

The British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli wrote about a hundred years ago: 'I was told that the privileged and the people formed two nations.' The task of creating 'one nation' is as urgent today as ever. In this issue we look at some of the goals that could provide a unifying purpose for all the diverse people within the nation. We also report some nation-building initiatives.

GOALS TO UNITE A NATION

by Sydney Cook

'WHERE THERE IS NO VISION the people perish,' says the Book of Proverbs. That wisdom from 2,500 years ago could have been written for Britain in 1985.

With our gaze fixed on 'progress', technology, wages and dividends, comfort and standard of living, have we ignored the priority of selfless goals for ourselves and our country? Talking of the need to be 'one nation', yet lacking a unifying purpose?

Without that purpose, we shall not deal with the root cause of riots on otball terraces. Nor with violence in industrial disputes; uproar in our council chambers; running verbal abuse in Parliament. Nor with a spreading attitude of blame, indifference and me-first in society.

The spirit of the people will not be slow to respond to selfless goals. When the horror of hunger in Africa was revealed, the nation responded with an unprecedented outpouring of often sacrificial generosity. But if we decide to defcat famine in Africa, it will take a long-term, united effort of all political parties, the willpower of all our people, as well as the co-operation of other countries. We shall need to beat every obstacle and every record. It was done in the Berlin Airlift. It was done to get men to the moon. Should we do less to save millions of lives?

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NEW WORLD NEWS

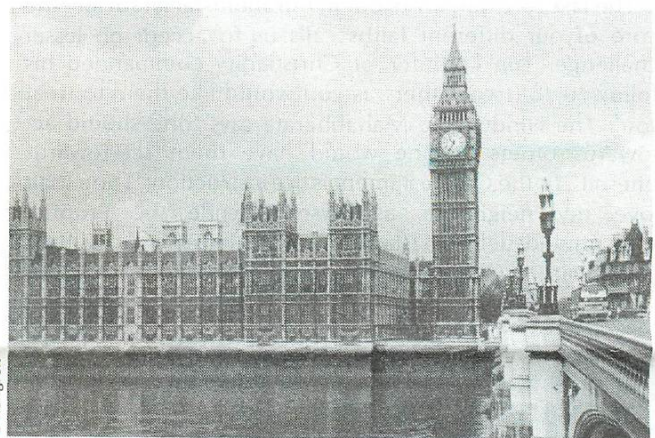
Vol33 No13 6 July 1985 25p



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Four aspects of Britain

Thanks largely to Mother Teresa, the pavement-dwellers of Calcutta prod consciences everywhere, but millions more across the world wait for adequate shelter and a place that is home. We could decide to put first in industry, not wages and profits, but the teamwork by unions and management that will produce the goods to provide those homes.

To tackle unemployment in Britain and the world will require the sharpest brains and stoutest will of all parties and sections of the community. We shall have to go at it with enthusiasm, vision and the expectation of solutions—and without any scramble for power and party advantage.

To be multiplied

As tens of thousands die in Cambodia, in the Middle East, in Lebanon and Afghanistan, and other conflicts, we need to learn, as individuals and as a nation, to be peace-makers, not just peace-lovers. It is the art of turning enemies into friends; in the family, in the office, on the factory floor, in politics and across the conference table. It begins with honest apology and restitution made for wrongs done, be they a part of history or fresh from yesterday. It has built bridges of understanding between France and Germany, Japan and her former enemies, black and white in Kenya, as well as within Tunisia, Zimbabwe and other African countries. It waits to be multiplied.

If we take on these and other goals, we shall find drift replaced by a sense of destiny and purpose. We shall find, too, that we need a miracle of the spirit and the help of a power beyond ourselves. That power is available. While computers unravel thousands of calculations in a second, the God who created the brain to invent computers can heal hate and straighten out the human heart in a moment.

The tasks are immense, but in our multi-racial society the core of our different faiths calls us to accept no lesser challenge. The Founder of Christianity commanded his followers to 'treat others as you would like them to treat you'. The Hindu epic Mahabharata says 'one should act towards others as one would have them act towards oneself'. In the Old Testament is the instruction, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself', while the Prophet Muhammed defined Islam to a questioner as 'to submit your heart to God and harm no one by word or deed'. ■

CHOICES FOR BRITAIN

by Gordon Wise

WHEN I WAS A SCHOOLBOY in Australia between the world wars, our school atlas showed a third of the globe in red. This was the British Empire. As a second generation Australian, I was proud to belong to it. True, Australia became independent in 1901 but close links of sentiment, diplomacy and commerce were then dominant. My grandparents were British migrants. My Australian-born father once said, 'I have lived in the reigns of six monarchs. I had "British" on my birth certificate, and as far as I am concerned I remain so.' This despite having always been an Australian passport holder and having held many Cabinet posts in Australian politics.

