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## TRADE UNIONISTS JUMP THE CHASM

TRADE UNIONISTS FROM A WIDE VARIETY OF BRITAIN'S INDUSTRIES told earlier this month of their work to create the attitudes in industry that will answer chaos. They were speaking to 500 people at the Westminster Theatre, London.

'It's not so important which men control industry as which ideas control the men,' said Bert Allen, a Branch Secretary of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers. 'Many people are in a fog. It is said that people in a fog toot the loudest!'

He and others have decided to speak out on what they see as the real issues in industry. They are doing this through a 50-page booklet, *Britain Works—OK*, which was launched at the meeting.

'This is a book about people who care for Britain,' said Mr Allen, who is a former President of the Final Appeals Court of his union. 'Many people say, "Why doesn't someone do something?" We in this book are people that have done something—and are doing so. My 34 years as a Convenor of Shop-stewards has taught me that we must have trust in industry if we are not to have chaos in this country. To climb over that great chasm of trust you do not have to have a brilliant mind, but you do have to have a committed heart.'

'*Britain Works—OK*' was into its second edition within a week of publication. Here **JOE HODGSON**, a friend of many British and international trade union leaders, writes about the book:

IT IS RARE that the peoples of these islands agree on anything, but we have come close to agreeing that we face catastrophe.

The problem is ice—the ice of winter, the icy grip of fear and the icy paralysis of crisis.

Crisis curdles the blood or makes it boil depending on whether you are a victim or whether you are accused of causing it. There must have been some interesting temperature changes in the House of Commons during last week.

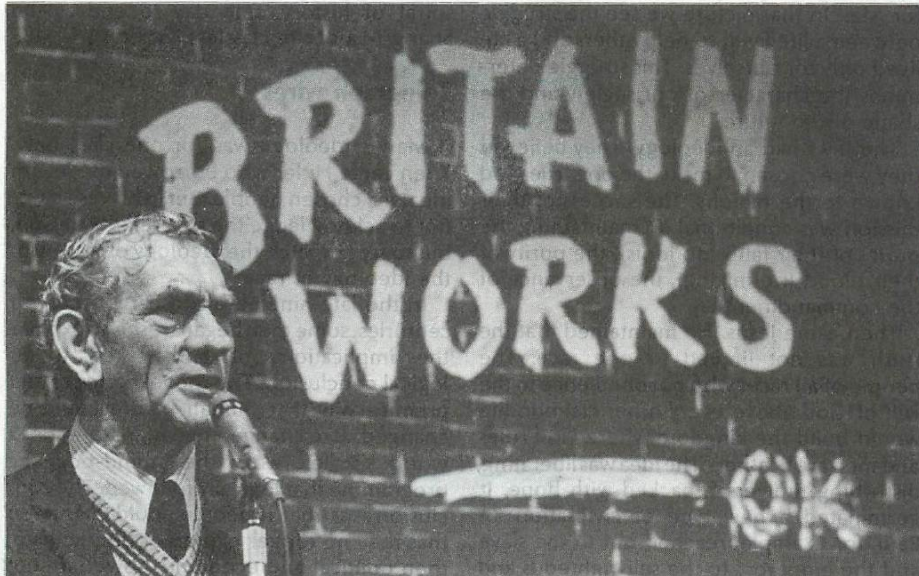
But in the other House the Lords took time to debate UFOs (unidentified flying objects). It brought to memory a more serious debate in that House 40 years ago,

when the then Lord Salisbury spoke about an unidentified factor of his day—or unidentified by far too many. 'The cause of the world's state is not economic,' he said. 'The causes are moral.... Ideas of economic adjustment are too small to touch the centre of the evil.'

The crisis we are in today is moral. Prolonged gazing at our own demands has blinded us to this. Not seeing the real cause of the emergency makes it far more dangerous.

It is insane to assume naively that someone else will sort it out. We are part of its

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D Channer

# NEW WORLD NEWS

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## And are filmed

THE LAUNCHING of the new booklet continues a campaign which began with the release of the documentary film, *Britain Works—OK* in the autumn. The film features the men and women who speak at greater length in the booklet, and has already been in use in many parts of Britain.

