

VOLUME 7

NUMBER 12

DECEMBER 1951

NEW WORLD NEWS



CHRISTMAS CHILD

CONTENTS

STAR IN THE EAST	
By John Tyndale-Biscoe	186
INVITATION TO CEYLON	188
MRA COMES TO SIAM	189
AUTUMN ASSEMBLY	190
TIMBERMEN	
By Christopher Mayor	194
THE LINE	
By Morris Martin	196
BOOKS FOR CHRISTMAS	200

COVER STORY

Christmas is the festival of children. In many lands it is the time when a child is honoured and when children are given pride of place in the family and the community. It has not always been thus. Two thousand years ago, in an attempt to get rid of a threat to his materialistic rule, a Middle East dictator massacred every boy under the age of two years, except one who escaped with his parents and whose birthday Christmas celebrates.

This Christmas, nineteen fifty one, we have reason to consider what may lie in store for the children who are now gathering round the Christmas tree with faces aglow and hearts in expectancy. Will they suffer the total liquidation that threatens our generation? Or will some powerful ideological force take control of their lives, moulding their minds with a truth that is no truth, and inflame their hearts with a bitterness that can never satisfy itself?

We—and not only the statesmen—are this very day determining the future of these children. This is done not by great political decisions alone, or by resolutions at the conference table. But if we deal drastically with the bitterness, the greed, lust and fear in ourselves, and commit our lives under God's direction to create a new order we shall not only cure the ills of our time but we shall give to our children a spirit that will shine in their faces for their lifetimes and beyond. It is this Christmas gift that the Christ Child brings to us, and through us to every child on earth.

STAR IN THE EAST

BY

JOHN TYNDALE-BISCOE

ACTS of aggression, accusations of aggression, fear of aggression, punch the headlines. Preparation for defence against possible aggression rips the lining of the nations' pockets. Fear of that culminating act of aggression, atomic war, lays icy hold on every human heart.

That is where the world stands at Christmas A.D. 1951. But in this setting an Asian Parliament has made history. The Minister for Defence and Home Affairs in the Burma Government recently moved a resolution urging the Government:

“to enact measures that would effectively wipe out Greed, Anger and Lust from Burmese minds, as these three constitute the main causes of all kinds of aggressive action in this country and the world as well.”

The resolution had immediate effect. The Opposition fully supported it, while cries of “Thadu” (Hear! Hear!) were heard in the House for the first time, during its passing.

The Minister, the Honourable U Win, is faced with many urgent practical problems. Corruption is rife. Armed bandits still roam the countryside, holding up travellers, looting, blowing up bridges, attacking police stations and capturing localities. The country has to be defended from Communists within and possible aggression by Red China without. Commenting on the resolution in the Burmese newspaper, *Union Gazette*, a columnist writes:

“As Minister for Home Affairs and Defence, he (the Hon. U Win) has to take aggressive action in the interest of the State and the people, but his aggressive actions are not prompted by those vile passions of greed and lust, although on occasions there might be some elements of anger! However, he is now on the path to remove these feelings and passions which always bring death and disaster in the end.

“Such a resolution passed by the Burmese Parliament recalls to mind how MRA is slowly and steadily creeping into the minds of the Burmese people. It is the same objective as MRA has in mind and has been preaching to the peoples of the world to adopt and act accordingly—thus eliminating the root causes of those things that divide the nations, create wars, cause dissensions, disturb peace and harmony and make man an enemy of his own kind.

Three Wise Men

“The passing of this resolution by the Burmese Parliament strangely coincides with the visit of the three devout Buddhists to the MRA Assembly at Caux, in Switzerland, where the same feelings and thoughts are expressed by men of different religions and different nations. . . .

The leader of these three wise men was the Venerable U Narada, Deputy Abbot of the Rangoon monastery frequented by the President of the Union of Burma, the Prime Minister and other Burmese leaders. The monastery is close to the most beautiful of all pagodas, the golden Shwe Dagon.

“Even in a small household of four people,” says the Abbot, “it is difficult to attain harmony. One is a socialist, one is a communist and one belongs to the Anti-Fascist Peoples Freedom League (the party in power), while another may have no convictions. They can't agree among themselves. But at Caux 1,500 people from all backgrounds and many nations and creeds live in absolute harmony. This is what Dr. Buchman has achieved. He has been raised up to meet the need of the hour.

"If a man goes to Caux he finds happiness. If a family goes to Caux it finds harmony. If a city or a nation goes to Caux it finds peace.

"Moral Re-Armament is for everyone. When I go preaching as a Buddhist monk, only Buddhists come to listen. When the Christian Bishop preaches in his church only Christians attend. But when we go together and preach MRA, then Buddhists and Christians, Chinese and Indians all turn up. Everyone can change."

One hundred and eighty acres of rich lands stand in his sister's and his names. It is enough to keep them for the rest of their lives. But they have decided to sell this land and devote the proceeds to Moral Re-Armament. "Moral Re-Armament calls for practical action," says the Abbot.

One of the Abbot's colleagues at Caux was U Ba Tin, at one time Director of Programmes for the State Radio, who has been editor of several newspapers. U Ba Tin says, "At Caux I went to see the play, *The Forgotten Factor*. It moved me very deeply. It made me see how wrong I had been in always thinking I was the most important member of the family. I wept when I realised what that attitude of mind had done to my wife. I immediately sat down and wrote a letter to her and apologised. I had thought our home was happy. It wasn't. But now it is going to be."

These two, with U Aung Than, at one time head of the Government's Information Department, have gone back to implement the resolution introduced to Parliament by the Honourable U Win. They know how to "eliminate greed, anger and lust," from men's minds, for they have learnt the secret of change in themselves.

Answer to Crisis

Christmas 1951 finds Europe facing the hardest winter she has experienced, and the world divided tragically into two. Western statesmen seek human solutions to the threat of militant ideological forces—first to build up sufficient military might to deter aggression, second, to give economic security to the masses who might otherwise be won over to subversive ideas. But the bill for arms uses up the money needed for bread and the democracies find themselves as ideologically defenceless as before.

Sincere men devote their best efforts to confining the areas of conflict, yet war continues in Korea, Malaya and Indo-China; the Middle East hovers on the brink and millions prepare for the very thing they dread.

Economic unrest is spreading in every country. Inflation is out of hand in many. The bold statesmanship of America seeks to cure the trouble with economic aid and succeeds in part in bolstering up the democratic world.

Yet it is painfully obvious to the statesman and the ordinary man today that the solution will be found not alone in the military or the economic realm but in the mind and deep in human nature. Who is dealing with this ideological crisis of the day?

Three wise men came to Caux and have carried back to Burma the answer to the underlying moral crisis of the nation. They have the solution to disunity, fear and war. They are part only of a growing world force which is bringing this same answer to every corner of the globe.

Eighteen of India's government and industrial leaders have sent an urgent invitation to Dr. Frank Buchman to bring this answer to India. The late Premier of Pakistan

stated just before his death that he wanted to come to Caux himself to learn how to bring constructive change to people and nations. Twenty-one prominent personalities in Ceylon this autumn urged that a Moral Re-Armament task force be sent to Ceylon.

Hope of Renaissance

Three months ago free nations concluded peace with Japan. But a peace treaty is a worthless scrap of paper unless a new spirit animates the parties to it. Millions in Japan today look to the Japanese leaders, trained during these past three years at the Moral Re-Armament World Assemblies, to give their nation moral and spiritual direction in their relations with the free world.

In Malaya public recognition is paid to the part played by men trained in Moral Re-Armament in bringing the communities together and removing one of the most serious weaknesses in the country's social and political structure.

