

FOCUS ...

BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN THE RACES

By Giles Kuimba

Coolmoreen ... steps towards a just and equal society



MISS NANCY BRERETON, who gave her farm, Coolmoreen, to the work of Moral Re-Armament.



Coolmoreen with Miss Nancy Brereton and farm manager Peter Loch.

FORTY managers and workers' committee representatives are this morning taking part in a unique experiment on a remote farm near Gwelo.

As they discuss "New Thinking in Industry", the theme of a two-day seminar, the group will be the latest involved in a broader-based plan to bridge the gap between the races.

For the farm, Coolmoreen, has been turned into a Moral Re-Armament centre dedicated to teaching the races how they can play a part in creating a just, united and caring society.

The seminar's aims are:

- To build the bridges of trust and understanding on which joint responsibility for industry can grow.
- To give every person a rewarding part to play

and make the country's industry more productive.

● To inspire personal, corporate and national goals that will encourage teamwork and creativity and make Zimbabwe an example to the rest of Africa and the world.

Pioneer Major Hardman John Kerr Brereton, who came from Tipperary, Ireland, in 1896, could not have known that Coolmoreen, the farm he established in 1922 between the Umvuma and Selukwe roads, five km outside Gwelo, would one day be used to bridge the gap between the races.

And even more to promote the spirit of comradeship and sacrifice in post-war Zimbabwe.

The major died in 1945 — 10 years after his wife — leaving the farm to a son and the youngest daughter, Nancy Brereton, who never married.

And Nancy, now 70, bought her brother's share of the farm on which she still lives and works as part of the Moral Re-Armament team there.

Said she: "Being Irish, I had a quick temper. I felt that men working on the farm would not listen to me unless I talked strongly.

"Then I met people in Moral Re-Armament in the early 1960s. They came here and we held meetings.

"I felt this call to rise above our conflicts and sufferings and launch the new Zimbabwe in unity and peace.

"It is a call to action in which every man, woman and child must take part. We need a new Zimbabwe in which everyone cares enough and shares enough so that we may pattern a new social and economic order.

"We need to close the gap between the rich and the poor, to inspire both capitalists and socialists to work together for the good of all.

"Such a decision cannot be made for us by others, but by ourselves, and in this way we can all start today to build the Zimbabwe of tomorrow."

With inspired unity, she said, every problem would be solved. Empty hands would be filled with work,

empty stomachs with food, and empty hearts with an ideology which really satisfies.

"All of us, black, white, brown, Shona and Ndebele, need a common goal and a vision for Zimbabwe's destiny in Africa and the world. No one man, group, tribe or faction can shape that destiny alone."

Miss Brereton got the conviction, in 1975, to give Coolmoreen to further the work of Moral Re-Armament, complete with all its livestock and equipment.

The official transfer did not take place until January, 1976, when Mr Peter Loch (58) offered to leave his farm in Kenya where he had lived for 20 years, and with his wife, Jean, came to manage Coolmoreen providing his services free.

"More than ever," Mr Loch said, "post-war Zimbabwe needs a spirit of sacrifice and our task is to harness that spirit to create the right society."

CYNICAL

He added: "Last year Zimbabwe was the scene of a unique event. Where else in the world has a fierce and widespread war been settled in such a way that the opposing sides immediately set about to play a part in leading the country?"

"It has given hope to a cynical world. Suffering people now see their longings as achievable, and hope is vital if we are to achieve the goals we now face.

"Difficulties there are, and difficulties there will be, but they cannot take away anything from the peace and unity already here."

The value of Coolmoreen was made clear last year starting with a 10-day camp for 22 young people and similar ones later.

Throughout the year there were meetings, large and small, bringing together people from all over the country and beyond.

When the Mayor of Gwelo, Councillor Patrick Kombayi, attended a meeting there, he remarked on the range of the people present, not only of different races, but also of varying ages.

TRANSFORMED

"This is what we need in Gwelo," he said.

In the atmosphere created by Coolmoreen, understanding the other person becomes more important and more interesting than defending one's own position.

And suspicious attitudes are transformed into a care for each other.

A former guerilla leader said at a meeting: "This is the first time I have met with people of all races thinking together on how to help the country. It has heartened me."

A former girl guerilla at a recent meeting said: "My parents were killed in the war. I returned to Zimbabwe with an immense hatred of whites, but here I have shared everything with them.

"I have found a family and I have seen what it means to live unselfishly. Now I am more concerned

with how I treat others than in how others treat me.

"This is the price of the reconciliation we seek — to forgive what others have done to us and to ask forgiveness for what we have done to others."

Summing it all up, an organiser of a recent seminar said: "We are certainly moulding the qualities of character we need to build the new Zimbabwe."

And Coolmoreen's influence extends far beyond Zimbabwe's borders. Already, visitors have come from other parts of Africa.

Mr Stanley Kinga, formerly Kenya's United Nations Commissioner for Refugees, described Coolmoreen as "a source of inspiration for all who want to build their nations on sound foundations".

Coolmoreen is a dairy and poultry farm, both of whose products are in great demand.

Last year, the farm ended with a profit of \$2 575, which is being used for much needed improvements, mainly in the dairy.

It is also planned to expand the poultry enterprise, doubling the number of laying hens by June next year. An additional 2 000-egg incubator is also needed.

Productivity, however, isn't the only aim. Plans are in hand to expand a farm training scheme designed to work out new approaches in many fields of agriculture including farm owner-worker relationships.

The policy is one of shared responsibility, including everyone on the farm to promote the spirit of team work and greater productivity.



EGGS are among the main products of Coolmoreen. Mr Peter Loch, inspects some of the eggs just collected from the laying pens.



FARM manager Peter Loch inspecting some of the day-old chicks in their cages at Coolmoreen.



CONTRACTOR'S employees are digging the foundations for better houses for workers' families at Coolmoreen. In the background are some of the finished houses, far better than any to be found in former city townships.

After meeting with Coolmoreen workers, a ZANU (PF) team organising workers' committees on farms in the area told Mr Loch how impressed they were with the spirit of co-operation on the farm.

"You are one big workers' committee here," they said.

Coolmoreen has received widespread encouragement to expand its work.

This year there is a continuing programme of seminars and weekend gatherings aimed at meeting the particular needs of the country.

"We aim towards the establishment of regular training courses, not only for Zimbabweans, but for people from other parts of Africa," said Mr John Bond, an MRA worker.

URGENT NEED

"We hope it will be a base from which people can profit from all that Zimbabwe has to offer," said another MRA worker, Mr Stephen Sibare, from Selukwe.

But there is an urgent need for accommodation. There are 14 workers' families, eight of which are already housed in modern houses built recently as a vast improvement on the old.

The change that has come in many people through meetings at Coolmoreen has brought closer the vision expressed by the Prime Minister, Mr Mugabe, when he said:

"Our new nation requires of every one of us to be a new man, with a new mind, heart and spirit . . . new hearts that spurn hate, and a new spirit that must unite and not divide."