Today, there is talk in Australia about becoming a

republic. Those of British descent are declining in proportion to the overall population. After the fall of British-held Singapore to the Japanese in World War II and after the US Navy saved Australia from invasion, security interests changed. And what is called 'the Far East' is Australia's 'Near North', attracting much of our concern, diplomacy and trade.

Similar shifts have, of course, occurred in most of the countries which used to make up the red third of the atlas. Yet must we go on quoting President Truman's Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, who complained, 'Britain has lost an empire but hasn't found a role'? If there are outlines of a role to be discerned, what are they? For, if we had a clearly defined role, surely it would help to over-arch the differences of class, culture and community which are stretching our social fabric today.

There is evidence that British experience is highly valued in crisis situations such as the famine in Ethiopia and Sudan. I was in Ethiopia with British people some years ago as I have been in India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Singapore and Malaysia. For the most part, Britain still has a good name. In Egypt, despite the Suez war, I found my British travelling companion welcomed and respected. When the recent cyclone and flood struck Bangladesh there were British, offering aid, to be seen on the TV screens.



Gordon Wise

B. Curmooch

What we have not done in an adequate dimension is to cultivate the friendship of our nearest neighbours, the Irish and the French. The French and the Germans, aware of how much their mutual hostility had cost in blood and treasure, have made their post-war friendship a cornerstone of policy. They have worked at it. We have not. At least, not enough. But there are good signs. The British are involved in European initiatives, at a non-governmental level as well as within the formal EEC structures.

Our crisis management is often superb: it is said that 'an Englishman's spiritual home is the last ditch'. Could more thought, effort and imagination go into averting crisis by a commitment to policies which would defuse anger in, for example, Ireland? A touchstone of whether we have learned from history could be whether we are prepared to talk to China's leaders about the indignity we heaped upon them in the opium wars—which they still remember—as well as about trade. This is not to condone Chinese Communism because we as a nation were at fault in the last century; nor to whitewash the bloodiness of the IRA because of Cromwell. But if we sought to understand what others feel and why they feel it, we might come up with inspired initiatives rather than just react to events—often with too little, too late.

I realise that I have switched from writing as an Australian to writing as a Britisher. In truth, I feel part of both countries. I am at home in both, having spent as many years in each country now. I love Australia. I love Britain. My first sight of the green shores rolling away from the Clyde, as our troopship anchored off Greenock; of England's green and pleasant land as our troop train made its way south to our base in Sussex; of flying and training over Oxfordshire's meadows and villages; of enjoying Welsh hospitality when returning from stormy patrols over the Atlantic; and of Yorkshire warmth and training there—all this went into my bloodstream. When on leave in London I ran the same risks as the Londoners from V1 bombs or V2 rockets, rank, station or accent did not matter—or certainly mattered less than the will to survive and the will to win. When you give your sweat and your heart to a country, it becomes part of you and you become part of it.

If we are to be truly one nation of Britain, we need not only to see where we have come from, in terms of class, race, income or area, but we also need to bend our minds, hearts and wills to searching where we should go.

At root, as a predominantly Christian people, with a Christian heritage, this comes down to 'Choose ye this day whom ye shall serve'. If we choose to serve ourselves only, satisfying the flesh in all its tyrannous demands, and ignoring the Spirit, we will become a marginal note in future history books, rent apart by our own squabbles. If we choose to serve the Lord and, because of that, serve each other, serve our neighbours at home and across the globe, we will have laid our foundation stones in building the Kingdom of God on earth. Such a task is so far beyond us that we will need to submit ourselves to the Almighty's power and design, one heart, one will, one goal. ■

WHEN CLOSURE SEEMED SURE

by Geoffrey Gain

THE CARBURETTOR MAKES the motor-car go. But in 1979-80 the fuel systems company which supplied carburettors to the Austin-Rover group was losing money at the rate of £3 million a year. Production had fallen in the previous 18 months, and the world recession had necessitated a reduction of the work-force from 1,600 to 398, including staff. Closure seemed inevitable. What little remained of the company would be shifted into a corner of another BL plant.