While tension grows in Egypt and no settlement appears possible in Persia, some of the leaders of the Arab world have looked to Moral Re-Armament to answer deadlock. An influential Egyptian paper, *Actualité*, ran a front-page article a month ago with the headline, "Let us get out of the Anglo-Egyptian deadlock in the spirit of Caux." The article proposes that the leaders of Egypt and Britain hold a "top level meeting at Caux if possible, or in any case in the spirit of Caux." It states that it matters little which side takes the initiative in arranging this historic encounter. Mr. Ahmet Emin Yalman of Istanbul, Editor of *Vatan*, one of Turkey's largest newspapers, said, "Our difficulties in the Middle East will be solved if we use Moral Re-Armament as a common denominator."

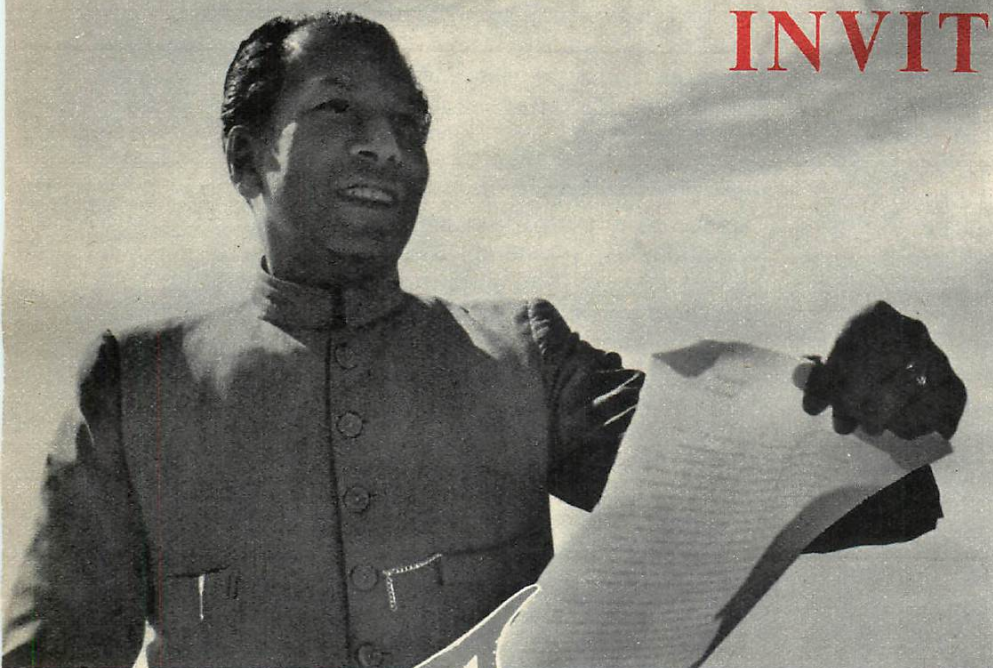
When the Speaker of the Sudan Parliament came to Switzerland this summer he recognised that at Caux was the Renaissance he had been looking for. Over a hundred came to Caux from fourteen African countries. And in the West, whose culture and civilisation draws its inspiration from the Crib at Bethlehem, at this Christmas millions draw hope of Renaissance from the world force of Moral Re-Armament cradled in Caux. Marxists from every European country have found in it a greater revolution. The leaders of industry from America, Britain, France, Germany, Holland, Italy and Scandinavia recognise that it fulfils industry's destiny to feed and clothe the millions of the world.

Fragile beginning of a World Force

The statesmen see in Moral Re-Armament, in the words of Robert Schuman, "a philosophy of life applied in action. It is not a question of changing systems, it is a question of changing men. Democracy and her freedoms will be safeguarded by the quality of the men who speak in her name." So country after country is sending its mature leadership to be trained in the application of absolute moral standards and the guidance of God to every sphere of civic and national life.

Two thousand years ago a star shone in the East to guide men to the stable of the Christ-child. It was the fragile beginning of a world force destined to regenerate humanity. This Christmas the same light shines to draw men from East and West alike to a common experience of moral change and divine guidance as the one hope of the future.

INVITATION TO CEYLON



“Moral Re-Armament will satisfy the deepest needs of the millions of Asia,” said Devar Surya Sena, the famous concert artist of Ceylon, at the Moral Re-Armament World Assembly, when he read an invitation to Dr. Frank Buchman from twenty-three leaders of Ceylon, among them three Cabinet Ministers, asking him to bring to their country the message of “inspired democracy—the common need of East and West.”

In response to another invitation from Japan, a Moral Re-Armament force has recently gone there.

The Ceylon invitation reads:

Dear Dr. Frank Buchman,

Colombo, 1951

The nations of Asia, many of which have within a few years entered upon a new phase of independence, require unlimited opportunity to develop a sound democratic way of life. They need technical aid, they need almost every material resource. Their most urgent requirement is peace. But everywhere nations, whose spiritual and cultural traditions compel them to seek the peaceful solution of problems, fear and prepare for war.

Our great spiritual leaders have taught that men will turn from pride, hate and violence—creators of division and destroyers of peace, only if moral force, channelled in every avenue of life, quickens right thought and action individually and nationally. All who pursue this path must welcome the evidence of reconciliation in families and industries, between class and class, between nation and nation, that attends the work of Moral Re-Armament.

Democracy, when absolute moral standards are enshrined at its heart, makes a stronger appeal than materialism, and has the answer to exploitation and want. This inspired democracy is the common need of East and West. It can overarch our differences and create the spirit that will make peace permanent.

We therefore warmly invite you and your workers to visit Ceylon so that our people may know at first hand the great movement that you have initiated.

SIR OLIVER GOONETILLEKE,
Minister of Home Affairs.

THE HON. MR. A. E. GOONESINHA,
Minister of State.

SENATOR SIR FRANK GUNASEKERA,
MR. S. W. R. D. BANDARANAIKE,
M.P.,

Ex-Minister of Health.

DR. M. C. M. KALEEL, M.P.

SIR WILFRED DE SOYSA.

MR. S. PARARAJASINGAM,
President, Rotary Club.

MR. AND MRS. JOHN WEIR.

DR. G. WIGNARAJA.

DR. K. J. RUSTOMJEE.

MRS. T. GUNAWARDHANA.

MRS. Z. DICKSON.

THE HON. MR. DUDLEY SENAN-
AYAKE,
Minister of Agriculture.

THE HON. MR. H. H. BASNAYAKE,
Attorney General.

SENATOR MISS CISSY COORAY,
M.B.E.

MAJOR T. F. JAYAWARDENE, M.P.,
Member for Colombo South.

MR. LEO FERNANDO, M.P.

MR. A. H. T. SOYSA.

MR. AND MRS. A. D. MCLEOD.

MR. B. R. DE SILVA,

Chairman, Ceylon Labour Party.

DR. AND MRS. C. C. DE SILVA.

MISS I. GUTTRIDGE.

MR. AND MRS. SURYA SENA.

MRA COMES TO SIAM

BY OUR FAR EASTERN CORRESPONDENT

SANG PATHONATHAI is a fisherman's son. His parents still live in a little fishing village on the gulf of Siam. Today Sang is Secretary-General of the Thai Labour Union, Editor of *Thamathipat*, which is the mouth-piece of the Siamese Government, and confidant of Siam's Premier, Field-Marshal Pibul. Sang and Pibul once shared a prison cell; now they lunch together and map Siamese policy.

