

NEW WORLD NEWS

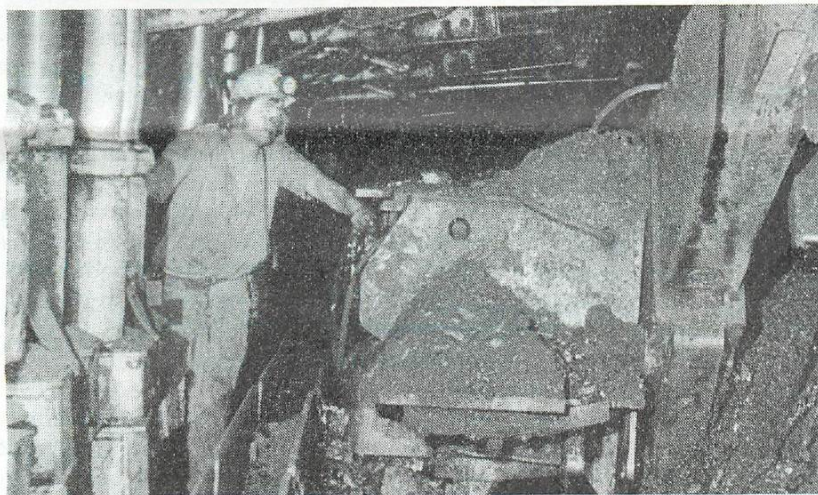
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Cummock



National Coal Board

The job-seekers...and those with jobs—what can be done about unemployment?

SPECIAL ISSUE ON EMPLOYMENT

A JOB FOR EVERYONE

'WORK, WORK, WORK, till every bone in my body ached,' says Bullbluff, the miner, in Peter Howard's play *The Dictator's Slippers*. 'And then something far worse than work. There was no work.'

When a man loses his job he not only loses his pay packet. It can also destroy his dignity. It can lead to a crisis of identity. Unresolved, such an experience can create a bitterness and hatred that are the 'driving fuel of revolution' as Bullbluff puts it. Or, as an employer said to last year's conference of the Confederation of British Industry, 'If those who believe in freedom can find no way to get on top of unemployment, sooner or later a chance will be taken by those who do not. This is not a political or a class issue. It is a question of democracy or not, in the long run.'

There is a moral and spiritual dimension to the unemployment crisis: whether it is the greed that leads to the maximisation of profits or wages, without regard for other people's jobs, or simply the helplessness and lethargy that make a person unemployable. The cost of industrial disputes can be plant closures and further redundancies; and new technologies can be used either to generate new employment or by unscrupulous employers to get rid of unwanted manpower. The word 'productivity' has all too often

become synonymous with the word 'redundancy'.

But what about our attitudes towards such issues as overtime, age of retirement, quality of workmanship, retraining for new skills, moonlighting and work-sharing? All have a bearing on employment and all can pose a moral choice. Trade unions in Britain and West Germany, for instance, are now campaigning for a shorter working week. But Britain works more overtime than any other country in Western Europe. One transport union leader estimates that if we halved the number of hours of overtime worked we could create 100,000 new jobs.

Of course employment skills are not the whole of life. A person's destiny can rise above his training for work. The lawyer Thomas Jefferson, the tent-maker Paul, the Carpenter of Nazareth are remembered for the destiny they fulfilled rather than their work-skills.

Each of us can find a God-given purpose in life whether or not we are employed. Indeed, to find such a purpose may be more important than being in a soul-destroying job.

In this issue, contributors write about how their faith has helped them to find such a purpose. For some it has helped them to cope with unemployment. For others it has led to new initiatives to generate jobs. ■

EYE- OPENER

KEVIN TWAITE was approaching his 25th birthday when he was made redundant. For two years he had been a proof reader at a big City of London printing company. But it was losing money and rumours were rife that it was due for closure.

'In a strange way it was a bit of a relief for some of us,' says Kevin of that fateful day in June 1981 when the shutters went up. 'For some who had been there 40 years it was a bombshell. You felt more sorry for them really. I just felt, "Let's hurry up and go somewhere else to earn a living."'

Three years later Kevin is still on the dole. Not that he has been hopeless or despairing during that time, though he admits, 'You get out of the way of work and then don't feel like going back to a full-time job again.' But the union has looked after him well, paying him £30-odd a week unemployment benefit on top of his dole money. He has had some casual work in Fleet Street during the last three years. And he has involved himself in his trade union, the National Graphical Association, as well as in local politics.