The Principal of the Luton Industrial College, Rev Bill Gowland, recommended the film for use in training: 'The approach is right as well as the technical side. And then there is the extra plus—the moral content, the atmosphere which comes from men who believe in the Holy Spirit. There is a quality in the film which has to do with Christ. It has credibility. It has reality.' He proposes to use the film for his courses.

In Bristol two secondary schools have used the film with their sixth-forms, while on the South coast one firm will use it in their apprentices' training course.

Fred Austin, a life member of Irlam Trades Council and for over 20 years shop-steward in the petro-chemical industry, said of the film that the question of 'I am responsible' must be made a national issue. 'The film is sharp and clear. This is what the working man understands. This is his environment.'

His wife added, 'I would love to see the film on television. It is what we people feel.'

Twenty shop-stewards of the National Health Service saw the film as part of a two-day training course and were followed by 30 nursing officers who saw a further screening. One commented, 'This film asked us, "Will our Health Service be run by hatred and bitterness, or by love?"'

After a showing in a factory, a trade union leader said, 'Honesty is the thing that comes across most straightly. It would transform negotiations if both sides knew the others were really being honest.'

The film has been dubbed in Hindi and Dutch. The Hindi version will be used in industrial seminars in India. **GENIS IBOT**

**Jack Carroll, former Chairman of the Transport and General Workers' Union of Bristol Docks, at the launching of 'Britain Works—OK': 'If there's a dock official, docker or employer that should see this film, it doesn't matter if it's North, South, East or West—I'm prepared to go.'**



BRITAIN  
WORKS

## FROM THE BOOK

**JOCK GILMOUR, car industry shop-steward:** I AM A DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST, and I believe in change.

There are wreckers, of course. People who have been planted among us to cause disruption. But it is the way we deal with our problems that matters—how we consult with one another and with our management, how we get the best for the people we represent. It's this that prevents the troublemaker from getting away with his bad day's work.

**JOHN VICKERS, Chairman and Managing Director of an old established Yorkshire firm:**

IT IS AMAZING that many people in authority do not seem to understand how people feel. The feeling of being slighted, offended, not consulted, happens to be the main reason for some very costly industrial disputes.

## The oxygen Britain needs

by Paul Campbell

HITLER, MUSSOLINI and Stalin distorted the meaning of the word 'ideology' for millions. The free nations suffered a grievous loss as a result. Because of those men, the word conjures up nightmares of brain-washing and regimentation of thought, of hammering on the door in the middle of the night and the ruthless violation of human dignity.

Therefore we surrender the power of ideology to the tyrants. That is a pity. For ideology is shorthand for the ideas by which we live.

Just as everyone has blood coursing through his body, everyone has an ideology. The man who says, 'I have no ideology' reveals his ideology by those words. You know immediately that the content of his life is limited to his self-centred perspectives and ambitions.

Because dictators have harnessed ideology to foul purposes and methods, people today are allergic to any concept which could channel the energies of the nation. We seem more and more to live by the idea that safety lies in being centred on no interest other than self. What we feel, not what we think, gets priority. If you feel good, all is well, runs the thesis. Books, lectures, seminars which

**ALBERT INGRAM, 33 years in the car industry:**

IS A FEW MORE QUID in the wage packet really always the most important thing? Or is it the quality of life spent in the factory? We are not fighting just an economic battle, it is a battle for our whole way of life.

We should provide adventure at work. We should provide an opportunity for a man to express himself.

**JOHN MACKENZIE, Clydeside shipyard worker:**

ONE of the 'couldn't-care-less' brigade, that was me. I belonged to the Boilermakers' Society. But I simply used the Society and did nothing for it.

I found that a new attitude meant seeing how to end demarcation disputes instead of encouraging them to keep going. Demarcation disputes used to be one of the death wishes in British shipbuilding. It's a thing of the past now with us on the Lower Clyde.

massage the ego are in vogue. But millions on this planet have good cause not to feel good.

In one of His talks Christ draws a picture of mankind standing before the Great Judge. They are being sorted out. To His right go those who came to His help when He was needy, hungry, homeless, sick and lonely, a stranger. To the left and into oblivion go those who withheld their aid. When they ask, 'When were You hungry, in prison, homeless and we failed to help You?', He replies, 'Your failure to do it for the least of these My brothers means you failed to do it for Me.' In that picture we see the struggle between a life lived to help others and a life lived only for ourselves. This struggle determines the character of our society and the shape of the future.

