

Indian answer for British industry

'WE BRITISH can learn from India.' So said Bert Reynolds, a telecommunications engineer and trade unionist from Birmingham, who has just returned from two months in India as part of a joint trade union-management team from Britain.



Bill Taylor (foreground, right) with some of the British team.

Speaking to 400 at the Westminster Theatre, London, he said that British industry should apply such concepts as the Joint Department Council at the Tata Iron and Steel Company, one of the biggest steel plants in India, at Jamshedpur, Bihar. He and his colleagues had sat in on this Council, and had watched as, for three hours, the 800 workers in one department asked searching questions of their managers, while the Managing Director and the President of the trade union listened and contributed too.

A management member of the visiting team remarked on the same thing. 'Coming from Britain,' said Richard Hawthorne, 'where it is uncommon to have management and union members joining in informal discussions at their place of work, it was encouraging to participate in many such meetings in Indian factories.' Mr Hawthorne is President-elect of the Nottingham Printing Industries' Federation.

He had been impressed by the achievements of the past 30 years in Indian industry,

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and of the eagerness of directors, managers and trade unionists 'to find even more effective industrial relations in the '80s'.

The team was invited to India by trade union leaders who asked them to pass on their experience of applying the ideas of Moral Re-Armament. 'With this philosophy the trade unions will reach their goal—to fulfill the needs of people,' said Bimal Banerjee, one who invited them. Mr Banerjee is General Secretary for West Bengal of Hind Mazdoor Sabha, the Socialist trade union federation.

They had spoken to a wide range of industrial and trade union organisations. Often the question of corruption had come up. People told them of their constant fear that a bribe would be expected for services rendered.

'Can we give a lead in dealing with "backhanders" and other corrupt practices in British industry?' Mr Hawthorne asked. 'That is the challenge to us in Britain if we mean to deal with corruption in the world.'

He told too of action which had given him hope—such as the co-operative housing scheme for 657 families initiated by Khatau Mills in Bombay, on the basis of no bribery, which is going ahead.

Not tolerated

Khatau Mills have sent many delegations to the industrial seminars at Asia Plateau, the MRA conference centre in the Maharashtra hills. Throughout their visit, Mr Hawthorne said, they had met men taking action to answer dishonesty and division as a result of these seminars.

Bill Taylor, who recently retired as a convener of shop stewards at British Leyland—and who gathered the team to go to India—said that all his doubts about what to do in his retirement had been resolved. 'I know now that I must be involved more than ever in MRA's world action.'

'I am amazed how many trade union men have asked us to tell them about the work we were doing in India,' he said. 'Many are concerned about the world. They know that to survive, our countries need each other.'

He had been shaken by the poverty he had seen in India. 'I know poverty, but not at

Offered—a costly opportunity

by H S Addison

TO MY MIND the most urgent problem in the world today is the materialism of our affluent societies. Frank Buchman, who began Moral Re-Armament, said that 'materialism is the mother of all "isms", and democracy's greatest enemy.'

Dialectical materialism is the openly proclaimed philosophy of Communism.

And unconfessed but no less powerful materialism seems to me to have become the real philosophy of millions of us in the wealthy countries of the world. The standard of living, the gross national product, the size of the wage packet have become the criteria by which the performance of governments is judged, so that the policies of statesmen are determined by them.

I sometimes think that we are like Gulliver in the land of Lilliput, who fell asleep and woke up to find himself pinned to the ground by a thousand silken threads. We need something that will give us the will to snap the threads, get on our feet, and do what needs to be done.

For almost all the worthwhile tasks in today's world are global tasks. They will only be tackled by men and women who have learned to think in terms of an ideology upon which all can unite across the world.

We need far-seeing and courageous leadership from our statesmen. But it must be sustained and supported by a groundswell of public opinion, rising from decisions in the lives of countless ordinary people. I cannot help thinking that our own domestic problems, like inflation and unemployment, will only be solved in a global setting.

There is so much to be done, not only for, but with the peoples of the developing world.

Almost certainly it will mean, for us in the rich world, a simpler style of living. But a simpler style of living could be the expression of a higher quality of living that would fascinate the world. We need to tackle not only the material results of materialism. We must have a cure for the bitterness which materialism has created. Above all, we need an alternative philosophy to materialism itself.

Such a philosophy must have at the heart of it the living God and the Holy Spirit, bringing with it all the fruits of the Spirit. All the ideologies which have ignored God or attempted to dethrone Him have gone the same fatal road from idealism to the lust for power ending in division, dictatorship and despair.

