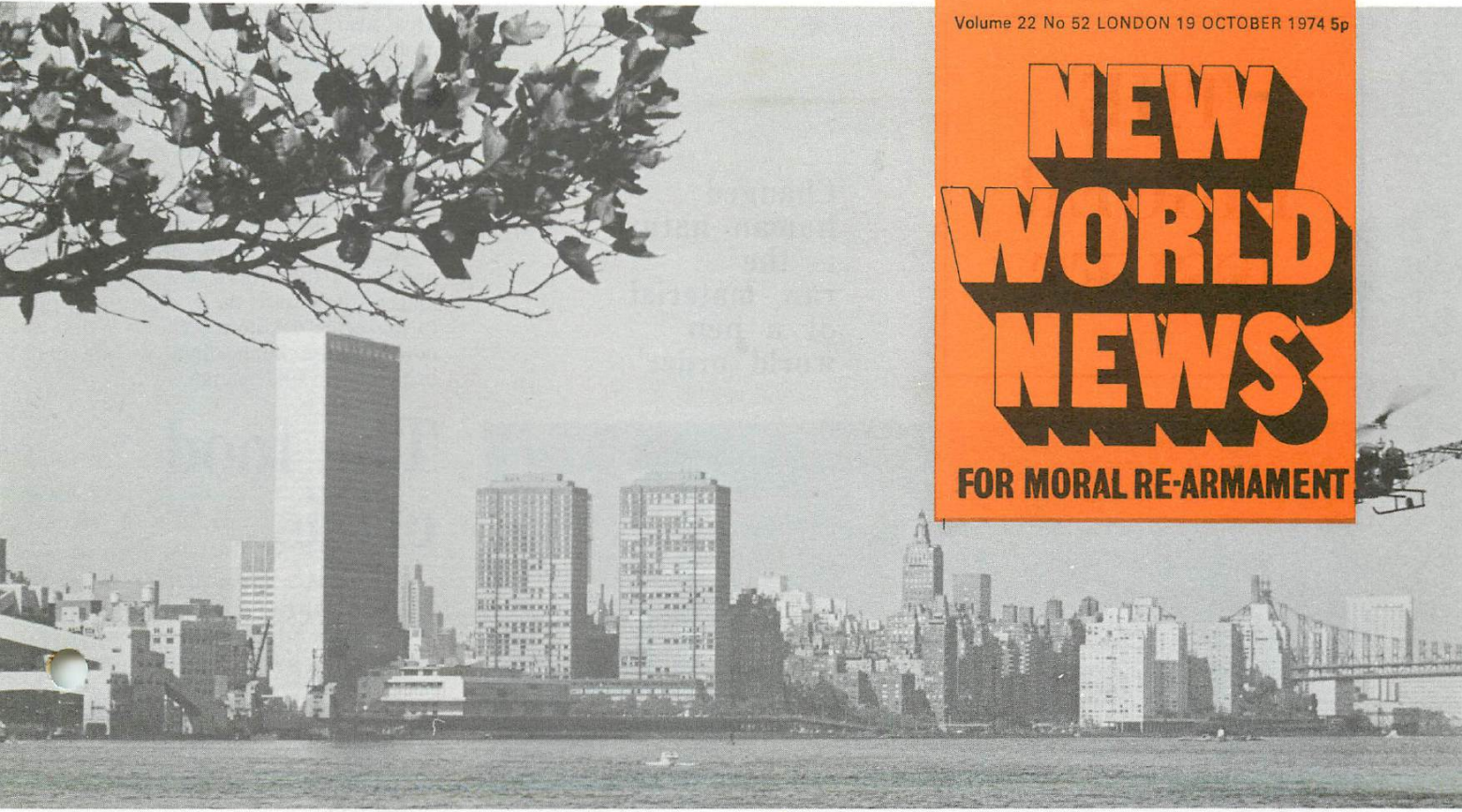


NEW WORLD NEWS

FOR MORAL RE-ARMAMENT



(above left) The United Nations in New York

Photo: United Nations

The Observer reported recently on the conflicting views held by economists about the solution to the present crisis. It said that many of them now 'look for a solution in the attitudes of men rather than the laws of economics'.

A senior United Nations delegate, who was working this summer on international economic affairs in Geneva, believes that diplomats are being forced to the same conclusion. Rising prices may be for some of us in Western countries an inconvenience, he says, but in thirty countries they are already a question of life or death. 'Unless you deal with greed in people, you are never going to get a real answer to these problems.'