For two and a half years he has been Chairman of the NGA's London Region unemployed chapel (branch) which claims the dubious distinction of being the largest print chapel in the world. During his chairmanship membership has risen from 400 to 1,000, such is the number of redundancies. He is one of its longest-serving members. Many of his colleagues are facing the prospect of never getting a job in printing again. Others have used their redundancy pay to set themselves up in small printing businesses of their own.

Kevin remembers vividly one tragedy which shook the union: 'A man who had been unemployed for six months asked a union official if he would ever work again in the



Kevin Twaite

same industry. He was told "No". The next day he killed himself.'

Surprisingly, Kevin says, 'The longer I have been unemployed the less cynical I have become.' He told a conference of trade unionists and managers in the north of England, 'The unemployed have got to develop new interests and concerns outside themselves, as I have done. Then they can give hope to others who would otherwise give up.'

In August 1982, he was invited to take part in an industrial conference on employment at the MRA centre in Caux, Switzerland. There he freely admitted that he had come to Caux a cynic. 'I viewed unemployment as a British problem,' he said. 'In Fleet Street, the home of British newspapers, a print worker on piece earnings can take home £600 a week while his colleague with the same skills can be unemployed and earn nothing.' But he continued, 'This conference has opened my eyes to unemployment in the Third World where 300 million have no jobs and state benefits are virtually non-existent. Unemployment must be tackled internationally. I will go away from here and tell others about my rediscovered faith in God.'

Michael Smith

NO MORE DESPONDENCY

by Blyth Ramsay

I COME FROM A SHIP-BUILDING town on the Lower Clyde, and was one of the great mass of unemployed in the Thirties. In all I was out two years—one year, a short return to work, and then another year. There is nothing more devastating to the dignity of men than unemployment. The Means Test meant that my brother and myself received no dole, and our parents had to look after us. This caused my brother to join the Army and I was not to see him again for ten years.

Even though I was not receiving money I had to sign on at the Labour Exchange twice a week; the local councillors used to stand outside to give advice and help where necessary. At our church a visiting preacher said, 'The question in people's minds today is not whether God exists, but how to exist from day to day.' Political speakers harangued the unemployed constantly. Every week there was some public protest. I wanted a new society, but was the



Blyth Ramsay

ordinary man always to be the victim of events around him, in work, out of work?

In order to keep my morale up, I cleaned my shoes every day, even when they had cardboard stuffed in to keep the wet out. I also went for a walk each day, sometimes accompanied by an unemployed mate. Then twice a week there was an unemployed club at our Church.

An unemployed friend of mine told me, after the football match one Saturday, how he had found a working faith and an aim to build the new society through a change in human

MORE HELPFUL THAN PITY

The following article by GEORG and MARIA HARTL is taken from the German-language monthly, 'Caux Information'. Mr Hartl was writing at a time when he was unemployed though he has since found a job:

I KNOW FROM EXPERIENCE what it means to lose your job and the pain of looking for one unsuccessfully. The fact that I had always been successful made me unwilling to accept that this should happen to me, as it is currently happening to about 150,000 other Austrians.

I launched one application after another and was turned down again and again. It is not a pleasant feeling to have to face that, at present, with my qualifications, I am not needed anywhere. I ask myself, 'What was the purpose of all my study and apprenticeship? Did all that effort have any meaning?' Such a situation makes me look at my conscience—have I acted correctly, and if not what can I do about it? But, even more, it makes me ask, have we depended on the state for far too long, instead of being responsible ourselves? We have been accustomed to the state offering us so much under the most attractive conditions—especially free training, a free choice of study opportunities and, finally, an adequate job.

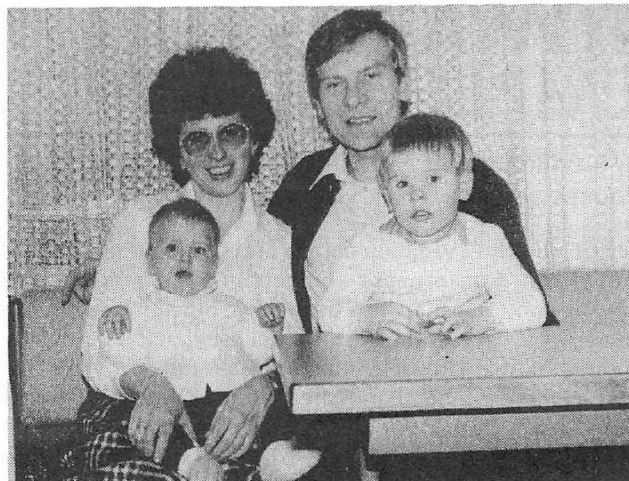
As in all situations of suffering, it is important not to fall into bitterness and self-pity. Through my faith I know that there is more to life than our physical existence and having a job. This attitude does not bring an immediate advantage in the search for a job but it gives a different perspective on the problem. A life without the significance which a job gives can still have meaning. A man's value on the labour market is not his only value if he knows that he has a destiny from his Creator which goes far beyond that. Similarly, fear