Two years ago Sang visited Caux for the first time. Back in England this summer, he visited MRA headquarters at both Berkeley Square and Tirley. In the course of a full-page article, his newspaper recently carried this tribute to Frank Buchman:

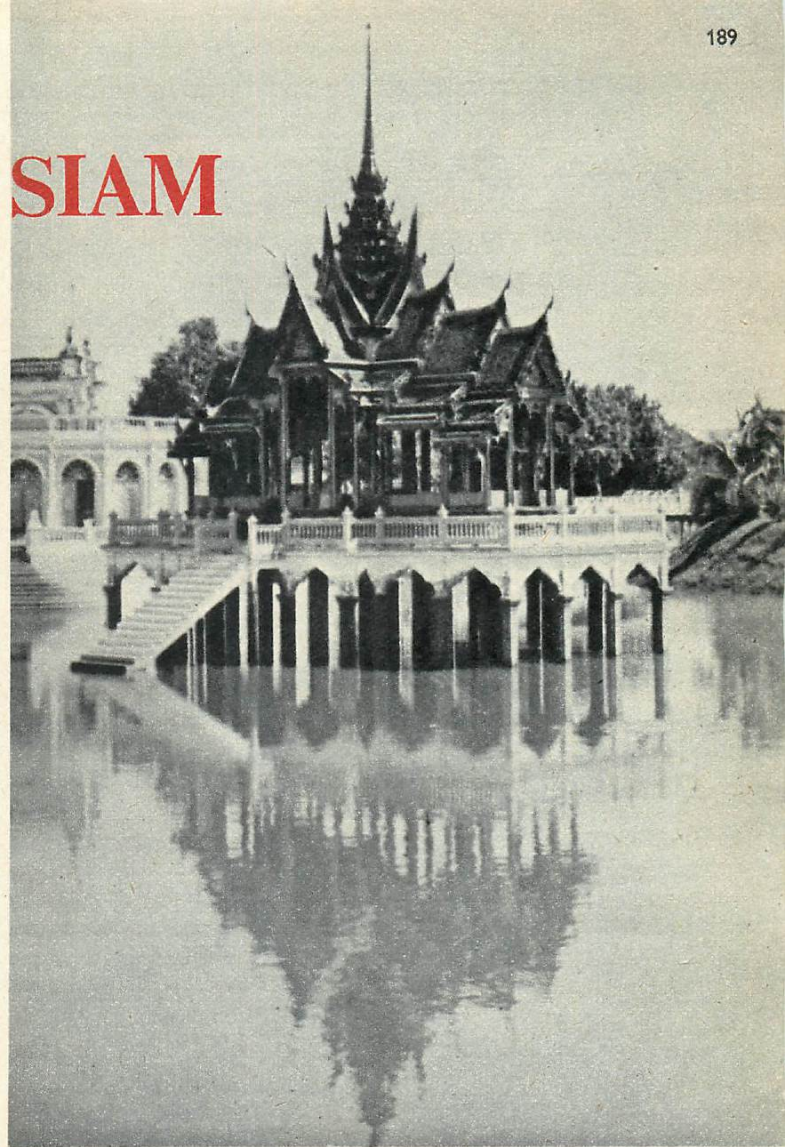
"The atmosphere of Dr. Buchman's home reminded me, in certain ways, of a Buddhist monastery. All visitors were equally welcomed—no rich, no poor, no high-class, no low-class and no colour discrimination. All differences must be left outside the precincts of Dr. Buchman's home. Visitors from far-away countries find the warmth of true friendship in his presence. In staying in Dr. Buchman's home a person may contribute something if he desires. Nobody would ask him to pay if he does not want to. All conversations were conducted with goodwill and friendliness. Arguments were made to explain points rather than to force issues . . . I left Caux with the determination to spread this good idea of Dr. Buchman's as much as I could."

Sang's observations on Moral Re-Armament and the situation in the world today are interesting. They reveal that he has understood the crisis of the modern world more fully than many of the statesmen who guide the destinies of the Western world.

"With the menace of war threatening the world," he writes, "some people, looking for a way to secure a lasting peace without resorting to arms and the loss of life and property inevitable in a third world war, have thought there might be something lacking in the religion they have embraced. So they have started studying other religious ideas—among them, Buddhism. Some have gone as far as to declare themselves citizens of the world rather than of this or that nationality. This idea is spreading widely, cutting across racial discrimination as it does so.

"An interesting movement along this line is Moral Re-Armament. It differs from any existing world organisation: it has no members' roll, no application for membership, no organising officials. Anyone who believes in absolute moral principles and tries to live as a good citizen is in Moral Re-Armament. The whole organism rests on the devotion and the sacrifice of those who believe in it. MRA is coming to Thailand, and I think it worthy of attention.

"The founder of this work is Dr. Buchman, an American of Swiss descent. He studied the philosophies of the East and of the West and came to the realisation that no other philosophy than that of absolute moral standards could



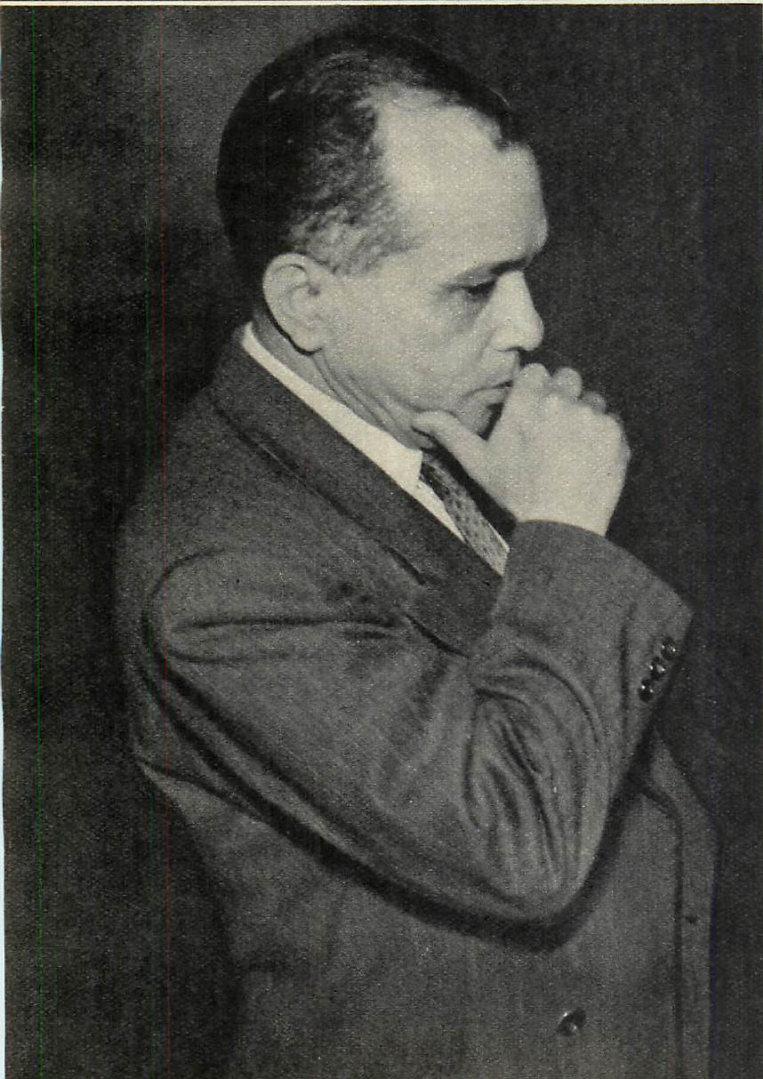
keep the world at peace. He started training himself along these lines for over thirty years. His work was not in vain. More and more are following him every day."

It was at Caux that Sang first saw this idea effectively at work in Europe. He realised that the spirit he found there would contribute towards lasting settlement in the world. He and his friends agreed that MRA was the answer to Communism, because they had met and talked with veteran Communists who had changed their whole way of living and thinking. Men who had come to Caux as bitter enemies went away to work together for the future of their countries.

"More and more people are learning about MRA," writes Sang. "It gets near to us. Burma and Malaya send delegates to the annual conference every year. I do not think it would be difficult for Dr. Buchman to spread his ideas in Asia, especially in Thailand, since the ideas have been known and practised here from time immemorial. When I was in London my friends and I discussed with the friends of Moral Re-Armament how to introduce MRA into our country, an important centre of Buddhism. How it will grow no one can foretell."

Since Sang wrote these words a gathering of over 2,000 monks in Bangkok has taken place to confirm the rightness of his judgment. Siam has enthusiastically taken Moral Re-Armament to its heart, and may yet pioneer a new way for all the world.