We reproduce in full a speech he made at the MRA World Assembly in Caux, Switzerland.

THE BIGGER ISSUES

as seen
by a diplomat
at the UN

MY PERSONAL CONVICTION is that historians will record the period from 1945 to 1973 as one period of history which is finished, and they will record that another started in 1974. A Venezuelan statesman, Perez Guerrero, said in Geneva that the next eighteen months would be the most critical period in the last thirty years.

What have been the most significant events in the last twelve months? There is increasing inflation; the petrol crisis; political upheavals and elections (every government in the Common Market has changed); changes in the Middle East; nine hundred million people watched on TV the World Cup, probably the biggest audience ever known in history; major famine - especially in Central Africa; the possibility of normalcy growing in South Asia; the Indian nuclear explosion; some strange new developments in China where the walls of the cities are again full of posters criticizing the local leadership; Watergate in the United States.

That makes clear that these last twelve months have been a period of exceptional change of all kinds. For us in the United Nations it has meant a great deal of work in emergency conferences, with meetings going on till two in the morning. Even though there have been some signs of what is called 'slackening of tension' in some areas it is clear there has been deepening tension and crises in other respects. From my experience in the economic sphere, a new chapter has opened because of crises in three fields: the fuel crisis, the food crisis and the financial crisis.

THE BIGGER ISSUES

'Changed human nature is the raw material of a new world order'



'Western assumptions about oil have been undercut'

Photo: USIS

The fuel crisis

Oil prices rose suddenly and dramatically during this period by four hundred per cent. Why is that so serious? Because energy is more fundamental than anything else in keeping modern society going. When the price of petrol goes up, the repercussions are felt in every walk of life. The balance of payments of countries have been drastically affected. The price of air travel has gone up. The SS France is going off the seas. The plastics industry is in serious difficulty because plastics are by-products of petroleum. The pharmaceutical industry has been affected. The fertiliser industry too. And we have even seen a thing that would have seemed impossible two or three years ago – petrol rationing in the United States of America.

This fuel crisis has especially affected the industrial, developed societies of the West. They suddenly woke up and began to ask: who is in control? Why has this happened? Are the great powers in control of the situation? What about these great multinational corporations that everyone says are so powerful? Are they, in fact, so powerful in the petroleum industry, or is someone else in control? This has been a great shock to the

governments of the world. Three truths emerge from the crisis:

1. It showed that a small group of nations could withhold energy – petroleum energy – from the rest of the world for non-economic reasons. This undercuts the assumption on which the Western countries have operated for generations. They assumed that if you needed more petrol, you simply offered a small increase in price to the oil-producing countries, or you played one off against the other. Suddenly they found that oil-producing countries had united and had said: 'We are not interested in an increase in price. We are interested in political factors.'

This is where the war with Israel became so relevant. Certain countries were immediately cut off as the Arabs' clients. They said, 'We will not allow our petrol to go to these countries.' It brought a big change in the thinking of governments.

2. Suddenly people began to realise that if this happened with oil, perhaps it could happen with other raw materials too. The copper producers might get together and make their conditions before selling copper. The bauxite producers might do the same. Tin – and so on. These are the essentials for the modern society. Even the US, for example, is dependent on getting from abroad twenty-two out of seventy-four essential commodities. And the US is in a far better position than any other country.

This also poses a new dimension of problems for governments.

3. The Western governments began to realise that these new countries who possess the raw materials – oil, bauxite, copper, tin – had realised that they had power, something they never realised before. And having once tasted power, they began to say: 'From now on we are going to be part of the decision-making process in the world. We will not any longer allow just these older countries to make the decisions.' This is a shift in power whose implications we are only beginning to understand.

The food crisis

The world reserves of food today are at their lowest point for twenty-five years. In 1961 there were ninety-five days' reserve supply in case there was a world emergency. Today there is only twenty-seven days' reserve. Why has there been a dramatic change in the food supplies available in the world? What are the reasons that have suddenly made food become a scarce commodity – maybe not in Switzerland, but certainly in many countries? Mr Macnamara, the head of the World Bank, has said that there are eight hundred million people who do not have the means to buy enough food to prevent them from going hungry to bed.

The prices of food have risen so high that in certain cases it has not been saleable. This is a fact one must remember. The Western countries are making complaints about the oil prices having gone up four hundred per cent, but the oil producers say: 'Yes, but what about wheat? It has gone up over three hundred per cent. Don't forget that.'