nature, beginning with oneself. He gave me a book on Moral Re-Armament which I read till two in the morning, by which time I'd decided to find out more. This resulted in my friend, along with a student friend and myself, deciding to meet every morning at 6 am for a two mile run and then, in front of a small gas fire, a short Bible reading, followed by a time of quiet, a seeking of God's leading for ourselves and for our town.

This went on for weeks. Many things happened as these sessions led us to make friendships with some of the leadership of the town. Our MP presided at a lunch for our council and neighbouring councils to hear about MRA. On another occasion we had a leaflet invitation printed which went to thousands of homes and culminated in a packed public meeting. Days of despondency and time-killing became full and interesting.

I still desperately needed work, but felt that through Moral Re-Armament I was helping to tackle the root causes of unemployment—greed and selfishness. A new purpose had entered my life.

The ordinary man led by God can build a new society where there is enough for everyone's need. It will mean a moral change in people's motives and attitudes. This I continue to fight for. ■



Georg and Maria Hartl with their children

need not cripple us if we do not look for our ultimate security in our own achievements and in human institutions.

The most helpful friends in such a situation are those who point me to these deeper realities without sentimental pity. One often needs correction, especially when bearing suffering. The 'consideration' of a friend who doesn't point out my mistakes is completely wrong. It encourages feelings of bitterness and self-pity instead of helping me to find the liberation I need again and again. Trusting that God has the right plan, I find courage, imagination and hope—that hope which is the prerequisite for a determined effort when success is hard to come by.

Maria Hartl: When Georg discovered that he would lose his job at the end of 1982, I asked myself, 'Why should it be him?' Feelings of aggression surged up in me against those people who had a job and, as I thought, were not so dependent on it as we who lived only on his income.

I was expecting our second child which was due at the end of April 1983. At the same time, we were to move into our new and more expensive home. At the beginning of the year I took the chance to restart my work as a child nurse for a few months. This meant we did not have so many financial difficulties. Although, when Georg could not see any prospect of a permanent job after looking around for almost a year, I was worried about the future.

Our friends and acquaintances knew about our situation. Many of them found it painful to be in touch with us, and were embarrassed to ask how things were going. Others supported us with advice and help and did all they could, for example when we moved to our new home.

Because Georg was turned down so often I sometimes began to doubt his abilities. I was afraid of admitting this but finally I couldn't hide it. My dissatisfaction expressed itself in reactions or in having little to say.

The birth of our daughter Katerina was a joyful event, which could not be dimmed even by our difficult circumstances. I felt how much God loved us, that He gave us such rich gifts and entrusted us with this child. In my new responsibilities, it came clear to me again that He must have a plan for me and my whole family. From that there grew confidence and strength to stand fully behind Georg again. Honesty about my doubts about him, and about my fears, helped us both to see each other more realistically and to accept each other.

Now Georg had found a modest job in the church and we both believe that this is a genuine calling. ■

TOWARDS FULL EMPLOYMENT

by **Neville Cooper**, Executive Director, Standard Telephones and Cables plc, England

SINCE WORK GIVES men dignity and satisfaction, since it is essential if human needs are to be met and society is to advance and since it offers us the role of fellow-workers in the process of creation, I cannot believe that it is part of the design of the Universe that men should not have full employment for their hands, hearts and brains. This concept is important—otherwise we can rest too inactive, learn too easily to accept other people's lack of work, accept too readily clever definitions of employment to talk away the problem or persuade ourselves that work is not so great anyhow.

We mostly think about and quote statistics about unemployment in the developed, industrialised countries. Many third world countries would dearly like to live with our unemployment figures. I shall refer later to third world problems but will limit myself principally to the matter we understand best—the rising trend in unemployment in the developed countries. Some factors contributing to this are: oil price rises; the recessionary cycle; production transferring to LDCs (Less Developed Countries); new entrants to the workforce; the use of technology; and attitudes to work and change.