AUTUMN ASSEMBLY



IN three months, 10,711 people from 88 countries gathered at Caux this summer. Owing to the demand the Assembly had to be extended into November, when the steep slopes around Mountain House shone with snow and the leaves of the trees turned to rich browns, yellows and reds.

Further French factory groups poured in over the concluding weekends. From German industry, chiefly from the Ruhr, there were delegations of shop stewards and workers' leaders, and members of national executives of trade unions with a membership of two and three quarter millions.

Supplementing the special report on Caux in the November issue of *New World News*, the next pages give picture highlights of the Autumn Assembly. During these days French and British Members of Parliament, German students, Communist veterans of the Spanish Civil War, Welsh miners, Finnish and Swedish workers and managers, Nigerian administrators, Indians and Africans met together to find a way of life that brings unity above class, race and nation, and to plan its spread throughout the world.

Afterthought on San Francisco. "I have come from a conference that was so different from this conference at Caux," said Professor Sinco, one of the Philippine signatories to the Japanese Peace Treaty, "but if we carry out the spirit of Moral Re-Armament in our dealings with each other, and in the dealings of nation with nation and class with class, the unexpected peace and happiness of mankind will soon come."



Melodies to Move the Millions. Paul Misraki, popular French song-writer, plays new melodies at Caux. French factory workers formed part of the responsive international audience.

European Recovery requires a moral ideology as well as improved techniques. This was the opinion voiced at Caux by a team of American industrial investigators headed by Raymond Zimmerman (centre), permanent E.C.A. official in Washington. With him are Robert Carmichael (left), President of the French Jute Industry, and Dr. Alloisio, a director of Pirelli Rubber, Italy.

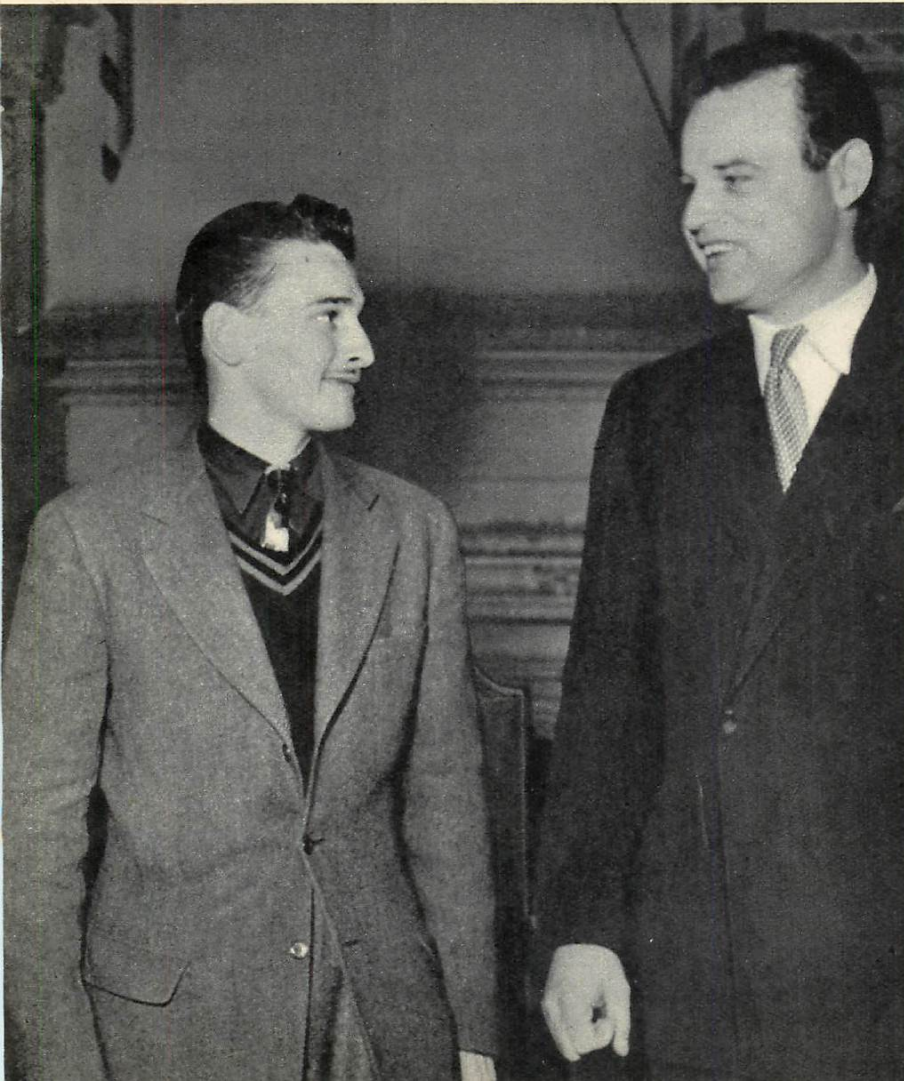


Rifare il Mondo. "I have seen what has been done in Italy by Moral Re-Armament. The principles of Caux give courage to men and the secret of living together to every population and every race. This Frank Buchman has understood above everybody," said Prince Castelbarco, Italian industrialist. He announced the Italian publication of Dr. Buchman's speeches, *Rifare Il Mondo*.





Docker's Leaders from twenty-one ports in Europe, America and Australia have been at Caux this year, many of them having led major strikes. Among them was Tom Keep of London, for 22 years in the Communist Party. Their revolutionary programme is to fight for settlement on the basis of what is right.



INTO BATTLE. At the heart of the Caux Assembly, Frank Buchman and the men he has trained have presented a world-uniting ideology. When the Assembly came to a close the delegates moved out into the winter offensives on a world

Two Paratroopers. French wartime paratrooper, describes the "miracle of Caux" when he shook hands with a German for the first time. The German (right), a paratrooper in the same campaign, said, "We fight for a new Germany, a new France and a new world."

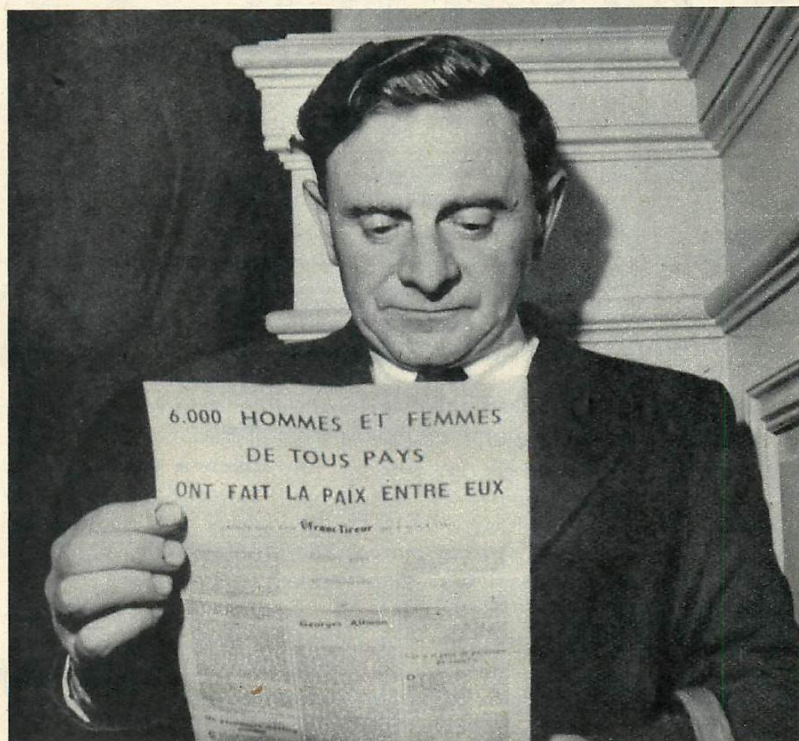


front. Before leaving they gathered in the late autumn sun to speed on his way this friend of worker and statesman, who for thirty years has lived and fought to bring change to men of every nation and to remake the world.