What are the reasons for these food shortages? There are at least seven. First, there is the population explosion in the world. Second, there have been severe droughts, especially in Africa. The



'Wheat prices up over 300 per cent'



'Green Revolution threatened by price of fertilisers'

Photo: UNICEF

drought south of the Sahara, stretching all the way from Ethiopia through to West Africa, has been so severe that some experts wonder if the climate in that region has permanently changed. Third, there is a depletion of habitual food sources, notably of fish. From 1950 to 1968 the world fish catch increased steadily. Since then it has begun to decrease, suggesting that some seas have been over-fished. Two years ago the anchovies disappeared off the coast of Peru and Chile. This made soya bean prices rocket as anchovies and soya beans have been the main constituents of animal protein. Mercifully, this year the anchovies have reappeared. Fourth, there has been a failure, for various reasons, of Third World countries to increase their agricultural production as scheduled.

Fifth, there has been wastage of food, both in developed and developing countries. In the United States, for example, every four persons consume as much grain in their liquor each year as would feed one person in the developing world for a year. In the developing countries, up to thirty per cent of food supplies are wasted through bad storage as a result of damp, mice, etc. Another interesting figure with a direct bearing on food prices is that it has been discovered that in North America seventy per cent of the food-price occurs beyond the farm gate - transport, packaging, advertising, etc.



Photo: USIS

A sixth factor in accounting for the food crisis is the changed policy of the United States. Last year the US announced that she was no longer ready to go on being the food-reserve store for the world and she began to sell off large stocks - notably to the Soviet Union - to help her balance of payments.

A final factor has been the fact that the miracle hybrid grains developed by the Americans, which have produced the Green Revolution in southern Asia, only respond effectively to synthetic fertilisers, and synthetic fertilisers are produced as a by-product of the petro-chemical industry. Suddenly, with the dramatic rise in oil, the whole Green Revolution has been put in jeopardy.

The financial crisis

A senior European banker wrote me saying that the world financial situation is far more serious than most people realise. The concern is that these enormous financial surpluses that are being accumulated in the oil-producing countries will get so big that within a few years more than half of the total wealth of the whole world will lie in the hands of twelve oil-producing countries plus the USA.

If this is allowed to happen, of course the whole system of international trade and finance would stop. The financial experts are thinking with great anxiety how to restore the financial balance in the world. Confidence in the international monetary system has already been shaken. When confidence gets shaken, various things come into the open, eg: the speculation that has been going on. In the news from Germany and the US we have seen that banks that were thought to be completely sound have had to close down their operations. At this moment none of the experts are agreed on the full answer. The oil countries, of course, will want to use their surpluses. But how will they use them? This is the question that has still to be answered.

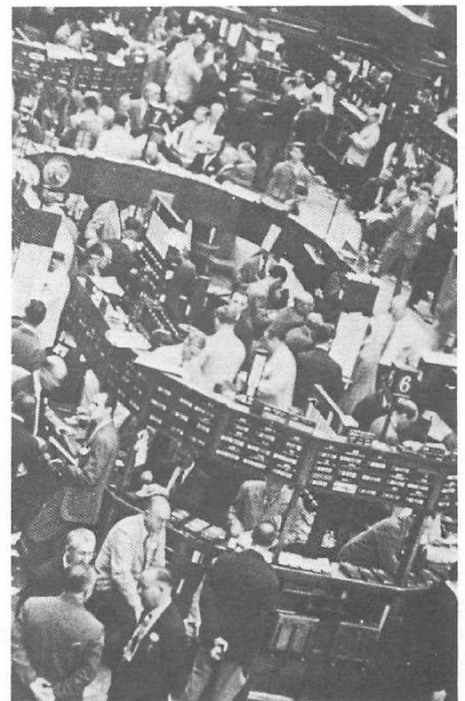
These three groups of crises came together and caused the special session of

the UN General Assembly in April. It was called at the proposal of President Boumediene of Algeria. Neither the US nor the Soviet Union wanted it; but they had to accept it because the Third World decided that it was necessary. This is also an interesting indication of a shift of power in the world.

At that special assembly we worked very hard; we did not have enough time to produce concrete answers for all these problems. We did produce two documents: one was a Declaration on a new economic order, and the other was a Programme of Action leading towards that new economic order. The final section of that Programme of Action was called the Special Programme, and this applies to about thirty countries which are almost at the point of bankruptcy, because they have no oil of their own; no raw materials like wheat that they can sell to get the money to buy the oil; inadequate food supplies of their own; inadequate fertiliser supplies; and they are not credit-worthy. They are in a desperate financial position.