Causes of unemployment

The sudden **oil price rises** sucked in wealth to OPEC and other countries faster than it could be recycled to work-producing investment. Many governments borrowed to the hilt to maintain purchasing power, but this only postponed the effects. Clearly, we should aim for **relationships which avoid sudden changes** in future. Nevertheless, even if we get these relationships right they clearly will not solve the whole problem.

The same is true of the **recessionary cycle**. No one expects unemployment figures to drop automatically to previous levels, when we come out of the current recession, and the longer-term trend of increasing unemployment is independent of trade cycles.

As for the **developing world** making cars, textiles and so on—what on earth did we expect them to do? If we are engaged in industries suffering because of the competition of less developed countries, we were lazy and stupid in not seeing the trends 20 years ago and maintaining our 'margin of sophistication' by selling more advanced products or adding value in design or quality. This is elementary economics.

It is a fact that, in many of our countries, there are more jobs than ever before and the increase in unemployed roughly equates to the number of married women who have become **new entrants to the labour force**. The free choice to do paid work or not is desirable, given that family responsibilities are being properly met. I would only say however that among all the talk about the value of women's work, I wish we heard more of the value of love and care and family management. Also, with all the talk about work-sharing, we should recognise that earlier generations had their own methods of sharing it.

So then, we come to **new technology** which is too often blamed for the problem. My thesis is that the problem lies in our use of technology, not in its development, which is as inevitable as the growth of an oak tree from an acorn. At the turn of the century 30 per cent of the labour force in this country was engaged in agriculture. New technology—notably the internal combustion engine—has reduced this to 3 per cent, and they produce ten times as much. But did 27 per cent of them become unemployed? No—largely because so many were employed in the new industries which developed just because of the internal combustion engine. Recent studies in Holland and Britain confirm that new technology can produce as many jobs as it destroys.

Creative spark

Having identified some of the causes of the problem, we should address the question of how the solution may be found. It will clearly not come merely by organising and by conscious action, although they are vitally necessary. But other factors are involved—**people's values, their relationships**, the spark of creativity which can be kindled or quenched in millions of hearts and which can lead to unexpected changes and initiatives.

What is our part? As always, I suggest it is to try to discern what is our Maker's design for development and co-operate with it. There is a tendency to think of our Creator as being mainly concerned with trees and lakes and nice 'natural' things or, at best, low technology, whereas machines and skyscrapers and high technology are man's affairs. I believe however that we will only see the issues straight when we see Him as the Creator of the whole real and potential world—of nature, yes, but also of computers and electronics and an infinity of future developments which our minds cannot yet imagine and will never fully comprehend. The challenge is to constant change, to meet new global goals.

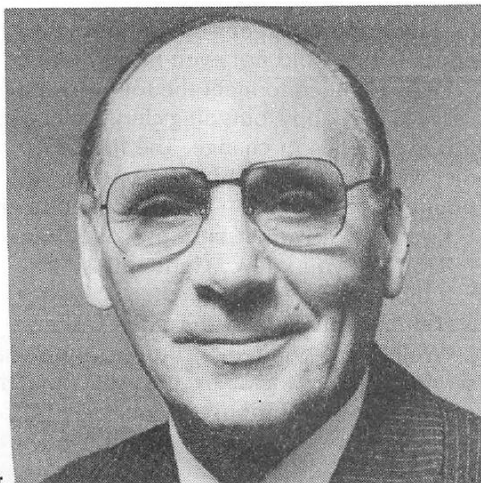
Honest with employees

In my own company, which employs some 30,000 in the UK, we have a policy that we will continue to employ at least the same number of people during the next decade. We believe that this fulfils a social duty and also makes business sense. It will however require a doubling of our sales and income in some four years and a quadrupling in about eight years—and this will take a lot of **planning and hard work**.

Some people say, 'But it's easy for you because yours are modern products in growing markets.' This, however, misses the point. The effect of new technology is, for us, as for everyone else, to destroy jobs creating today's products. Out of our **annual sales** of some £1bn, two-thirds comes from products which have only been developed within the past five years.

I quote my own company not in the belief that we have all the answers. I am simply pointing out that, as a company facing typical problems of rapidly changing markets, competition and technology, we think it is entirely reasonable (1) that we should not accept a decline in profitable employment and (2) that it will take all our efforts and energy to achieve this.

What is morally right and what is commercially wise can coincide—if we use all our intelligence and energy to achieve it. We have a plant in Northern Ireland where we realised that the product would be obsolete in about three



Harrison & Laking Ltd

Neville Cooper

years' time. We believe in being open and honest with employees. So we told them.