"Six Thousand Make Peace." *Franc-Tireur*, leading Paris left-wing daily, reports on Caux as the most effective peace conference yet. Reading the article is Marcel Vesval, Marxist-trained worker and Spanish War veteran, a member of one of the eighty French factory delegations.



France and Vietnam could find a basis of understanding through Caux," said His Excellency Tran Thien Vang, Member of the Council of the French Union (left), after he had heard a French soldier apologise to the Viet Nam people for acts done while serving in their country with the French forces.





AAGE RYGH

TIMBERMEN

BY CHRISTOPHER MAYOR

THIRTEEN thousand miles separate a Norwegian timber capitalist and a New Zealand timber trade union leader. But their hearts beat together for an idea which is revolutionary enough to unite Left and Right in a positive programme for world reconstruction.

Aage Rygh is Vice-President of the Norwegian Furniture Manufacturers' Association. Jim Freeman is Vice-President of the New Zealand Timberworkers' Union. At the 1951 Moral Re-Armament World Assembly these two men met together and told their remarkable stories.

The Norwegian Government constantly asks for higher production. The national economy depends upon it. And it was not helped by a strike which

took place in Rygh's factory in 1947. It made management think. "If there had been full confidence between management and men," says Rygh, "it would never have taken place." This crisis in the firm prompted the Norwegian furniture manufacturer to decide that management needed to make absolute moral standards the basis of their policies.

In this new atmosphere of trust and co-operation Rygh, with his colleagues, drew up a plan to tackle realistically the problems of production, wages and prices.

In the firm of Moebelindustri, Ltd., at Gjoevik, near Oslo, of which Rygh is general manager, the new policies have resulted in three remarkable developments.

1. Over a period of two years production rose 50 per cent.
2. Wages were increased by 20 per cent. This followed consultation with the Union about how the profits should be used.
3. Prices remained level in spite of two cost-of-living bonuses and increases in raw material costs.

"We constantly face many problems," says Rygh, "but we have found the basic solutions. If piece rates are too low the men tell us. Likewise if they are too high the men also tell us. And so it has become normal practice for both workers and management to think and live in terms of 'What is Right' instead of 'Who is Right'."

Soon afterwards, the whole of the furniture industry's timber ration was cut 50 per cent. The industry protested to the Government, but as Rygh says himself, "They simply had no more timber to give us." In Moebelindustri, Ltd., they faced three possibilities.

"We could buy timber on the black market," Rygh pointed out. "But honesty was the basis of our new confidence, and we decided to drop that. The second possibility was to dismiss some of our workers. We immediately decided against that, too. The third possibility was to find some honest way to get more timber."

In a time of quiet one morning, when Rygh decided to face honestly and unselfishly the whole issue, a plan began to form in his mind. He went and saw the responsible Cabinet Minister. The Minister immediately recommended Rygh's plan to solve the crisis facing the whole industry.

When Rygh presented his plan to the men they had confidence it was not just a trick on management's part to keep things running smoothly in order to safeguard profits. The scheme was to put some of the men to work felling fresh timber. "It is a hard and difficult job for untrained men," said Rygh, "so we asked for volunteers. Three times the number required offered to do the job. Those who stayed in the plant maintained production by overtime. The total extra cost of the timber to the industry was only one-third of one per cent. of the year's production." Not only was the industry kept running, but stocks have been laid in for a full year to come.

Rygh sums up the results of the

experiment in three simple points.

1. Never do anything "for" the workers, but "with" them.
2. People respond to the challenge of absolute moral standards when the line of battle is clearly drawn.
3. No problem is too large to be solved on this basis.

Rygh is not content to ensure the smooth running of his plant. He sees that the timber industry of Norway, and especially his own factory, must find its place in the fight for sound democracy within the framework of rebuilding the world.

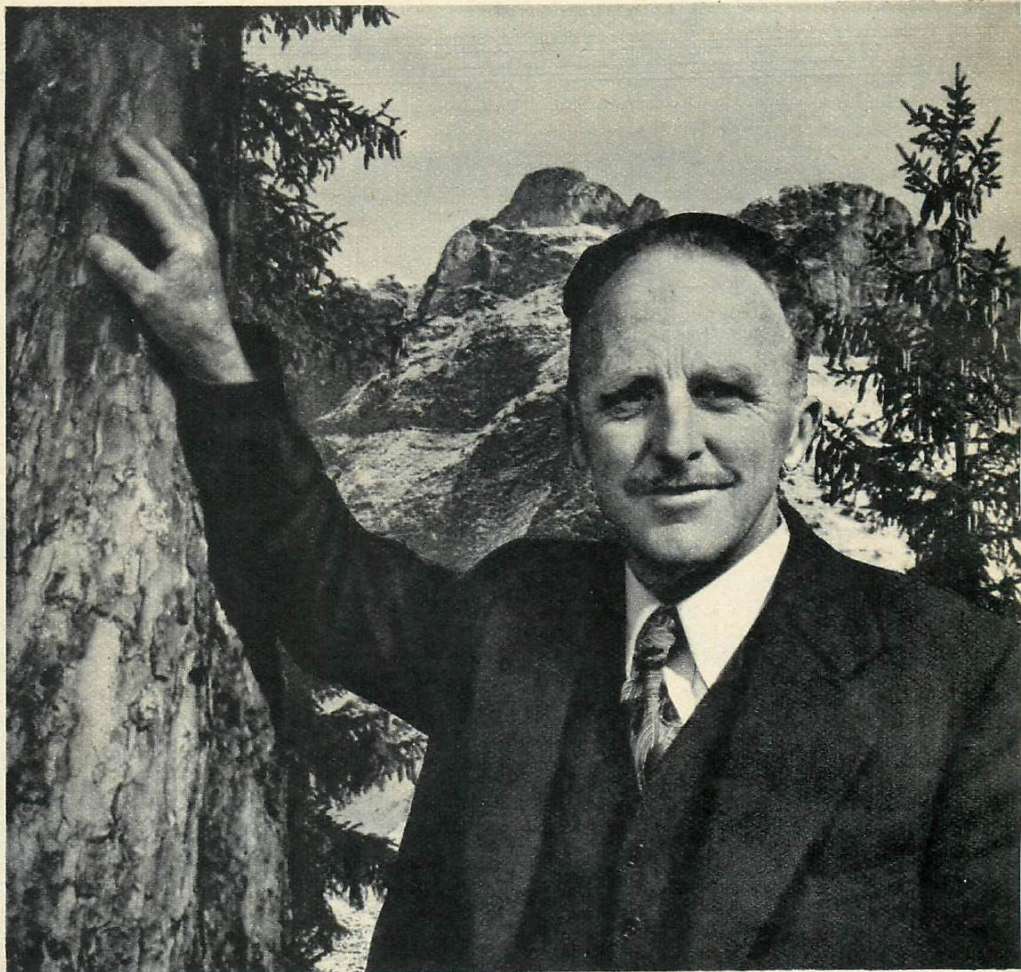
It is this fight which has brought a Norwegian industrialist into close friendship with a man of an entirely different background. Jim Freeman has devoted his whole life to a militant fight for a square deal for the workers.

Jim Freeman was sent by his Government on a mission to an international timber conference in Helsinki in 1949. When he returned he reported to the Government and to his Union that "the most significant factor in industrial relations I have discovered in Europe is the work of Moral Re-Armament." Freeman spent some days at the World Assembly at Caux, and on his return played a distinctive part in the nation-wide programme of Moral Re-Armament which was launched in New Zealand by a committee drawn from the Cabinet, the Opposition, the official Trade Union Movement and Agricultural interests, as well as civic leaders.

This new approach was as effective in New Zealand as in Norway, and that was why, at their national conference, the Timberworkers' Union officially adopted Moral Re-Armament as its official ideological policy. "Our Union has seen a vision of our industry as a pattern for industry throughout New Zealand; and of New Zealand as a pattern of living for the rest of the world," says Freeman.

