

MILITANCY

Moderation is out

by Gordon Wise

WHAT IS A 'MILITANT'? It has become a debased word like 'peace' or 'democracy'. The word now has overtones of the bully, the man who has the muscle, usually because his industry is vital to the economy, and who extracts from his employer what he and his group or section demand. When the employer gives in he passes on the increase by rising prices. Ultimately it is those who can least afford it who pay for the increase in the shops.

Yet it is not fair to classify all militants as greedy, selfish men. Some employers only heed just claims when confronted by militancy. The press refers to 'militants' and 'moderates'. Moderation is not a valid alternative to militancy of the class war variety. It takes militancy to out-pace militancy.

The test of the real militant is: will the outcome of a militant action benefit the whole industry and nation or will it benefit a few at the expense of the nation? Will the world ultimately benefit

by my militancy or just my own crowd?

A union leader in Coventry used to fight the class war. Now he is a true militant. He not only puts forward the just claims of his men. He tells them when he feels their claims are unjust. He tackles management when he feels they are too hard and he tackles them when he feels they are too soft. The other day he took his managing director to task for not giving men who were redundant three months' notice. This was put into effect.

He also took the man to task for going along with sloppy standards in the firm and for paying a man for 70 hours work when everybody knew he only put in 30 hours. That is militancy, fighting for what is right without fear or favour.

Who is going to set the pace in unselfishness in industry? Certain dockers' shop stewards in Liverpool are now demanding a £60 wage for a 20-hour week so that they skim off the

Continued on page 4

COOPERATION BEATS BRIBERY

India's film industry is the largest in the world. Last weekend Shashi Patel, whose company processes two-thirds of India's colour film, addressed a conference attended by Bombay businessmen and workers and delegates from 21 nations at the MRA world conference centre in Panchgani, India. He said:

I MUST TELL you about an investment I have made. Four months ago when I first came here it was like getting away from a bad dream. Two hundred people were going on strike. The company was losing money. It had been going on for four years. I thought I should sell the company.

Here I saw the play *The Forgotten Factor*. 'Maybe the trouble is with me, not the workers,' I said. So I started thinking what I should do to make a clean beginning. Back in Bombay I was approached by one of the union workers. He hinted if I paid certain money things would be quietened down. I felt it was wrong. More than wrong it might not last long either. Not a good investment.

I talked to the union secretary myself and was surprised he had the same feelings I had. He wanted to make profits for the company and to make bonuses for the workers. In five minutes flat we agreed on the principle on which it could be settled. We used the human approach. What was right for the company and for the workers should be done.

I asked the union secretary to draw up an agreement. For safety I showed it to my lawyer. My lawyer told me he could not find one fault with it.

Now the atmosphere in the factory is so good that the investment I have made in coming here has paid many times. My factory is showing what one small factory can do.

From there we can change the atmosphere in Bombay, India and the world. It will pay dividends not only in the factory but in the home. You can see that happening with my wife and children who are here this weekend.



Anne Wolrige Gordon

Blindsight opens 28 May Westminster Theatre London

REHEARSALS of *Blindsight*, a modern play by Anne Wolrige Gordon, are under way in the Westminster Theatre. Its West End première is on Thursday, 28 May.

For a mother of two young children who helps run a 160-acre farm, time to write is not easy to find. It is the more so for Anne Wolrige Gordon since her husband, Patrick, is Member of Parliament for East Aberdeenshire and she takes a full part in his constituency work. She solves the problem partly by getting up early and putting in a good stint before breakfast. Last year, she completed a full-length biography of her father, Peter Howard, which has been widely acclaimed.

Actress hits out at Bamboozlers

A SOCIETY that turns mass murderers like *Bonnie and Clyde* into folk heroes cannot expect Christian behaviour of people in Vietnam or the streets of London, according to a leading West End actress.

Speaking on 'Change by Violence or Consent' in London last week, Miss Phyllis Konstam said, 'We need to face facts. The permissive crowd who are very vocal and persuasive have bamboozled us. They have sold us a bill of goods, for they insist that the breakdown of moral fences is civilised and adult. They seem to have lost touch with reality, because the truth is the permissive society is a cruel society.'

The Westminster Theatre, London, dared to say there was a demarcation line between good and evil, she said.

'It is a theatre which says that life is not a meaningless bad joke and that with God's help we can become true progressives. We can evolve out of the animal state and become mature enough to live as brothers.'

Mrs Wolrige Gordon says about *Blindsight* (*Daily Express* William Hickey Column, 4 May), 'So many plays are purely destructive. I've tried to write one that brings out the best in people and will still be entertaining.'

Blindsight is Mrs Wolrige Gordon's first play but not her first venture in play writing. She completed *Happy Deathday*, the play on which her father was working at the time of his death.

In *Blindsight*, Philip Friend plays a millionaire philanthropist; Michael Malnick, the doctor who swindles him; Carolyn Courage, a blind girl who sees further than most; and Paul Hastings, the boy whose love for her feeds on difficulties. Among others in the cast are Philip Newman, Gabrielle Brune, Mary Jones and Geoffrey Colvile. The Director is Henry Cass and the sets are by William Cameron Johnson.