Our employees came up with the idea that, if we could not keep the plant open, they might offer it, and themselves, to other employers. They made approaches to companies throughout the world. Of course, during this period, productivity was high and there were no unnecessary stoppages. You will imagine our delight that, just a few weeks ago, it was announced that one other company had already taken on about a third of the workforce and another employer planned to offer further jobs which would take the total to more than we had employed. Incidentally, the additional work will be making garments, not electronic products—and I have no doubt that the employees will do it very well. For turning our hand to new things is essential if we want to go on being employed.

Thus, by sharing information and dealing with it positively together, a solution has been found, which we as management would not have found on our own. I am not advocating less management leadership—but, rather, more leadership in tapping the creativity of people. We are not limited by resources—for the unlimited resource is the imagination and energy and creative spirit in man which, if given free rein, can find the way forward.

Highest skill

So, what are some of the ingredients of an answer? I suggest the following:

First, a clear picture of the sort of society we want.

Secondly, flexibility. The Chairman of our company some years ago defined the highest skill as the ability to learn a new skill. We found that this faculty can be developed to a high degree and no one is really short of it. It is our expectations of people which may need most to change. Any restrictions on people's ability to train and retrain at any age—and to have these skills recognised and accepted—are anti-social and reactionary.

Next, changes in attitudes to the economy. Those who believe passionately in competition will need to accept also the need for co-operation and planning. Those who hate private profit will have to reconsider, if the price of their prejudice is that millions are denied the jobs which might be created.

The measures so far taken by governments to encourage new and small enterprises are creditable but should, I believe, be greatly widened and extended. So also should measures to encourage investment by millions of people in

their own and other companies. What better way of participating than having a stake?

We must at the same time avoid the simplistic, false-alternative argument that new small businesses will be the solution or that they will not be the solution. Large industries also have a major part to play.

We need also new attitudes to work and a new common-sense about pay. Many schemes for creating jobs are destroyed not by technology but by people's attitudes.

It is often said that it will cost untold billions to create all the work places which are needed. But there is a considerable shortage of people able and willing to clean windows, help old people, do simple maintenance work, and a whole range of services which are not capital-intensive. One of the encouraging experiences I recently heard of was a small private venture to give youngsters simple skills quickly—and then go out and negotiate jobs for them.

We need in addition new, large and imaginative initiatives. At a conference of which I was a sponsor a few years ago, Professor Nakajima of the Mitsubishi Research Institute suggested the setting up of a global infrastructure programme like an up-dated and enlarged Marshall Plan. He proposed that the developed nations should undertake co-operative work in the developing world, on projects which would have real value. They would include a second Panama Canal, the greening of deserts, hydro-electric schemes and the like. The benefits would include local jobs, work for the developed nations, the creation of wealth and the fact that Europe, America and Japan would be working together to raise living standards and open up new markets rather than quarrelling over limited existing markets. The Japanese Prime Minister has now taken up the idea and I think we shall hear much more of it.

Realist

I originally thought it idealistic and questioned how the capital could be raised. But when I see the billions which our banks have been able to pour into bankrupt countries with no obvious benefit in cash-creating hardware, I think, on the contrary, that the professor was a realist. Surely we should be prepared to consider global action as masters, not victims, of the economy.

I am not talking about doing something *for* people in the less developed world, but something *with* them for our mutual benefit, which will demand change from all of us. We need to consider the massive armaments bills, not just of the superpowers but of less developed countries. We must consider whether western lenders have not exercised inadequate control of the purposes for which money is borrowed. We must deal with waste and inefficiency brought about by corruption, for which both bribers and extorters must share the blame. The prescription must include change for everyone.

The relevance of our faith is surely central. The existence of a global problem challenges us to find adequate answers. It is a challenge which can, and should, take all our skills, all our capacity for work. I suggest we must accept it. ■

This article is an extract of a talk given by Mr Cooper to the Christian Association of Business Executives. The full text is published as a pamphlet under the title 'Solving the Unemployment Crisis'. Copies are available from Grosvenor Books, 54 Lyford Road, London SW18 3JJ, price 50p each post free; 10 copies for £4 post free.