The Jews had an ideology. They believed they were chosen to make the one true God known to the nations. The success of their mission was conditional on maintaining the purity of their faith (no idols), the purity of their blood (no mixing), the observance of the commandments.

Then came Jesus. He maintained that the truth was not limited to one race. The people of all races who put obedience to the will of God above every other claim in life would build the kingdom where God rules and men are brothers. The idea was liberating, disturbing, universal, packed with hope. It germinated a new type of civilisation. St Paul, for example, reached out to the slave and the emperor; to the self-righteous and

The shipbuilding industry has been going through quite a crisis these last few years. It needs everybody to be responsible. If a man has the conviction that something which is being proposed is not right, he should have the courage to stand up on his feet and say so. And then other men who for one reason or another are scared to stand up themselves, when this one man stands up they follow him.

**BETTY GRAY, Newcastle, who grew up in the poverty of the Depression of the 1930s:**

I FELT I MUST FIND an answer to bitterness. But I found I couldn't just decide to shed it. In desperation I asked a visitor to our home to tell me what the Cross of Christ meant in his life. He explained that you could lay all your bitterness, all your past, before God and find forgiveness and healing. Then you could go on and become a completely new person.

to the morally outcast. His life said to the world, 'Everyone is worthy of my best efforts, the strong and the weak, the good and the bad of whatever race.'

Marx was disillusioned by the British in his day, who proclaimed this idea but still practised exploitation and discrimination. He was fascinated by the forces forming in the mines and mills. He developed a theory that the road to the future was through class struggle. He had no faith that the oppressor could be changed. He must be destroyed and replaced by the oppressed, who in turn became the oppressor in an endless spiral of history, one day to end as the Shangri-La of the classless society.

### Telegraph wires

Marx's ideology was for one class only. Then came Hitler who borrowed the Jewish idea of a chosen people. But in his case it was not to acknowledge the sovereignty of God, but to try to match the ideology of class with the ideology of race.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, some men began freshly to explore the implications of faith taken to its logical conclusion. The root experience and premise was that human nature could be changed. To change human nature on a world scale was the mind-boggling programme that logically followed. The conclusion was that if people could change so that they no longer exploit or discriminate, then political and economic power are not



I made a list of all the bitternesses in my life, a very long list it was. I handed them all over to God. It was amazing. In less than a year they had all gone, all those things which I had thought would rule me for the rest of my days.

**PATRICK O'KANE, builder, Coventry:**  
**WE MUST LEARN TO TAP** the wealth inside people. Because, if you don't do that, then the whole of the North Sea could be oil, and all of the lochs in Scotland full of the best quality whisky, and it wouldn't be enough to satisfy the greed and still the desire for revenge inside people.

**RON HOWE, full-time union official, Manchester:**  
**AT THE MOMENT** we have the two sides, labour and management, each with entrenched ideas which often seem impossible to bridge.  
 There's only one key to the problem—

honesty. When you introduce honesty into the situation, instead of the half-truths and damn lies which are our usual way, it creates a relationship built on trust rather than on suspicion. It is amazing what a breath of honesty will do, and it can begin anywhere.

**BERT ALLEN, 34 years Shop-stewards' Convenor in a Midlands factory:**  
**THE SHEER BOREDOM** of the job gets on top of people sometimes, and that's one reason for all the troubles you read about. They go on and on keeping at the same old job day in and day out till it makes them feel like robots. Then if someone comes along and says, 'Let's have a stoppage', well, they're glad to do it, especially if the weather's fine. There used to be a saying, 'When the daffodils come out, we all come out!'

**WILLIE BELL, Manager of a Scottish coal mine:**  
**I WOULD SAY** that 10% of my working day

goes on mining problems and 90% has to be given to managing human energy.

The man who works for me must know that I come up to some moral expectation on his plane, that I'm not the overlord, the be-all-and-end-all on the job. He has to respect me. And he has as much right to criticise me as I have to criticise him. If we don't swing into that sort of society, then I don't know what we're going to do.

**LES DENNISON, building industry, Coventry:**  
**I FEEL THE PAIN** of the Third World, the pain of what's happening there—the poverty and the degradation. I long in my guts that the men in our trade union movement feel this pain. Because that's where passion comes from. Our passion can come from two sources. It can come from our deep hatred and bitterness, or it can come from love—not sloppy, sentimental love. I'm talking about the love that cares; the love that's concerned about all the unfortunate.

necessary to bring about political and economic change. As yeast in dough alters the structure and texture of bread, a new moral vitality in people is bound to alter the texture of society. The restructuring of human society is speeded as men become different.