To restore God to leadership in this modern world—that is the costly opportunity which we are being offered.

The Cross of Christ—not as a dogma, but as a transforming experience and a total commitment—that is the heart of the ideology upon which all can unite.

This article is taken from 'Bridges for the 1980s', the report of the international conference in Sydney, Australia in January. The report is now available from Box 1078J, GPO Melbourne, Vic 3001, price A\$1 plus postage, or from 54 Lyford Road, London SW18 3JJ, price 65p or 85p post paid.

Life-style for '80s

by Anne Mackay

NOT LONG AGO I picked up my son's school essay book. Under the heading, 'My Relations', was a fascinating nine-year-old's view of our family, culminating in the sentence: 'My mother is a common housewife'. I laughed—but then I found myself trying to crystallise the thoughts that had been in my mind as I did the many tasks that fall to the lot of the aforesaid housewife.

It seems clear to me that we need to re-evaluate our style of living. We are now faced with the needs of the Third World—the colossal problems of malnutrition, pollution and poverty. We may say that one person can't make the slightest difference to such issues. But I am trying to evaluate our own way of living and find out what God means it to be. I have found this refreshingly different from just reacting to the latest price-rise or lack of service.

How do we eat, and prepare what we eat? I enjoy cooking, but have found it more difficult in the last few years. Price rises have meant using more time and imagination—with cheaper cuts of meat, beans, vegetables or cheese. It is a challenge to experiment with new foods, and find ways of cooking familiar ones which make them go further. Buying in large quantities helps too.

How do we use our homes when so many families in our own country are homeless,

not to mention the millions in less fortunate lands? We have had our loft converted, and are now able to share our home with an older lady. Her presence in our family, with all she adds of interest and friendship, means a great deal to us; and she is able to give companionship to my husband's mother, also living with us. Our guest-room is often used as well. Our children are never happier than when the house is full.

How do we look after what we have, and get rid of waste? I feel frustrated by today's throw-away mentality. There is satisfaction in finding material in a sale and re-covering two old chairs; saving waste paper which our church can have re-cycled; opening up an old fireplace and heating our sitting-room with wood that cost only the effort of collecting and sawing it.

How do we use our energies? I think of my mother-in-law, now eighty-eight, who still takes on people who might otherwise need the care of a paid social worker. I think of many of my husband's patients I meet, endlessly seeking satisfaction from sex and tranquillisers, often longing for someone to talk to. Are there more who could help to answer some of these things, before they get to the doctor's surgery?

I am learning to use my own energy unstintingly in these busy times, when it is needed. Also to take the hour on first waking, and perhaps a precious twenty minutes after lunch, to pray and think to let God re-charge my batteries.

If the shoe doesn't fit

by Ann Carpenter

MOST PEOPLE are born poor. Millions face unemployment. Comparatively few are well-paid. Some choose not to be paid for the work they do.

These last are more numerous than many think, and they include those who give their whole time to the work of Moral Re-Armament. Each can tell his or her own stories of God's provision.

What does it mean in practice? Once launched on this risky but exhilarating path you need to sort out the difference between what you would like to have and what you need. These often coincide, but where they diverge I can try to persuade myself and others that what I want is what I need. Children know this tactic well.

The sales, though useful, can be dangerous ground. Last month I was convinced that a pair of smart leather boots, temptingly reduced in price, were just what I needed. However, they were a bit too small and no amount of trying to be Cinderella could make me anything but one of the Ugly Sisters. Then came the thought, 'But you don't really need them, do you?' The advertisers, of course, love people like me.

But what about needs? The children are growing fast and things are expensive. Only the other day I had to get my son a new anorak, using two weeks' Family Allowance to do so. Then unexpectedly he was given

one—and it fitted. Luckily I was able to return the one I had bought.

At Christmas we wanted to give our daughter a bicycle but did not see how. Again, we were offered one as a gift—the right size. In neither of these cases had we told anyone of the need.

Our decision not to smoke or drink saves a lot of money. On the other hand entertaining people and travelling take up a great deal. They are necessities—we think it would be the greatest mistake to cut back on the things we should do because we don't see how to pay for them. I like that statement made by Marshall Foch in threatening circumstances: 'My centre is giving way, my right is in retreat; situation excellent. I shall attack.'

Last month, just after receiving a much larger bill than we expected for servicing our car, my husband was due to go to Brussels and Strasbourg to help in the task we have taken on—that of helping the European Community find a concern for each other and for the rest of the world.