AUSTRALIA ISLAND LINK IN THE CHAIN

This article by FRANK COONEY is taken from 'Church and Nation', the official publication of the Victorian Synod of the Uniting Church of Australia:

WE WERE ON A day trip during a visit to South Australia. We left the car, and walked down a bald, slow sloping granite cliff, overlooking the Cape, then stood looking at the wide expanse of ocean. On the southern horizon was the blurred outline of the northern coast of Kangaroo Island. Below us, deceptively close because of the clarity of the air, was a group of islands. On the biggest stood a lighthouse, surrounded by a number of small supply houses. This navigational aid was a beacon for shipping travelling eastwards, and up the eastern and western coasts of the peninsula.

As we made our way back to the car, my friend Malcolm casually remarked, 'They're the Althorpes.' The Althorpes! I stopped in my tracks, and looked again at the lighthouse, fresh and glistening white in the sun, against a background of brilliant blue. A flood of memories took me back 34 years, in which these islands were a link in a chain of remarkable circumstances. I called out, 'I'll be with you in a moment.' I wanted to etch in my memory the outward setting of what I can only describe as a providence of God.

Thirty four years before I had been one of a great army of unemployed, and had travelled up and down the eastern States of Australia, for over three years, 'jumping the rattler'. A swaggie you met in Townsville, Northern Queensland, might cross your path in Adelaide, about 4,000 kilometres by rail. We were a 'brotherhood of the road', in which we were able to swop information on the most likely places to get a handout of food, a roof over your head, and in some cases money. Also it was profitable to know the places to avoid.

Swaggie

I was in Adelaide at the time. Through reading a book in the public library, then meeting a man, I was led to a basic experience of Jesus Christ which revolutionised my whole conception of life. Though still in bad economic circumstances, I was lifted out of fear and despair into a realm of faith and hope, and given a purpose for life.

One afternoon, walking down King William Street in the centre of the city, I met a young swaggie friend whom I had last seen in Queensland. He mentioned he had got on to a selling proposition, which he had knocked back, as he was returning to Queensland. Would I be interested? An insurance company had a consignment of paper tablecloths and serviettes, spoilt by sea spillage, and was selling them off cheap.

I saw the stock, and very attractive it was, with various patterns, a good buy for housewives and clubs for social occasions, eliminating the bother of laundering. I decided I would need at least one pound in cash; ten shillings to buy stock, which when sold, would enable me to turn the returns into more stock, and ten shillings for a hawker's licence for the privilege of selling merchandise from door

to door—an outrageous fee for those days. Where to get a pound when I did not even have the price of a meal?

I had arranged to meet the following day with my friend Leslie, a big happy, outgoing clergyman, who had led me to this experience of change. The first thing he did when we met was to put his hand in his pocket, and hand me a one pound note. He said, 'I've been asked to give this to you.'

I stared at it with a sense of wonder.

'How did you know I wanted this?'

'I didn't know,' he replied.

'Tell me your side of the story, Leslie.'

'Well,' he responded, 'a couple of months ago our church service was broadcast by the ABC, and the service was picked up by a lighthouse keeper called Charles Perry. He's stationed on the Althorpe Islands. Do you know them?' I shook my head.

'Something in the service must have got to him, because he wrote me a letter out of a sense of loneliness and despair, and asked for help. I answered his letter the best I could, and received a reply.'

Cheque

'He said, "When I received your letter, I felt as though a cool hand went through my head, and I was at peace." He wrote a few more things. In the sermon, I'd mentioned how you, Frank, had come to me for help, full of despair and hopelessness; and through deciding to let God take over your life, you had found power and peace. Charles was so grateful for what he had found, that he enclosed a cheque for one pound, as he put it, "for the brother who is unemployed".'

Leslie's face broke into a grin. 'It's remarkable isn't it. I have the privilege of giving a message; it's picked up by a lighthouse keeper who finds peace of heart and mind, then gives you the money you want. But the astonishing thing about all this is that the boat which takes provisions and the mail to the lighthouse only calls there once a month!'

'Yes,' I said, 'and I've got the money today.'

I took a final look at the lighthouse, then walked back to the car, grateful for the reminder of a truth which I have often forgotten: that where God guides, He provides. ■

Steel struggle

'STORY OF STRUGGLE by steel workers' was the headline in *The Journal* of Newcastle upon Tyne in April on an article about a new booklet. The booklet, Tom Jones's *It can be done*, describes how a group of workers at the Consett Steelworks refused to give up when the works was closed but 'to take a risky venture for the future' and set out to create fresh jobs. *The Journal* says that, registering as Consett Co-operative Enterprises Ltd, they directed their efforts into four channels—collaboration with Consett Technical College, demolition of the steelworks, the establishment of an advice centre and the setting up of their own factory. ■

'It can be done' by Tom Jones, published by Grosvenor Books, 54 Lyford Road, London SW18 3JJ, price with postage 65p.