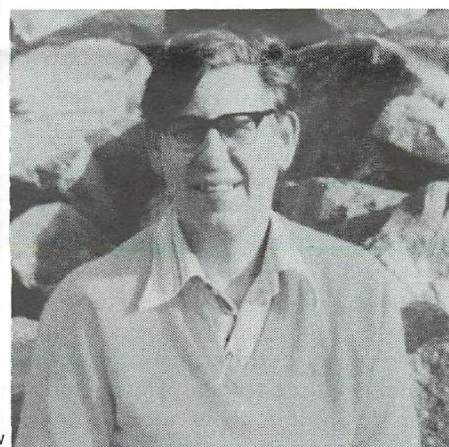
A tool-maker named Albert Benbow was the Convenor of shop stewards. In 1978 Benbow had led a strike of tool-makers who were concerned about the erosion of wage differentials. They were highly skilled men, and some of them, feeling frustrated, were leaving the already weakened industry. The strike was not without effect; two journalists had told Benbow, 'Your action is waking British industry up to the way skilled men are being lost.'

At that time, seven years ago, Benbow met an engineer who, he says, 'showed me there was a better way than striking. At Tirley Garth, the Moral Re-Armament centre in Cheshire, I came to see that our action could lead to the destruction of the company that we really wanted to save.' He decided to try and get rid of bitterness and establish trust.

A year and a half later the workers, led by Benbow and his fellow-stewards, had introduced a number of changes in manning and flexibility of working practice, but still the factory was in the red. Albert Benbow appealed to the group Managing Director, pointing out that the workers had put right everything possible. The MD visited the factory and told the Convenor, 'You are right. Because of suppliers' delays you have not been getting enough work. That is my responsibility. I will correct it, and the plant shall remain open.'

There were other improvements to be made, and the key to them, Benbow felt, lay in achieving better communications. He went to his departmental chief and said, 'One trouble is that we so seldom meet our bosses. We want to see you sometimes walking round the shop-floor and talking to the workers.'

The manager responded, 'Yes, we must work together more closely. If we two, you and I, can't do that, we shall never make a go of it here.'



Albert Benbow

Fortnightly 'communication meetings' were set up, with the superintendent of each section sitting down with his workers to discuss any question that arose. 'Quality' might be the subject, or 'production' or 'supplies'. Suggestions, questions, frustrations, complaints *could be settled swiftly*. Every six weeks there was a full meeting of the whole plant with the Managing Director, which would deal with the programme for the period ahead. 'They would tell us what was going on in the company and what was being planned or considered. We felt that the work of the company was our venture.'

Has it made a difference? 'Well,' says Albert Benbow, 'Over the last three years there has been no increase in the price of our product. We have had full employment with maximum wages bonus, and the work-force has gone up to 400 plus 98 staff. Also, we have developed a high-pressure petrol-pump which will soon go into production and which may well find a world market. This year our target is a £17 million turn-over. We're already £490,000 above our half-year target.'

Carburettors and fuel-pumps are small items that have to do with power; they keep the wheels going round. Modernisation and investment are great things which keep industry going. Most essential of all may be what Benbow calls honesty and trust: 'People must know that they're getting an honest dialogue. I would say that nearly all our workers now understand what the company is all about. There must be a belief in people who believe in the company. Communications and consultation on a basis of absolute honesty—that is the key factor.' ■

ACROSS THE DIVIDES IN TYNESIDE

by Tom Jones

WHY LIVE ON TYNESIDE? All my background is associated with South-East England. The North East is cold and windswept. The images of tawdry back lanes and post-industrial squalor persist —this is the home of the artless Andy Capp. Are we not banished to the ultimate of isolation and desolation? What of my roots implanted in London's suburban green belt, nourished through public school, university and a training in business management?

Model

Some of my kind come here and try to lose themselves in church or social work, spearheading protest, desperately attempting to disown their privileged past. Yet for hundreds of thousands this is home, where families grow up, a wonderful place with seashore, open country and trackless uplands within easy reach. The Royal Shakespeare Company makes Newcastle's Theatre Royal its home for six weeks each Spring—every performance sold out. *Tyneside Metro* is a model of integrated urban transport. And the Eldon Square shopping precinct provides a picture of unexpected affluence, its large Marks and Spencer branch the most successful in the land after Oxford Street. For here modern industry thrives in a competitive world, with technology and wages to match. Good pay is to be had in Government corporations and with the local authorities. There is prosperity and comfort for many.

For too many others, unemployed or caught in the so-called poverty trap, life is a struggle. The lure of material wealth on every side does not help. As opportunities diminish, frustration can set in, family relationships crack, human dignity go by the board. Suddenly to lose your job and have to change your whole way of life can be traumatic.