We felt he should go, and that we should bear some of the cost ourselves, though it could not be much. We had to pray for the rest. He was given some money by several people who heard of his plan. Then the day before he left a cheque arrived which completed what he needed.

There is a zip and a zest to life like this. We can take Jesus seriously when He tells us to stop worrying about how we will manage materially. It frees us to concentrate on what He wants us to do.

By the washing line

by Rosemary Thwaites

one of the initiators of the international conference held in Sydney in January.

WHEN OUR ELDEST CHILD Michael was less than 2½, we had twins. Recently, about 500,000 nappies later, I read an article in *The Australian* on why women go out to work. Only 14 per cent of all women surveyed were working mainly for money. So all the others wanted to get out of the house because, the article said, 'it's lonely and boring at home'.

Although we're thrilled with our children, I've experienced boredom, frustration and some bitterness because of all the chores and lack of let up. 'Why on earth,' I've asked, 'did I have to have two together? It's a nightmare.' But I've begun to ask God to give me perspective on my life, the faith that He is deliberately giving me this job to do.

Sometimes I've tried to be a success—full of good works, with a beautiful hairstyle and lovely children.

When I was out by the washing line one day I had a vision of the working motherhood of the world—all the women out in the fields working, perhaps with their children on their backs, millions and millions of women in the East and the West. I felt suddenly that I belonged to that, just like all of us who work.

Just when my husband and I felt we'd got enough on our hands and were trying to cope, God asked us to help organise a conference in our city. He pushed us out beyond what we could manage and forced us to think for the needs of other people.

Homebird finds nests

by Grace Bouch

WHEN MY HUSBAND retired from his work as a bank official in the City some years ago, we decided that we would be willing to do anything and go anywhere God asked of us. It wasn't an easy decision for a homebird like me!

We spent several months in different places working with MRA, letting our house while we were away. But then we were invited to India to take part in the work of MRA there. After much thought we decided this is what we should do.

Next day, talking over the fence, I told my neighbour about our invitation to go to India. Immediately she asked, 'What are you doing about your house?' She told me that her daughter was getting married in two months time and was desperately trying to find somewhere to live.

In the hearts of the Andes

An international MRA team has been travelling through the Andean countries of South America—Colombia, Peru and Chile. Here ANN CORCORAN from Britain gives a vignette from Chile:

'WE LOVE THE MOUNTAINS, the clear sky and the sparkling rivers. We love the soil. There is something special about being born on the land—it lives with you.'

Raul Orrego is President of the National Agricultural Workers' Trade Union of Chile. He travels continuously up and down this immense strip of land, some 4,500 kilometres long. Three million of the country's 11 million population work or draw their living from the land. Over the last years, starting under President Frei, there has been agrarian reform, through which the peasants are buying underdeveloped land which has been expropriated from the big landowners, and farming it in co-operatives.

Four of us from overseas recently had the opportunity to see this at first hand. Mr Orrego was one of the 100 or so trade union leaders who attended a conference in Santiago on the theme, 'How to create a positive alternative to class war'. The conference had been organized by the copper and steel workers, several

of whom had visited the MRA world centre in Caux, Switzerland, while attending the ILO in Geneva.

Following the conference, the foreign delegates were taken to visit different parts of Chile by the union leaders. Mr Orrego had brought 10 of his union to the conference. Several of them came with us as we visited some of the poorest areas in the province of Colchagua, 150 kilometres from Santiago.

Alcoholism

When we arrived in Santa Cruz, the provincial town, we were received by the Mayor, Alfa Cornejo de Olea. Forty per cent of the mayors in Chile are women: Mrs de Olea had brought up a family of eight so had plenty of experience in organizing! Press and radio covered the interview, devoting the whole mid-day news programme next day to the visit.

We were then taken to speak with a group of peasant leaders and later bumped along dusty dirt roads to one of the farms. It was an experience to sit in that big barn, surrounded by men whose weather-beaten faces gave nothing away. But they listened intently as we spoke—Hanni Blundell-Weidemann from Switzerland, who told how Switzerland's watch and clock industry had started as cottage industries in the peasants' homes; Erwin Zimmermann from Brazil, who spoke of his experiences of running an honest business and caring for his employees' needs; Ann Corcoran from Britain, whose father had met MRA as an unemployed shipyard worker; and Roddy Edwards from a land-

owning family in Jamaica, who has spent the last five years involved in rural development instead of accepting a life of privilege.

