

"Forgotten Factor" Play Impresses All Types: For Pretoria Next

(Contributed)

THE STAR

"THE FORGOTTEN FACTOR," the industrial drama of Moral Re-Armament, finished its first run in Johannesburg at the Library Theatre on Saturday. It has played to full houses representing a cross-section of leadership from South African industry, commerce and labour. Every night during the week's run senior executives from the mining industry and heads of businesses were present, as well as officials of the trade unions, university professors and students.

The play is touring the Union under the patronage of the Governor-General and Mrs. van Zyl and at the invitation of a representative National Committee. It was officially welcomed to Johannesburg by the Mayor, with a reception after the first night's performance.

The purpose of "The Forgotten Factor" is more than merely to entertain; it is avowedly designed as a democratic weapon in the war of ideologies. Each night at the end of the last scene one of the cast spoke to the audience.

"This play has a fourth act," he said, "and that next act is yours."

After the curtain fell the theatre was filled till midnight with groups discussing with the cast this "fourth act," and the application of the message of the play to the country.

Mine Dispute

This was vividly illustrated on Friday night in the case of a labour organiser who had been in conflict with the underground manager of the mine where he worked. After the play he turned to his wife and said that he was going to carry out the idea of the play by putting things right with the underground manager next time they met. His wife said, "There he is! Why not do it now?" The labour leader walked across the theatre and the two men shook hands to mark the beginning of a new relationship.

In the same spirit the head of an engineering firm met the leader of the union with which his company deals and immediately invited him to come to his home for a meal.

A well-known Communist came to the play. Afterwards he commented: "If moral re-armament were applied, then we wouldn't need the class war."

A senior member of the Chamber of Mines said: "This play has come at exactly the right moment. It shows us the answer to the problems we are facing."

Labour Leader

The chairman of a Transvaal labour union said: "For years I have tried to express an idea like this. Sometimes I've been too afraid, and sometimes I haven't known how to. But this is it. You put it clearly. God must be brought into industrial disputes."

But while the play has an industrial setting, its appeal "is

as universal as human nature," as one of the cast put it. It conveys an underlying philosophy of sound homes, teamwork in industry and unity in and between nations.

A factory worker who had resigned from his trade union decided to rejoin it to fight for the right ideas. A student who had been considering Fascism or Communism as the answer to South Africa's problems said: "Here is the right road," and cancelled a week-end trip in order to see more of the cast.

Subject of Sermon

The Rev. J. B. Webb saw the play and preached on "The Forgotten Factor" in the Central Hall last night. In a message to the cast, he stated:—

"'The Forgotten Factor' has a very distinct challenge and each one of us must apply it. It shows clearly the necessity for living on a basis of sharing, both materially and spiritually."

One effect of the play has been on the homes of those who saw it. At least two couples on the verge of divorce are known to have been re-united.

Among a number of representatives from the theatre who saw "The Forgotten Factor" was Miss Norah Taylor. She wrote to the cast: "Words cannot describe the pleasure your production afforded me. You are going to do incalculable good wherever you go, and your play is an artistic triumph."

Eleven Casts

The South African company with "The Forgotten Factor" is one of 11 casts presenting this play all over the world. During the Johannesburg run Dr. Otto Koch, Under-Secretary for Education in North-Rhine Westphalia, introduced the play. He was in this country to work with moral re-armament, representing his Government and flew back to Germany after the last performance of the play here.

Throughout the past week requests have come from all over the Reef for further presentations in many other areas. The play moves next to Pretoria where it opens its run in the Opera House on Monday, June 6.

In response to the demand that a wider public should be able to see it in Johannesburg itself, the Council of the University has made the Great Hall available for a further run in the city shortly.