Roman

Many cannot cope. This was brought home to me during our first winter on Tyneside by two instances of children being burnt to death in their homes. The electricity had been cut off and in one case the mother had gone out leaving the children alone with candles. There are unscrupulous money-lenders who will pay the immediate bills for a



Newcastle upon Tyne

E Howard

family and then extort high interest as the debts spiral out of control. Christmas is the worst time, as borrowed money is splashed out on presents. The direst consequences seem to pale beside those moments of sheer delight as children unwrap their presents—a desperate attempt by the parents to forget what is really happening.

For young people with nothing to look forward to, the heartbreak and frustration can be longer term.

Deprived

Tyneside coal was used in Roman times. Later the coal trade enabled Newcastle to become England's third city after London and Bristol. When, during the Civil War, Newcastle was besieged, there were stories of people in the South demolishing parts of their houses for firewood since coal was unobtainable. In time, shipbuilding, heavy engineering, chemicals, armaments, all linked by railways and based on local coal, iron and steel production, provided a magnet for unskilled labourers. They moved away from agriculture, from the poverty of Ireland, and from enforced land enclosures. Sadly, only during the nineteenth century has Tyneside been as active in peacetime as in war, with its demand for ships,

tanks and guns. At other times there was economic depression. But there was also dignity, as the nation saw with the Jarrow March in 1936. It may be the Tynesiders' mixed origins that make them so open, warmhearted and welcoming to outsiders.

Debts

Today, as in other industrial areas of Britain and western Europe, there is no work for a mass of unskilled and semi-skilled labour, mostly concentrated in small areas. Is their only future to be resigned acceptance and dependence on the welfare state?

My own involvement with the North East goes back to two years spent as a trainee manager with British Rail in the mid-Sixties. I was drawn to the Industrial North and to the blunt openheartedness of the people. I wanted to learn about the industrial heritage on which Britain's prosperity had been built.

Also, I had become committed to Moral Re-Armament. This vastly increased my faith in the love and power of God and sorted out complications I had put into life. It took me into the lives of other people and showed me new hope and purpose in a variety of situations and places. Now, back in the

North East, I am conscious that more than ever Britain owes a debt to her great industrial communities.

Can I point to signs of hope?

A housewife is one who has found new hope and purpose. Once terrified to leave her home or admit to her unemployed husband the debts she had run up, she is now open, articulate and clear of debt. Somebody had listened to her in a Church 'drop-in' centre and she was helped by a savings scheme set up by local residents. Life remains hard, yet she can scarcely believe the good fortune of her new-found freedom and the support she has found from new friends.

Dependence?

On one outlying council housing estate reputed to accommodate some of the most socially deprived, including convicted criminals and many single-parent families, a small group of residents including an Anglican priest meets regularly to talk and share their problems. Through the priest they invited myself and another from more prosperous areas to join them. Resentment, demand, alienation on the one hand and the arrogance of superficial knowledge on the other are being overcome.

Recently a Conservative MP met some of the group. He heard of their initiatives and certain realities of their lives. Then he interrupted: 'You make me very humble. Six of you have spoken to me and not one of you has moaned.' Across the social and class divide a relationship of trust has been started where questions can be frankly asked, advice sought, genuine needs expressed and discussed.

New jobs

Here and there individuals and groups seek to bring purpose, activity, even new jobs where there are few to be had. In the heart of Newcastle a dedicated group works to assist small businesses and craftsmen setting up on their own. Over the river in Gateshead an Enterprise Centre run jointly by a management association, the trade unions and the local authority brings together inventors and unemployed craftsmen to develop new ideas. A trained engineer runs a Manpower Services Commission project in Stanley which employs school leavers to make plastic inflatables for swimming pools and play areas. Consett Cooperative

Enterprises, a group of former steel workers, is finding a market for the plywood van-liner kits they make. And one of their number is organising a week-long Consett Festival.

Recently a local sociologist was telling me of his view that the 'South' and the present Government understand little of the needs of the 'North'. I told him of my conviction that bridges need to be built, that the South owes the North a debt, that we belong together, and of certain initiatives along these lines involving people of all parties. 'What, a guilty Tory!' he exclaimed.

I believe it goes beyond that. I make no apology for my Tory background and attitudes, but we badly need to understand what others feel and why, and the hurts that have been inflicted by the arrogance and insensitivity of

people like myself. It is also true that we must not be afraid of saying our own side of the story, voicing our own deeply held convictions or fears. The other person will be helped if they can understand me, just as I need to understand him. It may be a painful process. There is no value, however, in a 'consensus' which avoids facing up to the deeper, and often conflicting issues which being human involves.