Lack of water is one of the area's main problems. The land could be fertile but there is no capital to sink wells or to irrigate, and loans are hard to come by. Yet the determination among the people to find a way forward and their hope in the future were impressive.

But it was not only the material problems that the young trade unionists were concerned about. One day, we sat together in silence for 15 minutes. Then one by one they spoke about what was really on their hearts: 'On our farm,' said one, 'the problems are mistrust, jealousy and hatred. Everyone thinks only of his own economic advancement. The men want the women to do everything for them in the home.' Another said, 'I need to apologise to my wife.' They were all concerned about the widespread alcoholism. Mr Orrego himself used to drink heavily, but has not touched a drop since a recent spiritual experience.

Politics

After that talk, Mr Orrego told us later, the men all went out and bought things for their wives and children. 'This is amazing,' he said. 'It has never happened before.' They also asked him to arrange a conference, where agricultural workers could learn more about moral and spiritual re-arming.

None of us will forget the open hearts and generosity shown to us. But more than that: the fact that people are people, with cares and hopes, no matter what the politics.



Henry and Grace Bouch

So here we were with the perfect answer—or was it? It might be difficult to reclaim the property if the couple did not find another home when we returned. But we decided to let them rent the house for three years.

Our stay in India was curtailed by ill health and within 14 months we were back in England with no home to go to. What would we do? The next three years were to prove to us that when you do what you believe God wants you to, He does look after you.

First we were invited to stay with the friends with whom our daughter was living. Then came Henry's operation. As he came

round from the anaesthetic he asked the nurse, 'Do you have a convalescent home where I can recuperate, as we haven't a home to go to?'

That morning, unknown to him, an elderly friend living alone by the sea had had the thought to invite us to stay with her—and to do it immediately. So when I went to see Henry I was able to relieve his anxiety. We stayed with her for several months until her daughter and son-in-law returned from overseas.

By this time Henry was much fitter. He took on the business and administration of *New World News* for a year while the business manager was abroad. After that we were asked to help with the reorganisation of Grosvenor Books, MRA's publishing house—Henry working in the office, and myself providing lunch for the staff. Again we were offered hospitality by many friends.

Inflationary

Some time before this we had decided that our house in London had served its purpose and that we should sell and move out of town. We told our tenants, and they wrote back asking us to quote a price and give them first refusal. We did so.

Over the next 18 months they tried unsuccessfully to raise a mortgage. House prices rose and they wrote again, asking if our price had increased. Because we felt that the inflationary prices being asked for property were wrong, we said that we would abide by our original figure. Very soon after this they were given a mortgage by a building society and the deal went through. They looked after our furniture for us until we needed it, and this saved us storage fees.

During these months we looked around, not sure where we were meant to live. We nearly settled for a charming cottage in the country, especially when the owner dropped his price by £2,000. But we felt we were meant first to finish the work we were doing with Grosvenor Books.

Then one day, when we were out for a day in the country with our daughter, we called in at a local estate agents. They gave us properties to look at—amongst them a flat which seemed perfect, and amazingly was within our means. Because we had the ready cash we were able to buy quickly.

People often rely on money as an answer to fear and insecurity. These experiences have shown me that the real answers lie in the realm of the spirit, of trust and obedience to God, and care for other people.

Out from the old age cage

OLIVE BURNETT, now in her eighties, was a doctor in Worthing for eighteen years. She now lives in Brighton:

WHAT A WONDERFUL GIFT old age is! It is the time when all that we have said and sung in the exuberance of youth can come to fruition. If we live alone, as I do, in the quiet and stillness we can develop our love and trust in God.

The first step, taken now or in the past, is to be really honest in self-examination and to ask forgiveness from God and from those we have wronged. The next is to give all we have, all that we are—soul, body, mind and strength—utterly and unreservedly for God to use for ever and ever. This provides a firm foundation on which to build a fruitful, adventurous and joyful old age, starting and planning each day with God.

In the willing acceptance of inevitable limitations we can find new experiences, new ways of doing things, a new and exciting life, living each day to the full and thanking God for it. Of course, it isn't easy, but who wants things to be easy? In my lesser self, I do—a comfortable armchair, no effort, no challenge, a soft life, drifting along. But my better self rebels at this dismal picture.

If we are to make the most of our latter years, which are a privilege from God, we must let go our demands. We need backbone, purpose and assurance that in God's plan for remaking the world, we matter. The atmosphere we create, the way we think and

speak, the smile on our faces, these are more important than activities, which are so often inadequate.