This concept threw a spanner into the premise of the Fascists and Communists that political and economic power was the sole road to change.

Henry Drummond, an Edinburgh scientist, was one of the pioneers of this philosophy. But he saw that the subscribers to faith were often something like telegraph wires, which passed on other people's messages but sagged in the middle when it came to their own thinking and living. They lacked the fire of St Paul. There was little evidence that they thought seriously of the work needed to transform their own cities, to say nothing of the world. Drummond pointed out that the chief expression of Christ's ideology was His care for people, individually and collectively—not only for the blind and paralysed, but also for his capital city and his nation.

Drummond could see that those solely occupied with their own spiritual well-being were missing the grandeur of Christ's purpose and power. He knew the feeling of belonging to a mighty army marching throughout all time to a certain victory. He lived with the joy of 'the thinking of the man who holds in his hand some programme for humanity'.

Then came Frank Buchman to make his

contribution to this wider perspective. 'Our greatest sin,' he suggested, 'may be inferior thinking.' He saw that 'we need to find an ideology that is big enough and complete enough to outmarch any of the other great ideologies. Until that time comes, men will flounder. They will not find their way. But when the Holy Spirit of God rules the hearts and lives of men, then we will begin to build the new world of tomorrow that all of us long to see.' This ideology, he maintained, was essential for the survival and extension of freedom. It was to democratic society what oxygen is to life.

**Vibrant**

For Buchman the logic was irrefutable—a better world demanded more responsible people. Men who give three feet to the yard, 16 ounces to the pound. He saw in absolute honesty, purity, unselfishness and love not impossible targets for perfection, but the direction and stimulus for change—personal and national.

To people with high ideals and low living, he would say, 'Put up or shut up.' He was clear that you are your message. His call was not to Utopia but to sanity, to the change needed to make our freedom flourish in the home and the street.

Buchman was used to raise a world network of people committed wholeheartedly to the democratic ideology. Today they are at work among all races and all classes on all continents. To be a power for change, an

ideology has to be lived. It has to be in the feet as well as in the head. All nations have one thing in common—our need to change and live what we talk about.

Why do people shy away from this answer? Could it be not so much because of what Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin have done to the word ideology, but because of the commitment involved? It is a commitment to be totally responsible. This ideology requires acceptance of responsibility for every nation as well as your own—for the Communist world, the capitalist world, the developing world; for rich and poor; for what needs to be put right; for this generation and the next. A terrifying thought? Yet to shoulder such responsibility, contrary to what you might think, turns out to be not a burden but a liberation. It gives freedom from the prison of superficial irrelevancies. It makes life vibrant with an alertness, an awareness that you hold in your hand a programme for humanity.

As the spirit of responsibility penetrates our people ever more widely, the unexpected may happen; a practice of co-operation born of a new appreciation for the other class, the other race, for the Irish, the Nigerian, the South African, the immigrants in our land. Then we will build a new economy, kindle again the spirit of our people, and with the Commonwealth countries revolutionise the attitudes between countries East and West, North and South.

In a nuclear age, the future belongs to the ideology that unites.



**PETER RUNDELL** has been for two years the Secretary of the East Chelsea Branch of the Chelsea Constituency Labour Party. Here he gives his personal view as a Christian socialist:

MARX SAID, 'Philosophers analyse the world; the point is to change it.' Because I accept that challenge to build socialism, I am a Labour Party activist.

The real question that divides people is how to achieve fundamental change. We have seen apparently helpful steps lead to disaster—seen purges follow October 1917, massacres follow national liberation, as in Cambodia. How can we avoid such tragedies?

Race and class rule are pervasive. Some structures enshrine them. But what is the best way to destroy them and create true brotherhood? Some people would have us believe that in the fight against unjust structures your motives and feelings are irrelevant. But does anyone take that seriously?

The emotions of individuals can have a destructive effect on political issues. Among the most powerful are hatred and resentment. Even mild dislike of one member of the committee on which I serve can predispose me to disagree with him, irrespective of the correctness of his position. How much more powerful in forming attitudes and policies must the resentments be, engendered by the systems under which people live—from South Africa to the Gulag?