INDIA

A SOCIALIST IN DEED

INDIA HAS 700 million people. On paper their average yearly income is only £46. While 22.5 million privileged ones work in industry, up to 100 million are underemployed, if not unemployed. In these circumstances, to get 3,000 jobless men full industrial re-employment is like getting them all first prizes in a bumper draw. Yet this happened.

Behind what they call in Calcutta trade union circles 'this trade union miracle' is Satya Banerji—a socialist in deed. A man who has learned to unlock the dynamism of creativity in the ordinary man. At 64 his urge to lighten the burdens of others keeps him clinging to overcrowded buses or to the second class compartment of the popular Calcutta trams. One day he is arranging a video showing of Solzhenitsyn's *One Word of Truth* for Bengali intellectuals. The next day he is trudging along to help the son of a multi-estate owning family to sort out his future or to give spiritual training to the teaching staff of a high school.

Doorstep

To his doorstep come budding trade unionists seeking counsel. Amongst many that he has stuck alongside for years now is a Muslim slum leader. Banerji has helped him to initiate a programme of material development of his slum based on human development. Last week a 720ft tube-well was inaugurated in the slum. This was given by a Lions Club through an industrialist friend of Banerji. Now a cooperative is taking shape that will aid the unemployed youths and widows in the slum to do some paid work in their hutments.

Unschooling but self-taught, Banerji was the only son of a perennially unemployed motor mechanic. He left home at 14 since his father could not pay for his schooling. Bitterness at the society that deprived him of formal education led him to Marxism. They put him to organise workers as even at that age he had already tried to organise slum-dwellers. Disillusionment with *Stalinism* led him to the folds of Radical Humanism under the mentorship of M N Roy—the only Indian to be on the first Comintern Executive Committee, where he crossed ideological swords with Lenin.

Trouble

In 1953 the next stage of Banerji's revolutionary development came with Moral Re-Armament. A young Englishman, son of a diplomat, won his interest by taking the trouble to go not just once, but three times to ensure he came to see the MRA industrial play, *The Forgotten Factor*. Since then he has often repeated that MRA is the ordinary man's chance to do the extraordinary thing.

For years he led the union in the private railway company he worked for. Knowing that this railway, serving three states of India, was running at a loss, Banerji tempered his demands on the basis of 'what is right'. However in 1970 a politician was elected trade union chief. This embittered Satya Banerji once again. But it was not long before he politician over-reached himself with excessive demands. The company had to close down. The politician scampered off when the 3,000 men lost their jobs.



Satya Banerji

Banerji got the offer of a job but instead of taking it thought of the retrenched men. He went to the homes of many of them and rallied them from hopelessness. His own burden of bitterness rolled away when on a train journey from Delhi he had the conviction, 'Forget your bitterness. Think of others. You are needed for them.' He alighted at Howrah Station ready to shoulder the cares of these 3,000 men with the vigour of a 20-year-old.

The Railway Minister in Delhi was sympathetic and responded to Banerji's selflessness by getting the Indian Cabinet to make a significant policy decision to absorb these private railwaymen into the national railways.

But the way was not by any means clear yet. The Railway Board had to be persuaded to implement this decision. This seemed impossible as the Board would face the opposition of the two national railwaymen's unions as Banerji's union was affiliated to neither. Banerji's impulse then was, 'Not one cry of hatred, not one word of anger but try to reach the heart of the Railway Board Chairman.'

Ingenious

This he did. The Chairman said, 'In my eight years here this is the first time God has been mentioned in negotiations.' The ingenious plan worked out by the Board involved absorbing the 3,000 men inconspicuously in small batches all over India.

Today, ten years after this 'miracle', Banerji keeps closely in touch with many of these same men who have now been transferred back to Calcutta for working on the much-awaited Metro Rail project.

Mornings still find him sitting in an ill-lit room mulling over life and matters of depth, or listening to the woes of these or other men. Even now when the health of his wife—the rock of his life—or some other struggle worries him, the pessimist in him lets that one cloud darken the whole sky. But once he is over it the sunny periods are almost childlike in their cheer. His voice on the phone booms out—enthusiasm undiminished with age—so that all in a room benefit from his conversation while you have to hold the receiver some inches from the ear.

With that faraway look, absorbed in concern, he characteristically twirls his grey eyebrows as if drawing the wisdom of years from them and says, 'The industrial working class in India is no longer underprivileged. Millions of others still need to be considered.'