Theatre Today by Elizabeth V Andrews, Ph.D., A.R.I.C.

IN MY YOUTH, some thirty to forty years ago, there were strict rules with regard to the structure of a play, to which one had to adhere. All plays, whatever their content, were built to a similar construction pattern (as, even now, great music):— Introduction; Development; Conflict; Clash and Struggle of heroes; Dénouement with happy ending, or tragedy respectively, according to the type of play.

The action never stood still but always developed according to the character of the imagined heroes (not the real actors).

Every first night, I remember, was an exciting event giving food for thought, and talk, for a long time.

But what happens today? There are excellent actors who have to play (not even 'act') in senseless, incongruous, unimportant plays without solutions and proper endings—and that apparently is left to the viewer to think out. Why? After many years of boredom, I have given up going to the theatre (except to some classics and operas); anyway, I would have forgotten them soon after leaving the play.

To my luck, I was invited to the Westminster Theatre last week to see the two plays by Peter Howard—*The Dictator's Slippers* and *The Ladder*. To my astonished delight, there was plenty of reason, sense and purpose in both;

new ideas that kept one thinking all night afterwards, as in my youth: problems and questions to solve.

Thank you, Peter Howard, for making me believe again in the possibilities of the theatre.

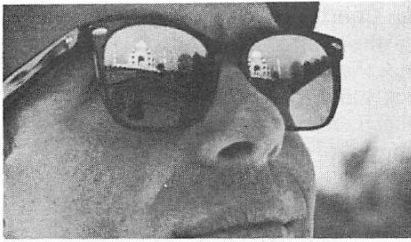
NOTE: *Dr Andrews is a Hungarian who has lived in Britain for a number of years. She is a fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine.*

Clergyman and his conscience

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY of the Swedish Church met last week in Joenköeping, South Sweden. Two thousand five hundred clergy and laity participated.

With the support of the national and local organizing committees for the Assembly, a reading of Alan Thornhill's play *Bishop's Move* was given in the city by a group of people, mostly young, from Stockholm and Gothenburg. *Bishop's Move* ran for twelve weeks in 1968 at the Westminster Theatre, London.

The play is about a clergyman and his conscience, how he is exposed and how finds a faith through this experience.



Through European Eyes

by Eliane Maillefer, a young teacher from Switzerland with an MRA international force in India

ALTHOUGH I AM a teacher, I have never seen so clearly how eager children are to feel they are needed in whatever happens in the country. Indian children love their country and respond to anything which will change it.

Working so closely with young girls taught me a lot and increased my faith. They do not need to have the difference between right and wrong explained to them. Like any of us they hate being told what to do, but love finding out for themselves what is right.

In Delhi, for instance, in a class of 14-year-old girls, after a moment of listening to God, to the inner voice, one of them got up and said, 'I have decided to stop looking down on the servants.' When I told the headmistress she was shattered. 'But it is what we have been telling them for a long time, but they never did it!'

I found out how important it is that

children have their own sense of God's guidance and that I do not put in their heads thoughts I would like them to have. In Shillong, after having had guidance some girls came and said that they should behave differently with the pupils of the rival school. I got ideas on how to seal the reconciliation, but my next thought was to let them find out for themselves what they could do. Soon they came with much more interesting suggestions. One was to show the film *Asian Experiment* for both schools, talk about their own change, and to listen to God. Another was to write a play in which the actors would be selected from rival schools too.

Their readiness and quickness to change amazed me. Thirty of them met every morning to plan how to bring change in the school.

After seeing *Asian Experiment* two girls said, 'When we saw there leaders

apologising, we felt ashamed of our lack of courage and decided to apologise to the people we have wronged.'

I was interested in the fact that listening to God is a uniting factor. All these schools had Hindu, Muslim and Christian pupils, but listening to God these differences no longer mattered.

In each town we visited, thousands of children were sent by their principals to see *Anything to Declare?* in schooltime. Many teachers came as well and their interest was not less than the children's. An Indian teacher said at an MRA meeting, 'All these truths of MRA have been handed down to us in our Hindu religion, but we have forgotten and neglected them. We need to listen to the inner voice. MRA has come to give us a jolt.' And the comment of the Mother Superior of a convent school was, 'Your coming to Shillong is an intervention of God. It has given us fresh hope.'

Europeans through Asian eyes

by Mohan Bhagwandas, Colombo, Ceylon

TRAVELLING, working and living with the cast of *Anything to Declare?* has taught me and many others a great deal about Europe and Britain. I never realised that when I decided to work with Moral Re-Armament in India, I would learn so much about these lands as I have.

For me it was the first time ever, meeting French, Dutch, Germans, Danes and others from Europe. Having got accustomed to encountering shabbily attired hippies from these lands, the thing that first strikes you about them is their neatness and cheerfulness. During their stay in Bombay a Swede, two Englishmen and I were responsible for transport. It was a priceless experience for us Asians who are extraordinarily 'democratic' about punctuality, to see the vehicles at our disposal fill up and move out on time.