My wife and I and our two sons have lived on Tyneside for five and a half years. We do not have financial security, having no salary, yet we are secure in the knowledge that we are in the right place. The generosity of friends and the offer of a retired teacher to share her home have more than met our needs. Whatever else we may do and wherever we may go, we should not wish for home to be anywhere else. ■



Bart Caulker (left), President of the North-East branch of the Standing Conference of African Organisations, talks with Amy Dawkins, a founder of the Black People's Action Group in Croydon, at Tirley Garth.

'I WAS IN INDIA at the time of Mrs Gandhi's assassination, and I want to apologise to my Sikh friends for the pain and suffering inflicted on them,' said Ashish Basu, a design engineer from Calcutta. Dr S Singh Papiha, Chairman of Community Relations in Tyne and Wear, responded as one of the Sikhs present. He said he felt moved and thankful at such a complete apology.

This exchange took place at a seminar attended by 110 people at Tirley Garth, the MRA centre in Cheshire, from June 21-23. They looked at their part in healing Britain's many divisions 'so that we can tackle the future together'. The seminar, entitled 'Beyond conflict to consensus and constructive change', was initiated by Hari Shukla, Senior Community Relations Officer, Tyne

and Wear, and Gursharan Sarang, the Sikh Commissioner on the Commission for Racial Equality.

The ethnic minorities were represented and some police also took part. During a colourful evening of culture and music, delegates enjoyed a Punjabi 'Bhangra' dance, and a Sierra Leonean living in Britain played the harmonica and concertina. Songs were sung by people from Vietnam, Malaysia, Australia and India.

After hearing how forgiveness and new attitudes came between a West Indian and some police, a Chinese and a Tibetan, a British retail businessman and his Jewish suppliers, a participant said, 'We caught a glimpse of what this great bridge of forgiveness can mean for the world, and most of us left determined to build it.' ■

WHAT, THE DEVIL!

by Janet Mace

BESIDE THE FURNACES OF HELL, Stinker and Stonker were awaiting the arrival of their master, the devil. They were his principal henchmen, responsible for the execution of satanic strategy on earth, and had been summoned to report on their work in Great Britain.

'I think we can congratulate ourselves,' said Stinker, 'that we have almost destroyed their national unity. Satisfactory gaps are widening everywhere—between young and old, the north and the south, black and white, men and women.....'

'Not to mention the political parties and labour and management,' purred Stonker. 'I've always said that "divide and rule" is one of His Diabolical's most penetrating pronouncements.'

'Do you think,' said Stinker reflectively, 'that when His Diabolical rules we shall get some leave?' It was one of the most frequent causes of moaning and groaning and teeth-grashing in the Nether Regions that there had been no let-up for centuries in their work of pushing humanity hellwards.

There was a sulphurous stench and the devil stood beside them. 'Did I hear you talking about leave?' he screeched, kicking Stinker with a red-hot toenail.

'Only when you have won, Your Diabolical,' quavered Stinker. 'Only when you are secure on the throne....'

'That may not be for centuries,' snapped the devil, 'so keep your mind on your work. What do you have to report from what they still choose to call the United Kingdom?'

'I was just remarking,' said Stinker, 'that their national unity is *being eroded daily*, in accordance with your instructions. In every field, those who want to hold the country together have got their backs to the wall....'

'Another of your superficial, stupid comments,' snapped the devil. 'You know what it says in the Instruction Manual?'

'"People in the last ditch and/or with their backs to the wall need to be watched carefully,"' mumbled Stinker. "'It is in that position they often seek and receive aid from the Enemy.'"

Premature

'Precisely,' said the devil, 'And don't forget it. I hear there has been satisfaction among the less experienced imps about our victory at the Brussels football match and other recent advances. Their satisfaction is premature. News has reached me of a sense of shame, of men and women looking at the state of society as a whole. I have even heard the dread word "repentance". Nothing will create a feeling of one nation as quickly as a sense of national repentance.'

'But, Your Diabolical,' whined Stonker. 'These sentiments are not widespread.'

'Fool. Every dangerous trend starts with a few people. Have you seen what it says in *The Times*? Look at this. "Liverpool said sorry to the people of Brussels for the Brussels football disaster in a civic service in Liverpool Anglican Cathedral on Saturday..... the congregation

joined in an act of sorrow, an act of penitence and an act of reconciliation."