As in Norway, this new approach was not merely an attempt to oil the wheels of one industry. Freeman had a world vision and saw New Zealand's rôle in that.

In February 1951, a waterfront dispute broke out in New Zealand which lasted for five months. Freeman got to work with other trade union men who had been trained in Moral Re-Armament. They were men such as Bob



JIM FREEMAN

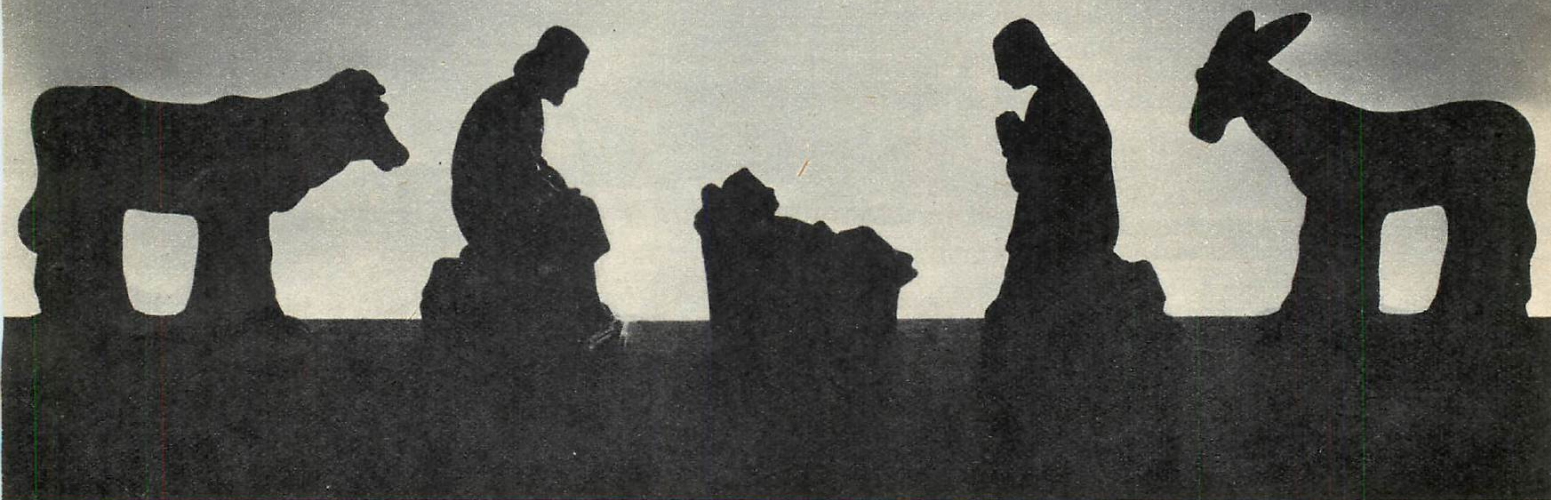
Freeland, National Secretary of the Harbour Board Employees' Union, and Wally McNeil, Freeland's Auckland branch president.

Freeman was invited at this time to make a national broadcast at the height of the dispute, clarifying the real issues involved and pointing out that it was not a strike with economic justification, but a political and ideological move aimed at disrupting New Zealand's industry and cutting Britain's important meat supplies. He stressed the need for all the issues involved to be considered on a basis of "What is Right" and not so much "Who is Right". This new approach was adopted by the official Labour Federation with an overwhelming majority, and finally terminated the critical dispute. Freeman's broadcast was later given over the Australian national network to explain the situation which had become so clouded in the heated propaganda outbursts of both sides. Another repercussion was that, due to the co-operation of New Zealand trades unionists with

British dockers' leaders who had been to Caux, 53,000 tons of meat were unloaded without trouble in British ports.

Freeman was one of the 16 labour and management representatives who flew from New Zealand and Australia to report to the 1951 Caux Assembly on the effective application of these principles in industrial and social life. With him were men like "Gus" Alford, Federal Executive member of the Australian Waterside Workers' Federation, and Jim Ross who was, as President-elect, officially representing the Geelong Trades and Labour Council at the Assembly.

Speaking with the Norwegian industrialist from the platform at Caux, Freeman stated: "MRA has the answer adequate for the problems of New Zealand, just as it has for the world at large. Throughout my organisation this feeling prevails, and representatives of all sections of New Zealand life support this belief. It is for all of us to understand this answer and then learn to apply it."



THE LINE

BY MORRIS MARTIN

THE Line was no place to be on Christmas Eve. But it was my turn on duty and that was the end of it. The weather was cruel. Almost a blizzard earlier in the day. It made you sorer than usual for the refugees who were trying to get across to our side of the Iron Curtain.

Things had been fairly quiet during the day. The stream of humanity from the East and the mixed crowd of business men, anxious relatives and shysters from the West seemed to have died down as Christmas Day came nearer. We were sitting there, biting our pencils, looking at files, gazing out into the gathering darkness and exchanging a few words now and then.

I was thinking of home. Bert, my British colleague, generally a cheerful little Cockney, who pretended not to have a care in the world, was uncommonly quiet. Frenchie, who came from Marseilles, didn't have as much to say as usual, either, and Ivan had his expressionless look on. There were just the four of us. A couple of clerks were off in another room and a couple of soldiers were on guard outside. The stove, which they stuffed full of wood every hour, a bench and a chair or two were the only other pieces of furniture besides our desks. We were on duty on the Line

and that was all we expected.

The room was hot. As the door opened to let in a traveller, a rush of fresh air and a few snowflakes would make their way in. Then the door would slam behind him as he left to go on his way or back where he came from or to be held in the barracks where we kept doubtful customers while we made enquiries. Then the heat and the boredom would close down again. We had got used to it—the same problems, the same evasions, the same refusals, the same despair.

The door had just closed behind our last traveller. I wasn't easy in my mind about him.

"A nasty looking customer, that one," I said to Bert.

"Yes, but his papers were O.K. What can you do?"

"I know. Nothing. Not a darned thing. But I still don't like the looks of him."

"Maybe you'll be in his shoes one day," cracked Bert. "Heaven help you if looks decide. You'll get twenty years hard labour."

Frenchie was always cautious. "You fellows are too easy. Ivan has the right idea. Only let the ones in who are some use to you. I bet you that last one was a spy."

Bert got quickly bored with Frenchie's comments. "Ask Ivan. He probably knows."

Ivan heard his name. He hadn't been listening to our gab, and grinned. He wasn't so bad. Tough, of course, as they have to be. But we got along all right—if we stuck to the rules. That was his trouble, he couldn't ever get away from the book of rules. He was just going to say something when the door was pushed open.

Into the room came an old man, partly pushed and partly supported by a soldier. He was covered in snow and wet through. Matted white hair fell from under his old cap. He had a straggling beard with icicles in it. He looked just about all in. He swayed a bit as the soldier let go of him and then stumbled over to the bench near the stove and sat down.

The soldier came over to our desk.

"I picked him up outside, sir. Acting a bit suspicious. I thought he was trying to make a bolt for it across the Line. He swears he wasn't, but I brought him in."

"What was he up to?" I asked.

"He was peering into some of the D.P. huts down the road and trying to cross over into the barracks."

"That's a queer one," said Bert. "Most people spend all their time trying to get out of those barracks."

"Bring him over here," said Frenchie. "We'd better find out what it's all about."

Ivan looked across. "Which side of the Line did you pick him up?"

"That's the funny part, sir," said the soldier. "At least, you wouldn't find it funny, I suppose. He was trying to get into the East. Said he'd often been there and can't see why he shouldn't go there again."

Ivan was really interested now. "A capitalist spy. I'd like to question him."

The soldier went over to the bench where the old man was steaming near the stove.

"Come along, grandpa. You look as if you'll go up in smoke soon."

He pulled himself together, picked up his rucksac and slowly walked over to Ivan's desk. Ivan watched him carefully, and so did I. He was wearing an old uniform he had picked up somewhere—several sizes too big—with his trousers tucked into army boots. And he was old and tired. The soldier saw this and pushed a chair across for him which was more than he did for most of our visitors.

