

Trade Union Attack On Moral Rearmament Movement

THE International Confederation of Free Trade Unions has published in London a long critical report on the origins, aims, history and activities of the Rev. Frank N. Buchman's Moral Rearmament Movement, once known as the Oxford Group. The report says that Dr Buchman's followers are not recruited from the masses, but from the "ranks of leaders"; that they follow Dr Buchman blindly and unconditionally; that they include many ex-Communists who are "an easy prey to mysticism"; and that the achievements they claim in the in-

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dustrial field are largely imaginary.

The sources of their wealth, the report says, are completely unknown, but "must be very rich." The confederation believes that "this certainly means that the movement has to make concessions."

The confederation's executive council, which has amended and approved the report, concludes that the movement's directives to factory workers "seldom correspond to the will of the majority, and in the view of the sectarian character of Moral Rearmament are hardly aimed at the welfare of mankind in general." The executive declares that Moral Rearmament should be prevented from encroaching on trade-union preserves.

Early Career

DR BUCHMAN, says the report, was born in Pennsylvania in 1878 and became rector of the Church of



Dr Frank Buchman

the Good Shepherd at Overbrook in 1900. He founded a home for waifs and strays in Philadelphia in 1905, but resigned in 1908 and became extension lecturer in personal evangelism at several American universities. He founded his movement, which was then called the Oxford Group, in the city in 1921. The report says that he rapidly "found

friends and followers, especially among undergraduates, who were attracted by his puritanical outlook and by the use he made of the experience he had gained on his missionary trips to China, for example, holding house parties as a means of converting people."

Four Absolutes

IN August, 1936, says the report, Dr Buchman was not merely opposed to Communism, but gave the following "pro-Fascist statement" to the "New York World Telegram": "Hitler or any Fascist leader, controlled by God, could cure all the ills of the world."

The Oxford Group's programme then consisted of what were known as the four absolutes—absolute unselfishness, honesty, purity and love "on the personal and national plane." The fourth absolute was extended to include "personal, social, industrial, national and supra-national" fields when the group changed its name to Moral Rearmament in 1938.

During the Second World War, according to the report, the group's activities were criticised in the British and American Press, which complained about Moral Rearmament disciples, "nice young tennis players" who were touring the country instead of defending it. In 1946 Moral Rearmament bought three hotels at Caux, Switzerland, and turned itself into the Moral Rearmament Foundation.

Discussing the movement's methods, the report says: "Dr Buchman does not build up his movement from below by recruitment from the masses—on the contrary.

Team of Keymen

"HIS is not the path of a democratic movement, but that of a dictatorship, since he builds up his movement from the ranks of leaders. As long as Dr Buchman confined his activities mainly to university youth, he chose people who had won sporting and athletic honours in student circles. In fact, he always tries to gain influence over a group, mainly by making use of its special characteristics, and he worries very little whether the principle is always the same. These people were trained as a team of keymen to win over converts, who followed their leaders blindly and unconditionally."

Dr Buchman, the report says, is now recruiting politicians, industrialists, trade unionists and former Communists, as well as undergraduates. The confederation thinks it "noteworthy" that he should be anxious to recruit ex-Communists, and thinks this is because they respond more readily to mysticism and will accept Dr Buchman's appeal to "blind herd instinct."

Having examined more closely some of the movement's own reports of its "trade union achievements," the confederation concludes that "in all cases they were found to be half-truths or fabricated single 'successes'."