'From our perspective we can see that they are all responsible for the spirit in the country. But over the years we have induced a satisfactory blindness to this fact. Blaming other people and groups has increased. But this,' he spat at the newspaper clipping in his hand, 'this shows a sense of national responsibility. And it must be stopped. An act of penitence my flaming foot. Its disgraceful. And look at this. A headline in the Italian paper *Tutto Sport*: "Liverpool, we forgive you". Where's it going to end?'

Stinker and Stonker trembled. 'We're working as hard as we can,' mumbled Stinker self-pityingly.

Strategy

The devil roared on. 'My strategy is twofold. Turn them from the Enemy and from the ancient laws which bring order into their affairs. Ultimately that strategy will ensure total withering of care—ugh, loathsome word,' and he groaned horribly, 'and total blindness to their national destiny. The idea of one nation will be finished for ever. What a day that will be in the annals of hell! But the Adversary with that blasted light which surrounds Him could illumine the connection between the way they live individually and the difficulties they bemoan in national life. If this was followed by repentance and a decision to obey the Adversary, then all Heaven would be let loose. There is no time to be lost.'

The heat of the furnace was making Stonker sleepy. He closed his eyes for a moment. Savagely, the devil slapped his face. 'What is the first step in repentance,' he screamed. 'You will find it in the *Satanic Guide to Temptation*, page 634.'

'Of course, Your Diabolical,' whined Stonker. 'I've read it a million times. "The first step in repentance is a sense of sin followed by a feeling of guilt."'

Confusion

'I've sown some useful confusion there,' said the devil. 'Many of their intellectuals assure them that there is no such thing as sin and that a sense of guilt is bad for them. Remind all your battalions of this. Tell them to redouble their efforts in every field. A little bit of dishonesty here, bitterness and a sneer of jealousy there, lust and cruelty and indifference whenever possible. Our major victories spring from a million minor victories. But similarly, a million small victories for Him,' the satanic features were convulsed with rage (as they always were when he spoke of the Adversary) 'a million temptations resisted, a million sins repented, will bring major victory for Him.'

'No struggle is too hard to head them off from repentance. Repentance produces a 180 degree change of direction. They turn from me and look at the Adversary. They feel his love and forgiveness and then he shows them the way he wants them to go. Years of work can be destroyed in an instant.'

'Suppose Liverpool led the way in repentance....'
'Oh no, Your Diabolical, that could never happen.' Stinker trembled at the thought.

'It is horrible to contemplate. But it could happen. Already there has been this ill-conceived delegation to



Turin. The name of Liverpool could echo round the earth as a city where men and women made a fresh start, where a sense of national destiny was reborn and where our battalions were routed.'

He looked at his subordinates with scorn and loathing. 'Go on,' he said. 'Get back to it. Incompetent as you are, you're all I've got.'

Without a word, Stinker and Stonker turned and slunk away, up the slippery slope to their battle stations on earth. ■

INDIA—GROUNDS FOR NEW HOPE

by Suresh Khatri

FOR 20 MINUTES THE GRACIOUS lounges of Asia Plateau, the MRA centre in Panchgani, came alive with silence as nearly 120 people sat reflecting. The search was for 'how to create new hope for India?'—the theme of a conference from May 17-26.

From such sessions called 'No more talking' several people made fresh beginnings that could lead to constructive action. Others shared significant experiences from the past few months.

A vice-president in one of India's top ten industrial houses, expressed a new insight. 'When the Sikhs were massacred upon Mrs Gandhi's assassination,' he said, 'I felt they deserved what they got. Here I have seen how shameful that was on my part...I should not just be a critical observer of MRA any more but must seek to play my part.' After the monsoons he is starting three-day programmes for higher management at Panchgani on 'The relevance of moral values to industry'.

A man working in a Pune factory which exports scooters world-wide came with his wife, son and daughter. A month earlier the factory had sent him to a seminar for industry at Panchgani. He had faced his callousness towards his 12-year-old daughter. On the day she was born he had been fired from his job in Bombay. Blaming her for bringing bad luck he had treated her cruelly ever since. She was so fearful that she hardly ever addressed the father directly. However, on returning from Panchgani, the first person he called out for was the daughter, enquiring after her in an affectionate manner which surprised her.

A recently retired Parsi building contractor said, 'All my life I had thought making money and hard work were everything but I see now that I had forgotten values and people. Giving charity and helping the odd person out was all I did. God wants my whole life not just some good works.'