"What's your business here?" I asked him as gently as I could.

"I want to cross the Line."

"Have you made an application for a permit?" said Bert quickly.

"No, I'm sorry. It never used to be necessary."

"What do you want to do in the East?" asked Ivan.

"I want to visit friends."

This made Ivan sit up. "Give me their names and addresses."

"There are quite a lot of them. I don't know if I can remember. But I have letters from them in my bag."

This questioning seemed to me to be becoming somewhat irregular. So I broke in. "Just a minute. Let's get this thing straight. Do you want to make application for a permit to enter the East?"

"Yes, if I have to," replied the old man, a little sadly.

"O.K. then," I said, "it's not our business. Over to you,

Ivan. You go ahead."

Bert and Frenchie nodded and the three of us began to talk about something else while Ivan pulled out one of the official forms and began to question the old man. "What's your name?"

"Klaus."

"Huh!" grunted Ivan. "German all right. How old are you?"

"I don't know exactly."

"You don't know! Where were you born?"

"In a little village in the East. No one bothered much about years and months there. Things didn't move very fast."

Ivan smiled a superior smile at that. "We were like that, too, before the Revolution. But now we know just when we were born and where we were born. And what's more, we know *why*. Do you understand that, old man, we know *why*."

He jerked his head in our direction. "Those clever fellows," Ivan went on, "they don't know that with all their knowledge. They don't know why they're alive and what they're living for."

He must have caught sight of me listening, as he turned quickly back to his questions.

"Well, what shall I put down? Seventy, seventy-five?"

"Put whatever you like."

"Where do you live?"

"Just where I happen to be."

This was too much for Ivan. He threw down his pen. "Just wherever you happen to be," he said sarcastically. "Not Moscow or Berlin or London or Paris or Nishni-Novgorod or anywhere particular—just where you happen to be. And now you happen to be here. I can't write down 'The Line' for your home—though it will be if you don't think up something. How about Siberia? We have quite a lot of travel in that direction these days. Mostly one way though. Or do you want to come back?"

"I know Siberia," said the old man surprisingly. "I've often been there."

Ivan looked at him suspiciously.

"I've been in Moscow, too. At Christmas."

"Christmas," said Ivan in his superior way. "That must have been years ago. We threw all that junk out with the Revolution. Capitalist nonsense! You give your boss a present and hope he'll treat you better next year. You give your wife a present and hope she'll be faithful to you next year. You give your children presents to keep them dependent on you and they give you presents to prove they're independent. We've cleared all that nonsense out now. We give no presents any more." He paused, and in a kind of a hushed tone with something in it I'd never heard from Ivan before, he said, "We give ourselves to the Revolution."

We were all listening now. But the old man surprised us by saying quite quietly, "And what has the Revolution given you?"

A flash of surprise and anger came into Ivan's eyes. He looked straight at the old man and then said in his cold, flat, official tone, "It has made us the most feared people on earth. Wherever I go, people tremble."

The old man looked straight back at him, and I'll swear he smiled the least bit.

"That must be nice. And what makes *you* tremble?"

Ivan looked angry for a moment. Then he shrugged his

shoulders. "You've noticed that, have you? Well, I'll tell you. The Captain makes me tremble and the General makes him tremble and the Commissar makes him tremble, and the Revolution makes the Commissar tremble. So my job is to make you tremble."

"You don't frighten me very much. Perhaps I'm too old—or I've seen too much."

Ivan picked up his pen and pulled the papers in front of him again.

"Come on. Let's finish this. What shall I write down?
Age: Uncertain, about 75. *Place of Birth*: In the East.
Home address: None. Doesn't sound very good yet. *Occupation*: What do you do?"

"I make little things for people. Little wooden figures, dolls, toys. Anything that makes them a bit happier."

"Can't you give me a straight answer?" barked Ivan.
Occupation: Making little wooden things."

"I'd rather you said, 'Making people happier'."

"Happiness is a bourgeois value," said Ivan in his official voice again. "If you're part of the Revolution, that's happiness enough."

"Is that what your wife thinks?" said the old man.

"She's learning," said Ivan grimly. "But she's a little like you. She wants the old Christmases her father told her about—trees and candles and songs, the church in the snow and the priest with his prayers. But she'll forget, and our children will never know. Now, how about those people you wanted to visit in the East? Let's see those letters."

The old man fished down in his rucksac and brought out a handful of letters, some in envelopes and some just little screwed-up notes, folded and battered. Ivan studied them for a minute or so. Then in a surprised voice he said, "But, these are all from children—Moscow, Irkutsek, Ploesti, Bucharest, Prague . . ."

"Yes, I knew their fathers and the children write to me."

Ivan was at the end of his patience. "You're a spy. This is all a trick to get in and make trouble among our people. I'll have you arrested. And why were you looking in the D.P. huts down the road?"

"I've lost a lot of my friends recently and I thought I might find some of them there. I hoped someone might invite me in."

Ivan jumped to his feet. "You can come for a visit of twenty-four hours if my colleagues give me an assurance to take you back into the West. You won't get far from the Line in twenty-four hours. Happiness and little wooden figures and letters from children!" His voice was hard as he waved the old man away. "Get out! Get out!"

We others had been watching this little exchange, and I think by now all our sympathies were with the old man. He stood up. The water was still dripping from his old uniform, but there was a dignity about him which was impressive.

"What's the trouble, Ivan?" I said. "Don't bully the old fellow."

Ivan pushed over the paper he had been filling in. "Look at this. There's no sense to it. He may be a spy and I won't let him in unless you agree to take him back at the end of twenty-four hours."

Frenchie nodded. "That's right. You can't be too careful. We'll support you if he's a spy."

I called the old man over. "Here, let me see your paper."

I read it out for Frenchie and Bert to hear. "*Name*: Klaus.
Age: Uncertain, perhaps 75. *Place of birth*: In the East.
Domicile: Wherever I happen to be. *Occupation*: Making little wooden things. *Purpose of journey*: Visiting friends."

I looked around at my colleagues. Bert was tapping his head to indicate that the old man wasn't all there. Frenchie was looking wise. "You can't be too careful," he said. "He looks highly suspicious to me."

Bert broke in, "You were born in the East. You want to go back home, is that it?"

"I'd like to," replied the old man, "but I've business to do in the West as well."

Somehow I didn't like the sound of that. "Business? What kind of business? Were you ever a member of the Communist Party?"

"Or of the Fascist Party?" chimes in Bert.

"Or of the Nazi Party?" says Frenchie, so as not to miss a point.

"No," says the old man. "I never belonged to any political party. I've been in the East and I've been in the West—London, New York, Washington, Paris, Ottawa, Rome—I know them all. I remember days when I used to arrive there through the snow, through the starlit night at Christmastide. The lights would shine in the houses, people singing, the crowds coming out from the Midnight Mass, the families round the tree. I had one priceless gift to bring to men—happiness, joy, peace. Everything else I gave was just a token of that gift. The stars used to glow in heaven when I handed out my little wooden gifts from my old bag."

I was staring at the old man and Bert's jaw had dropped almost to his chest. Frenchie reached forward for the rucksac. "Here, let me see what you've got in there."

He pulled it open and fumbled around for a minute and then came out with a meagre handful of straw, a few bits of pine branch, and some carved figures.

"That won't get you far," said Frenchie, rather disgusted with his find.

"Not far?" said the old man. "Round the world and down the centuries."

As he said this, something happened. I'll swear to it. I can still see it today. It wasn't a trick of the light, though by now it was black dark outside and the lights were not very bright in the room. But the old man seemed to grow in strength and size. His beard filled out. His old uniform fell into decent folds, and those little figures which Frenchie had dropped on the table, he was reverently arranging to make a Nativity scene. There was an ox and an ass, there was Joseph, and there was the Mother and Child. They stood on our battered old desk with the bits of straw and pine branch woven amongst them.