One of the special privileges of old age is time.

It can be one of the hardest things to appreciate. The long empty hours are the testing times. How easy it is to become self-absorbed, constantly reminded of one's failing body, as one's senses become less acute and one's memory lets one down! We can be like birds shut up in a cage not noticing the open door.

But as our bodies become weaker our souls can become stronger. These times are a test of the reality of our faith. We can accept that Christ is all we want or need.

Most of us have been activists, satisfying our creative instincts in what we did and what we achieved. Now we need to develop a new pattern for living.

We can use the time we have to think of the world, and pray for it, to establish a closer listening relationship with God, bringing everything to Him, our depressions, our anxieties and fears, our pleasures and joys, remembering to thank Him continually.

We can use our time to be good listeners—not advisers or controllers, but willing to let people unburden themselves to us and to help them find God's answer. We and they can learn to trust Him for today, tomorrow and all eternity, setting Him free to work miracles in, for and through us.

Apology for racism

FOURTEEN YOUNG PEOPLE from Australia and the Pacific are taking part in the sixth 'leadership-training' course at the MRA centre in Melbourne, Australia.

Since February they have been studying world affairs and the experience of people, in history and today, who have been spurred by their faith to involve themselves in their countries' problems—men such as Toyohiko Kagawa, the Japanese Christian social reformer and trade union pioneer to whom national leaders turned after the Second World War; and George Washington Carver, the black American orphan who helped change attitudes between America's races.

One had attempted suicide twice before joining the course. 'I was bitter against God as He did not let me die,' she said. 'Now I know why. He has a purpose and a plan for the world. I have a unique part in it.'

Sensitive

'There is a big difference between living for the new world and living for my tiny desire,' said Setsuko Shibata from Japan. In the face of this calling, several realised they needed to make changes in their way of life and relationships. 'I realised I wasn't as good as I thought,' said Bruce Green from Victoria. 'I saw that I was run by lies and impurity and that I should put it right and tell my family about it. I also apologised to my father for my rebellion against everything he said or did. Since then we have become much closer.'

'I try not to, but deep down I treat you as a conquered people,' Queenslander Lyndelle Drew told the Papua New Guineans and Aborigines at one of the course meetings, apologising for her racism. 'I have expected you to speak English as well as me and have treated you as inferior because you don't. It has been a terrible thing in my life. Here I have come to know you as intelligent, sensitive people.'

'Trust and understanding have been built through that apology,' says Seruma Wedega, one of the participants from Papua New Guinea. 'No one had ever said anything like that to me before. I had often thought that white people always expect us to think like them, but have never understood what we think. I realised that I had to change, too, the way I think about the white people. We need each other.'

Other participants came from Japan, Taiwan and Hong Kong. 'I put my whole heart into caring for my people and couldn't think of other nationalities,' said Grace Tsai from Taiwan. 'I have learnt that I won't find the answer to unite China unless I start to care for other nations as much as I do for the Chinese.'

INDIA contd from p1

that depth.' He had seen conditions in factories which would not be tolerated in England.

'We of industry need to get together with a willingness to tackle that task,' he said. 'We met many there who are doing this. But we don't hear of them. We hear the worst of them, and they hear the worst of us. Constantly we met Indians who had given up British industry as lost, and we had to give them news of the positive developments.'

'In Bombay we were able to do that on TV. We want to get the chance to speak on TV here in Britain too.'

Speaking at an earlier occasion, George Taylor, member of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers, who was also in the team, said, 'In India I faced the stark reality of how people live. The answer to irresponsibility in our trade unions is to experience India.'

WE ARE ALL to be the bridge-builders in the world—the bridge between God and man, found for us in the face of Jesus Christ; the bridge between the Jesus of history and the living Christ of our experience; the bridge between Christian and Christian; the bridge between Christians and a world where our allies will be the God-seekers, the peace-makers, and friends of the poor.

But, if you would seek to put the world to rights, do you begin with some other person or with yourself? It is a day to remember that the confrontation of God with man calls out not the interest of the spectator but the fresh and renewed response of the seeker. 'Here am I, send me. I am the Lord's servant. As you have spoken—so be it.'

Robert Runcie, Archbishop of Canterbury, in his enthronement sermon on 25 March.

Owing to Easter holidays there will be no issue of *New World News* dated April 12. *New World News* will appear again on April 19.