You may feel that in your country the price of this or that item has gone up; but that is just an inconvenience compared with what is happening in these thirty countries where they are at a stage of life or death. This is the most urgent task the UN is facing; but the UN is active in every one of these fields I have been discussing.

For example, there was a special World Population Conference held in August in Bucharest to discuss the population explosion. In Rome in November there will be a special World Food Conference. In September there was a Monetary Conference of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and next year there is to be another



'How can the world's financial balance be restored?' Photo: USIS

THE BIGGER ISSUES

special session of the General Assembly.

So at the technical level more brainpower and more experts have been put to work on these problems than ever before in history. I am grateful for that, and in many fields progress has been made. The head of the World Health Organisation believes that in the next eighteen months the last case of smallpox in the whole world will occur. Their anti-smallpox campaign has been so successful.

Yet while one can be grateful for all the technical things the UN are doing, all my colleagues in the UN from the Secretary-General down are deeply worried. They have a feeling that the pace of events is going so fast they do not know how to control them. They talk about a new world order. And that has brought me in my work in the United Nations back time and time again to the truths that I have learned through Moral Re-Armament and from Frank Buchman, its founder.

Creating the willingness

There is one sentence in a speech of Frank Buchman's that I wish could be put up in every committee room in the United Nations. It is this: 'Changed human nature is the raw material of a new world order.' You can make all the economic, technical and scientific plans you want, but in the last resort without a change in human nature you will not re-direct the course of history. It is one thing to call a conference to discuss a problem; but it is another thing altogether to produce the willpower in nations to accept the consequences of the problem and the willingness to change. This is the crux: how to create that willingness to change?

This is precisely where MRA fits into the perspective I have been describing, because MRA is a world revolution, operating in every dimension—economic, social, political—and aiming at change in all these dimensions, but based on personal change. And that is why I feel this conference in Caux has its importance in the same echelon as these other emergency conferences of the UN that

have been called this year, and why I feel it is a privilege to take part.

What do we do about truth when we see it? You know, sometimes at a conference like this, over a meal table, in a meeting or in the theatre, you get a new flash of truth. What can we do about truth when we see it? It seems to me there are three things we can do. We

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can try and suppress it, put our heel on it, like putting out a cigarette. And when truth was uncomfortable, I have often done that. Or, secondly, we can talk about it. When I was at university, we used to talk till the small hours of the morning about truth. Or, thirdly, we can act on it. And that is what Moral Re-Armament is about. It is about acting on new truth as we see it.

When I met MRA, I was a student and I had great theories, but it was Moral Re-Armament that showed me how to unite theory and practice. I discovered how, when I was honest, it opened up new illumination on the way ahead for myself and on what I felt about the world.

Dr Buchman said, 'MRA takes the needs of nations and answers them with men.' It works in an added dimension. It is not an alternative to any of the activities of the UN. It is the supplement that makes the other things effective. Because the truth is that behind all these problems—fuel, food, finance—there are moral problems. This has been very clear in relation to our discussion on the food problem in the world. Greed in people disrupts the food supplies of the world. Unless you deal with greed in people, you are never going to get a real answer to these kind of problems.

Truth will return

A few years ago a senior banker in New Delhi said that he calculated that fifty per cent of the foreign aid that was going into India was being wasted because of corruption. The UN has found no answer to corruption. It has got a Development Programme that is pumping millions of dollars out all over the world; and this is necessary. But without an answer to corruption, you will never get effective results. This is the point where MRA meshes with UN activities.

Solzhenitsyn issued a statement, just at the darkest time before he was thrown out of the Soviet Union. In it he said three things. He said something about his own country. Despite his bitter experience, he said this: 'I have never doubted that truth will be returned to the people. I believe in our repentance, in our spiritual cleansing, in our national renaissance.' How many of us are willing to say that about our countries and to take the risks that Solzhenitsyn has taken to make that happen for his country?

The second thing he said was: 'I have said of myself worse things than all the accusations they can make against me.' This was written at the time when the Soviet authorities were trying to smear him. I find that extremely interesting. Because he is honest, he is a free man. Think of that compared to the situation that developed over Watergate in Washington. Then he said a third thing: 'Support seeps through' even into the Soviet Union. The man who changed Solzhenitsyn's life when they were in prison together is also now out of the Soviet Union. When he had his first contact with MRA in London and saw the world outreach of what was happening, he said, 'This is the answer—but you must make it known.' That is part of our purpose in being here.

Here is the question I leave with you. If, as the Venezuelan statesman said, these next eighteen months are going to be the most critical over thirty years, what should I do with my life during that period?