For most of them it was their first time in India. Often one found the heat too much or the cold rather severe or the food too hot. But they never grumbled or got fed up. Yet they were startlingly honest about what they felt,

humble enough to learn and fearlessly admitted their mistakes when they made any. One always felt included when amongst them. Their feelings for the poor was not something theoretical but genuine. It sprang from costly decisions and change on things like superiority towards real people. It was their quality of life wherever they went that won the hearts of all. We also had our times of trial. When working on a project one found the European mind, the English mind and the Asian mind ticking so differently that if we had not learnt the secret of finding God's plan together, there would have been the makings of a world war.

Then there was the opportunity to room with a person who had an amazing alarm clock that buzzed for one hour before dawn. The astonishment when through ignorance someone asked a Frenchman, 'From which part of Britain are you?' But openness and a common aim kept us united because we found that the lessons we learnt with each other were the secrets the world was looking for.



I cannot help but say how excellent were those selfless, unseen but pivotal group of men behind the screen. I mean the stage crew. To sum up what they have done one can quote a student who said, 'They have set a pattern of workmanship that every office, every factory and every farm in Asia must copy.'

The spirit, passion and unity of the force of *Anything to Declare?* has meant a great deal to hundreds of us in Asia. For many it has meant new hope for the future. They are building a bridge across our two continents that will usher Asia and Europe into a new era.

Swiss MP and Bombay businessman give money for auditorium

A SWISS Member of Parliament in Asia representing his Government announced a gift of 3,600 Swiss francs from people in the Canton of Vaud for a new auditorium to be built at the MRA centre in Panchgani, India. Louis Guisan accompanied by his wife was at a conference in Asia Plateau, Panchgani, after representing his Government at Expo '70 in Tokyo.

In India where television has not yet reached the people, theatre and the film industry have the power to reach vast audiences in their own language. An audacious bid to produce plays relevant

to the urgent situation in Asia has been launched in Panchgari where work has begun on the construction of a theatre and auditorium.

£280 per seat covers the cost of the 450 seat theatre the total cost being £224,000. Plays and films will be produced to reach millions of ordinary people in every village and town.

A Bombay businessman, Sashi Patel, whose company processes two thirds of India's colour film, told the conference that he and his wife had decided to donate 5,000 rupees for a seat in the auditorium. 'We feel this is an invest-

ment that will pay rich dividends,' he said.

A former Justice of the Punjab High Court, Justice Tek-Chand, addressing the conference said, 'I wish the atmosphere here were to pervade quickly and soon everywhere else on the globe. I consider this a place for pilgrimage.'

* * *

ON 11 May an MRA international force with the European revue *Anything to Declare?* leaves India for Malaysia. Four young Indians will accompany the force to Malaysia, Australia and New Zealand. They are Kalpana Sharma from Bombay, Vijayalakshmi Subramaniam, Hyder Ali and Sachidananda from Bangalore. They are raising the money for their travel and expenses.

Continued from page 1

profits which are expected to accrue from the introduction of container ships on an increasing scale.

Would it not be more revolutionary of these 'militants' to go to management and say, 'Containers will bring greater profits and prosperity to our industry. Before we take greater wages and you take greater profits, could we see that freight rates are reduced, so that people on a low standard of living in other parts of the world can more readily afford what Britain makes and exports?'

One Liverpool dockers' shop steward is bringing four of his colleagues to the MRA Industrial Conference in London this weekend to see how they can bridge the gap between the favoured and the under-privileged nations, rather than widening that gap by inflated wage claims or excess profits.

Employers should themselves be militants, by making a new world their business. Employers need to take initiatives instead of reacting to the men they classify as 'militant'. The best of the 'good employers' are seeing the goodwill inside their plants, built up over 40 or 100 years, destroyed in months and weeks. The challenge is more fundamental than better communications. As the chairman of one company said of his highly-placed colleague, 'Better communications would not help him because he has nothing worth communicating.'

If the fuel of militancy is adulterated by bitterness or greed, then there is breakdown. If the fuel is a passionate concern for the moral and material welfare of all mankind, then humanity is moved forward.



SATYA BANNERJI, INDIAN TRADE UNION LEADER (PHOTO ABOVE), GIVES HIS VIEWS:

'Unions—spur to management and government'

ORIGINALLY, the trade unions were a defensive movement, developed in response to capitalist excesses. Now that labour has made so many advances and has acquired such powers in society, we ought to go on the offensive. The trade unions should be a spur to management and government to see that industry meets the needs of millions all over the world. A wholly new teamwork would follow if we challenged the management to join us in the bigger fight, that of putting the welfare of mankind before pay and profit. The Welfare State needs to be extended to becoming the state of welfare of the world as a whole. Further, in a welfare state no system of social security or of social welfare can meet

man's deepest longing for security and care if it is not run by men having an answer to selfishness and bitterness in their own hearts.

Satya Bannerji, Secretary of the Light Railways' Staff Association of West Bengal, visiting Europe in 1969.

WHEN WE TALK officially with management there is little in common. We have our point of view and they theirs. But an atmosphere can be created when we meet unofficially, and talk as human beings. Honesty brings this atmosphere.

Frank Sully, liaison stop steward for Lambeth refuse collectors and TGWU branch chairman.