## What Marx missed



L. Reingelt

But great figures of resistance to these systems, from William Nkomo of South Africa, co-founder of the ANC Youth League, Rev Arthur Kanodereka of Zimbabwe to the Norwegian socialist pioneer Hans Bjerkholt, have made it clear that these hatreds of class and race are destructive forces. They have also demonstrated that they can and must be overcome.

Another personal drive that profoundly affects public policy is ambition. Nobody doubts this at a national level. On a small scale, I remember a student union meeting in which I voted against my own beliefs from ambition, and a fear of what my comrades would think of me. But when I faced the truth and asked God to help me, I found a freedom from ambition. My own success is not now a decisive factor.

For there is a positive as well as a negative

side to the impact of personal choices on public decisions. Human nature can be changed. Not only do corruption, ambition, greed and hatred warp judgement, but the opposite is also true: those who set out to live by absolute standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love, in all aspects of their lives—though they may fall short of those goals—elicit trust and selflessness in others.

Nobody should underestimate the importance of the decisions that rebuild homes, transform relationships at work, and give meaning and purpose to existence. They affect the way we live most of our lives. But the exciting thing is that this kind of change, applied thoroughly, provides a realistic force for radical social change as well.

There is another factor that gives hope. A person or a cell can find an adequate strategy if they will make a simple experiment of silently reflecting on their situation, open to any thoughts that come—however uncomfortable. Objective criteria—such as the absolute standards mentioned above—are necessary to measure the resulting ideas. Sincere Marxists will be willing to experiment with this source of a united strategy in common reflection, accompanied by a freedom from the forces of ambition and greed. As a Christian I must expect to seek God's will for my life and my society alike, and this time of quiet gives God a chance to speak.

However often I err, these ideas represent for me the necessary basis for a socialist analysis and practice.

### CHASM contd from p1

cause. We beef and we bellow, we thump tables or wave order papers. But, as a former Director of British Steel said last week, 'For years many in management have been saying, "It's each man for himself and the devil take the hindmost". We can't blame the unions if they get good at it.' We all want more—and we'll be damned if we give way. The trouble is we'll damn everyone else unless we give somewhere.

We live in an impatient age. Many people are trying to operate a twentieth-century machine with nineteenth-century ideas. No one moves fast enough—especially if 'my problems' need sorting out. Our slowness in dealing with injustice builds up frustrations and bursts tempers. Disputes procedures in industry must be speeded. So must the rate at which any of us deals with what is wrong.

One group of trade unionists, far from being deterred by the crisis, and convinced that people must be mobilised to challenge the underlying causes, plan to bring large numbers of their colleagues to the MRA Assembly at Caux, Switzerland, this summer.

Some of them have put their convictions into a broadsheet entitled 'Not every man for himself, but every man on the march towards a better future for all'. This broad-

sheet has received the backing of a wide range of trade union leaders, and it is being distributed in thousands in the coalfields and factories of the Midlands and in Birmingham city centre.

The need is to create trust. We have reached the stage in industry where people look for an ulterior motive in almost anything said. The most sincerely given observation is misinterpreted. When the various groups find the way to build trust we shall get somewhere.

I think, for instance, of the action taken by one employer whose factory is suffering the effects of secondary picketing. Conscious of his responsibility to honour overseas contracts, his first reaction was to curse the pickets. Then he sought God's direction on the situation. He approached his local MPs, the road haulage employers, the Chamber of Commerce, the trade union headquarters, and spoke to the pickets in his area. He ended by speaking to the strike committee. Through these steps he has built relationships based on a real understanding with all involved—a thing of importance for the future.

None of us are helpless. As the author of *Britain Works—OK* says, 'We are all almighty in a limited sphere. We can decide to do or

not do certain things and no one can prevent or dissuade us.'

Referring to the men he has written about he says, 'All have felt the need to search for what is objectively right, fair, sensible, as the deciding factor, instead of insistence on "getting my own way".'

'There is so much to be done, so many wrongs to be put right, such a marvellous country to be brought to birth. The men and women who decide to take it on will never again have cause to complain of any lack of job satisfaction.'

### BRITAIN WORKS—OK

#### Booklet by Geoffrey Gain

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