I felt I had known it all along, but I couldn't stop myself asking, "Klaus, what's your Christian name?"

With a quiet dignity he replied, "It used to be Saint. But the children called me Santa and that's the name that's stuck."

I heard a muffled whistle from beside me. "Blimey, if it isn't Santa Klaus!" said Bert. "What are you doing here on the Line?"

"I came to find my friends. Mothers with babies and no roof over their heads, and the wind howling and the snow driving. Fathers who are desperate because they don't know where to look for food and shelter for their families."

The old man pointed to the Christmas figures he had arranged on the desk. "That's why I always have these along with me," he said.

Frenchie was still acting hardboiled. "Pretty, isn't it?" he said. "But what's it add up to?"

"You've forgotten haven't you? You in your warm office. Your wife and children in their warm home. Your friends with plenty to eat and drink. You've forgotten how the Father, the Mother and the Child were cold and had nowhere to sleep. And have you forgotten the shepherds, too? They were there—out in the cold, no homes for them that night. The newspapermen, the radio men, the newsreels—they missed it. But the picture was printed on the imagination of mankind and the greatest artists have never grown tired of painting it. The commentators were off at the front covering some Roman war, or they were down at the parties in the big hotels—those hotels that never had room for Joseph and Mary and the Baby. The shepherds were there, though, and they were humble enough to recognise history being made when that Baby was born—joy, peace, happiness—they knew it. You've all forgotten it."

Frenchie looked as if someone had hit him on the head. The old man had a way of looking at you that made you feel small—me, at any rate. Bert wasn't giving in so easily.

"That's old stuff," he said. "Teach it to the children, but keep it in the nursery. If you live on the Line, you want something else for Christmas."

"Maybe you'd want it wherever you lived—but it isn't Christmas," he replied. "Tinsel and noise and expensive presents and cheap laughter. Christmas where you can only stand your friends when you've had two drinks and they can't stand you when you've had a third. When you've no room for a new world in your heart, but only try to forget the old one by make-believe and noise. Christmas where men hate. Christmas where men plot and plan to destroy their fellowmen—that's not Christmas."

Ivan was listening intently, still standing apart. As the old man paused, he shook his head as though trying to dislodge some thought that was making him disloyal to his Revolution.

"But that's all there is," he said. "The rich destroy themselves and the poor take over. The strong rule the weak. That's how we built our Revolution. What is your Christmas, anyway. And what are these?"

He gestured contemptuously at the crèche on the desk and as he did so the old man turned and pointed out through the window.

"You've never known Christmas. You never heard of the greatest Revolutionary who ever walked this earth. If you had known it, and if those who had known it had lived it, you would never have needed your Revolution. Look!"

It was so still you could hear the hiss of the snowflakes falling from time to time down the chimney on to the fire. A light, where it came from I don't know, seemed to shine behind us as we looked towards the window. It caught the crèche in its light and on the fresh snow outside threw lifesize silhouettes—the Father, the Mother and the Child, the ox and the ass. Ivan stood rooted by the sight. It was something from another world. I suppose we others all felt the same desire to move forward to see more closely. As we did so the light caught us, too, and our three shadows

joined the picture on the snow, and there was something strange and yet something very familiar about them.

"Look Ivan," said the old man. "When that Baby was born to lead the greatest revolution of history, there were three Wise Men who came, not from the West, like these clever fellows, but from the East. They followed a star. You have wise men in Moscow. They, too, follow a star, a red star. These Wise Men from the East saw a golden star, filling the heavens and they followed it to open a new day for mankind. Your red star may fill the earth, but it will fill it with blood and sorrow."

He picked up the old rucksac for a moment, and turned it upside-down. A few twigs and straw fell out.

"You were worried about what I have in my bag. You should have worried about what I have in my heart. You are strong in the East. You would rather make people tremble than happy. You are proud in the West. You would rather be secure than risk all for a new world. No wonder you're worried about what's in your hands—bombs and guns—and in your heads—ideas and philosophies and plans. But what's in all your hearts? Emptiness, hate and terror. And none of you has room for the Mother and the Babe and the love that only they can give. You're just as bad as each other when it comes to that."

The voice that had been so strong and compelling died down to a whisper, "And yet if you understood, you would all welcome them to your side of the Line, and the Line would disappear. That would be a real Christmas."

The voice stopped. We were gazing out on the snow, not daring to look at each other. That strange quiet was all around us. I caught the sound of someone singing, it sounded like a million miles away, and yet it might have been right inside my head. I don't know. But I did know we were alone and that when I turned back to the room there would be just the four of us—but with a difference.

Minutes passed; or maybe time just stopped. Ivan was the first to move, very slowly back to his desk.

Frenchie gave a great yawn and rubbed his eyes. "I must have dropped off. I dreamed I was talking to an old friend."

Bert was humming a tune. It was "Holy Night". He stopped suddenly. "Something reminds me of home." Then he walked over to Ivan who had picked up the questionnaire off my desk. Over his shoulder Bert read it out.

"Name: Klaus. Age: Uncertain, perhaps 75. Place of birth: In the East. Domicile: Wherever I happen to be. Occupation: Making little wooden things. Purpose of Journey: Visiting friends."

Bert stopped. Ivan looked up at him and passed the paper over to us. I saw Frenchie's look of surprise as he glanced it through. I took it from him.

At the bottom of the paper was my signature, and Frenchie's and Ivan's and Bert's, and above our names the big rubber stamp which said "Permit granted", and underneath that the coveted endorsement that only went to VIP's "Permitting unlimited exits and entrances across the Line."

On the floor there were a few little bits of straw. Outside the window there was the snow. Inside our hut were four men, thinking.

"And I was afraid of letting him in," quietly said Ivan, as, like a child doing it for the first time, he made the sign of the Cross.



BOOKS FOR CHRISTMAS

THE WORLD REBUILT

by Peter Howard

The true story of Frank Buchman and the achievements of Moral Re-Armament

Cloth bound 7s. 6d. Paper cover 2s. 6d. \$1

REMAKING THE WORLD

The Collected Speeches of Dr. Frank N. D. Buchman

Cloth bound 10s. 6d. Paper cover 5s. \$3

CLIMAX OF HISTORY

by R. C Mowat, Lecturer in History, Royal Naval College, Greenwich

10s. 6d. \$2.50

ESCAPE TO LIVE

by Wing-Commander Edward Howell, D.F.C.

10s. 6d.
\$2

ANNIE THE VALIANT

A tribute to Annie Jaeger by William and Clara Jaeger

1s. 6d.
25c.

AND SO WE GOT MARRIED

An anthology, beautifully illustrated, compiled by Hannen Foss

15s.
\$3

CHRISTMAS LASTS FOR EVER

A Christmas anthology compiled by Hannen Foss

12s. 6d.

THE BACKGROUND WAR

Studies in the Bible by Brigadier D. Forster showing its relevance to the ideological conflicts of today

5s.
\$1

RING IN THE NEW

Poems by Bremer Hofmeyr

2s. 6d.
50c.

TREASURY OF CHRISTMAS MUSIC

Edited by Dr. Will Reed with a foreword by Sir Adrian Boult

10s. 6d.
\$2.25

Words only 1s. 6d.

GOLDEN BOOK OF CAROLS

Ten carols with illustrations by Treyer Evans

7s. 6d.

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

TREASURE BOOK OF THE WORLD

Edited by D. M. Prescott. For boys and girls aged 8 to 13.

9s. 6d.
\$2

VERY FIRST BIBLE STORIES

A series for the 3 to 5 year-olds:

- Zaccheus, the Little Man
- The Little Black Lamb
- The Picnic Boy
- Baby Jesus
- The Little Grey Donkey
- The Blind Man Who Saw Jesus

each 3s.
50c.

Obtainable from: Moral Re-Armament, 4 Hays Mews, Berkeley Square, London, W.1; or from, 833 South Flower Street, Los Angeles, California.