Suresh and Leena Khatri

BUILDING BLOCKS

by Aad Burger

THE NETHERLANDS HAS the highest unemployment rate within the European Economic Community. Forty per cent of the unemployed are below the age of 23 and the number of people who have been without work for more than one year has increased sharply.

Opinions about the causes of this relatively high unemployment vary greatly. As a trading nation, Holland is very vulnerable to the effects of the world-wide economic crisis. Another factor is that many more women are now entering the labour market in this country. Our wages are relatively high and we have an extensive and expensive social security system. And often new investments lead to fewer rather than more places of work due to the introduction of modern technology.

The fact that one can, despite difficult circumstances, take initiative oneself to do paid or unpaid work that will help improve society gives people hope and encouragement. A young teacher who had taught for one year at a school with 80 per cent foreign children was told that she would not be needed at the school after the summer holidays because of cuts in the budget. She was not put off by this and applied for an educational job abroad with a large firm. The prospects seemed good but in the end the post did not become vacant when expected. Then quite out of the blue, just before the end of term, she was told that she could return to her old school after all. She accepted this eagerly because she wanted to continue her work with the mainly Turkish and Moroccan children. She says that seeking for God's guidance step by step, together with others, meant that during the months of uncertainty she did not lose faith or hope.

A young silversmith who has his own workshop was confronted with the consequences of the economic crisis—orders went down steadily and costs kept rising. He was tempted to stop adding VAT to his bills in order to attract more customers. But he and his wife decided to stick to their conviction that you cannot have a part in helping answer corruption in the Third World or anywhere else if you practise it yourself, even on a small scale. Instead he decided to do some creative thinking about how to get new orders. His initiative to design and make company souvenirs for a specific firm and for the local city-government, brought him new work. Unexpectedly, he received an offer to display some of his work, free of charge. This exhibition led to some new orders. Then, he and other craftsmen distributed a folder about their products, which also resulted in more work. So instead of taking the road of corruption and despair, he sought a solution which gave hope and vision not only to himself but also to others.

These are small 'building blocks'. But large-scale government initiatives, however necessary, are not enough. Individual and group initiatives at every level can replace the curse of unemployment with meaningful work. ■

VIETNAMESE AND AFGHAN REFUGEES were among 70 people, young and old, at a recent Moral Re-Armament conference in Perth, Western Australia. They met on the theme, 'Your life and our world'. Other participants included European migrants as well as families from farms, university, the professions and trade unions. One of the Vietnamese had escaped from his country at the 15th attempt.

Former Federal Minister for Education, K E Beazley, told the conference about a major report on education in Western Australia, drawn up by a committee which he had chaired. The report, hailed in the press as 'the dawn of a new era', had just been presented to the state government. It contained recommendations aimed at carrying the school system into the 21st century. Mr Beazley said that, in taking submissions, the committee members travelled extensively throughout the 2,500,000 square kilometre state meeting a wide range of people. His main conclusion was that 'homes let children down far more seriously than schools'.

Jean Foster, a doctor in Perth's largest hospital, said, 'I see in my patients that having a stable home life helps people deal with crises. I've found that as I take time to be quiet with God and to talk with my husband, my care for patients improves. Being busy, even if you think it is worthwhile work you're doing, can be an excuse for not spending time with God. You avoid issues instead of facing them.' ■

LORD BLANCH, the former Archbishop of York, will chair a public meeting on June 10 where industrial managers and trade unionists will join him in calling for 'a new priority for Britain'. The theme of the meeting is, 'Building a nation governed by men and women who are governed by God'. It will take place at Tirley Garth, the Moral Re-Armament conference centre, near Tarporley, Cheshire at 3 pm.

The occasion will be a 'summons to leadership of people who are in a position to influence events in Britain', says Lord Blanch. 'I would personally regard moral and spiritual leadership at the local level as priority'. It is not always those who think they are in that position who exercise leadership, he says, 'just as in an army where the leadership of the General is not enough, but success depends on the leadership of the corporals, too'. The afternoon will chiefly be given to people who are already giving leadership. 'They will give evidence that there are men and women being governed by God, and who are exercising their influence in public affairs'.

The 7 July issue of 'New World News' will consist of a full report of this occasion and a week-end conference which precedes it. Anyone ordering extra copies before the issue is printed (i.e. by 28 June) can have them at the special rate of 15p per copy, postage extra. Orders to: The Circulation Manager, NWN, 12 Palace Street, London SW1E 5JF.

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