His gynaecologist wife spoke movingly of the need she felt 'to treat one particular person very differently'.

This couple have already revisited Panchgani to help

run an industrial seminar and give their new found convictions and experiences. Their driver, Abdullah, a grey-bearded Hyderabad Muslim steeped in Sufi-ism, though not a participant in the May conference meetings, said, 'I see something noble and deep in action here. If I am allowed I should like to add my straw-weight of service whenever called for.' He was a full participant in the June seminar—paid for by his employer.

An army engineer said that the conference had helped him shed his misconceptions about one particular community of India. 'Here I am learning,' he said, 'of their beliefs and good points.'

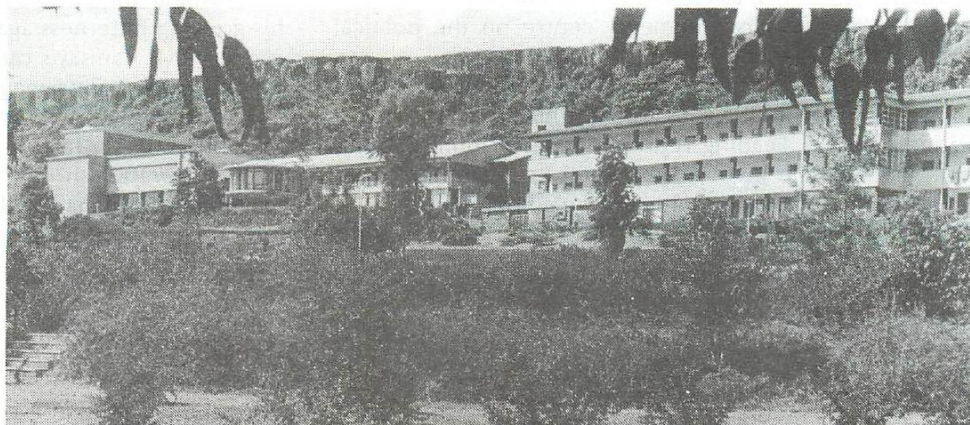
Hindus and Sikhs from Jamshedpur spoke of their continuing work to build amity between their two communities. Soon after the storming of the *Golden Temple* at Amritsar, Punjab, a multi-religious group of 24 had sent a letter to Eastern India's newspapers, expressing their resolve to help answer Hindu-Sikh divisions. In the areas where this group were active no Sikhs had to seek refuge in *gurdwaras* when Mrs Gandhi was killed. They could remain safe in their homes.

Two months ago 15 of this group went to Bokaro, also in Bihar, where after Delhi the worst killings of Sikhs had occurred. Their aim was 'to listen to the Sikhs and to feel what they went through'. Welcomed by the area Superintendent of Police they were put up in the *gurdwaras*. There, eight widows from the November carnage had been given shelter. Two of them, a mother- and daughter-in-law, were widowed in one night, having only one 12-year-old male survivor in the family. At the end of the group's 20-hour visit the widows thanked them saying, 'This is the first time somebody has come and talked to us. Otherwise they just talk with the *Gurdwara* Committee and go away.' At the request of the leaders of the Bokaro Sikhs the Jamshedpur group are soon making a longer visit.

A teenager from an affluent Bombay family said, 'Last year I came to Panchgani. At home one day I shouted at a servant. Then I thought about it and really felt sorry when I realised he too was a human being. I went and apologised to him.'

Another Bombay student who was concerned about how to find reconciliation in 'the Sri Lanka family' felt he should start by apologising for estrangement from certain close relatives. He posted two 'ego-crushing' letters that day.

At a prayer meeting for Sri Lanka and other trouble spots on the Indian sub-continent, writer and journalist Rajmohan Gandhi concluded, 'A thought of hate is a bullet of hate. We may not actually pull the trigger but we are then equally guilty.' ■



Asia Plateau, Panchgani

B Cummock

Towards unity

by Julie Tan, Malaysia

GROWING UP IN A MULTIRACIAL SOCIETY is like growing up in a large family. I did both. We come to accept that there are certain characteristics and peculiarities attached to that group or person. We never bluntly call it prejudice or racism. After all, we mix freely with them, don't we?

I went abroad to study, intending to settle. It took the courage of a Malaysian Indian girl who confronted me with 'I have always hated the Chinese because I know they look down on us' to clarify my feelings. My first reaction was, 'I have never looked down on your people. I have many Indian friends.'

But looking honestly at my attitude I knew that I had grouped Indians under 'poor, not so intelligent as the Chinese'. Then I looked at my attitude to the majority race, the Malays. They have the political power but we, the Chinese, are more hardworking and have the money. I apologised to the Indian girl and later to a Malay. He said, 'I never thought I could ever have such an honest conversation with a Chinese.'

This experience opened my heart to returning to Malaysia and living that she becomes the nation God means her to be. For a multiracial society to become united there is a need to be honest about prejudices, attitudes and hurts. Hand in hand with that we need an appreciation and respect for what we can learn from the other. Then together we need to see what we can contribute to make 'one world, one family' a reality. ■

NEWSBRIEF

CARINTHIA IS A SOUTHERN PROVINCE of Austria and shares a common border with Yugoslavia. The majority of its inhabitants is German speaking, but a minority speaks Slovene. A number of towns and villages are mixed. There are tensions between the two peoples. This has its roots in events of the past, especially around the time of the Second World War. Also, there are differences of mentality between the two. The Slovenes, although Austrian citizens, feel discriminated against by the German population. Now a debate is going on as to whether schools in mixed areas should be bilingual. The German speaking population are strongly against this, as children would have to learn both languages. Other disagreements centre on the political rights of the Slovene minority.

'Hope in a World of Tension' was the theme of a weekend conference in April in Tainach, Carinthia. It took place in a Catholic centre. Leading representatives of both peoples took part. People involved in Moral Re-Armament from different parts of Austria initiated the gathering.

Among the participants were MPs, the President and

Vice-President of the local Parliament and other German speaking leaders. The Chairman and Secretary of the Catholic orientated 'Council of Slovenes', as well as a number of other Slovene personalities, were also present.

In discussions during the weekend differences of opinion were shared in an open and honest way. People on both sides seemed to agree that a change of attitude was the indispensable next step towards better understanding. The headmaster of a Slovene high school admitted that the Slovene press was often tendentious. His honesty made an impression on the representatives of the German speaking population.

Many of the participants expressed the wish to meet again and seek a solution to this minority conflict. ■



FIFTY YEARS AGO Blyth Ramsay (right) was working in a Greenock shipyard. On a recent visit to Nigeria he was made a chief. He was given the title of Dike I of Ihitaoha Uratta at a ceremony in May by Eze Oha I of Ihitaoha Uratta, Eze Onu Egunwoke (centre). Also shown is Linus Akunna, Commissioner of Information for Imo State.

In a statement to the press, Eze Onu Egunwoke, a former trade union leader himself, explained, 'In 1955 I met Mr Blyth Ramsay under the auspices of Moral Re-Armament. He was a humble shipyard worker in Scotland and came out with a team of Moral Re-Armament and talked me into accepting the principles of Moral Re-Armament that believes in absolute honesty, absolute purity, absolute unselfishness and absolute love.' Through MRA, he went on, he had lost his growing bitterness against the imperial power. He also spoke of Mr Ramsay's care for him on his visits to Britain.

The Nigerian Statesman quoted Chief Egunwoke: 'We must build bridges across the world; we must show gratitude to our friends be they white, red or green, who have helped us by sincere and honest advice and who are opposed to exploitation and man's inhumanity to man.... What matters now is not colour but character.' ■

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Published fortnightly for Moral Re-Armament by The Good Road Ltd, 12 Palace Street, London SW1E 5JF, England. Printed by T W Pe gg and Sons Ltd. Articles may be reproduced without reference to the editor, acknowledgement welcomed. Price 25p. 10 copies £2 10p us postage. Special rates for pre-publication bulk orders. **Annual subscriptions: British Isles** £9.00 (2 copies of each issue £12.50); UK pensioners and students £7.00 (2 copies £10.50); **All other countries** airmail £13.00. Regional offices and rates: **Australia** New World News, PO Box 1078J, GPO Melbourne, Vic 3001 \$25.00; **Canada** Moral Re-Armament, 387 chemin de la Cote Ste Catherine, Montreal, Quebec H2V 2B5 \$20.00; **New Zealand** New World News, CPO Box 1834, Wellington \$36.00; **South Africa** Moral Re-Armament, PO Box 10144, Johannesburg, 2000 R20.00; **USA** Moral Re-Armament Inc, 1030 Fifteenth Street NW, Suite 908, Washington DC 20005 \$20.00. **Business:** Tirley Garth, Tarporley, Cheshire CW6 0LZ. Tel: 082 93 2305; **Editorial:** 12 Palace Street, London SW1E 5JF. Tel: 01-828 6591