

EASTER Britain and Moral Re-Armament

Easter thoughts for my British friends in MRA, at home and abroad
From Roland Wilson, Secretary of MRA in Britain
New Delhi, 29 March

IS FRANK BUCHMAN out of date? If the world seems to change does Truth change?

In India I read that because of the population problem some missionary societies are sending out missionaries in family planning. Family planning happens to be Government policy. If you enquire into the facts, aspects of this programme emerge which to me seem blood-curdling. The family planning missionaries are no doubt heralded as progressive, 'with-it' in every way. At one time the test of a missionary was whether he was with God.

In a with-it-world can we in MRA expect to avoid the temptations of other men? I suggest this Easter we might examine our living and also our thinking, and see whether with-it-ism has infiltrated us. Jesus said, 'The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in Me.'

We have to decide whether our strongest urge is to fit MRA into the contemporary scene, or to heighten still further its revolutionary aims. It is worth remembering that the test of revolution is never size or numbers, or the extent of popular support. The test is in the realm of aims.

Buchman, for the last twenty-five years of his life, constantly stated that MRA is the greatest revolution of all time whereby the Cross of Christ will transform the world. It was a woman journalist who gave him that headline challenge. The last Easter I was with him he proclaimed the theme for us all as, 'Have you an Easter experience of Christ adequate to answer the Kremlin?' This conception is diametrically different from the idea now being put by people of many view-

points that the test of our Christianity is whether we can come to terms with the Kremlin.

Buchman's published speeches, which make good Easter reading, cover a period of twenty-nine years. It is always the temptation of youthful enthusiasm to regard its own age as the most unique age ever. Buchman died seven years ago. And people say that in those seven years we have come to face a different world. They forget that Buchman himself lived through some changes. He knew the man who invented electric light. He endured two world wars. He saw the birth, growth, power and collapse of one ideology. He saw the birth, growth and expanding supremacy of another. He saw the rise and fall of ancient and powerful nations. He saw the birth of radio and television which has transformed humanity's life. He shared in the marvel of electronics and was stimulated by the wonders of the nuclear age and man's journey into space.

Till his last days he let the full kindling effect of these vast human developments work on his mind and imagination. But he was not so naïve or easily influenced as to believe that these things affected the truths for which he stood by one iota. Nor have any of the further changes since his death.

One man recently wrote of MRA that 'it is not a rigid rule'. If Christ's Sermon on the Mount is not a rigid rule, then neither is MRA. But all too often people who complain of a rigid rule are those who want to live without rules. When after the War the first group of Japanese arrived at Caux, Frank Buchman sat down to dinner

with them on their first evening. Many of them knew little of MRA. He asked for a pile of notebooks and every Japanese was handed one. They were then told that the essential and necessary basis of Moral Re-Armament, for all who wanted to have a part in it, was adequate time daily listening to the voice of God. They were urged to begin the following morning.

Breakfast may not be a rigid rule but most ordinary people treat it as such, and would be in difficulty without it. The absolute standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love are or are not a rigid rule according to the view we take of them. For myself, I find it necessary to make them a rule. If a rule is something which I am always expected to obey without exception and irrespective of my own convenience, then those standards are a rule. And experience has led me to query the motives of all those who question their binding and universal application.

We live in a world, of course, that resents rules. It has established its own rule, of doing what we please or what we think will please others. But I would welcome for myself and all the MRA men and women across the globe, as part of our Easter experience, a faithful re-application of those rules which any who worked with Frank Buchman know to have been the guide-lines of his life and the secret of his effectiveness. And if we think that because the world has changed, the rules are modified, then we put paid to the programme for which he lived and died.

Frank Buchman normally faced and dealt with sin. To him sin was the

disease, Christ the cure, the result a miracle. Some people are propagating the view that large aims, rapid movement and the excitement of an expanding programme are today's antidote to sin. Frank Buchman did not hold this view. No one battled more resolutely than he did to kindle us to tackle the needs of our nations, which is the most adventurous of all tasks. He also said repeatedly, in public and private, that men need the stronger dose, that 'the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin'. And he made it abundantly plain that anyone anywhere who sidestepped this universal Easter experience had missed the mainspring of his revolution.

He said that the words, 'Make and keep me pure within,' are the greatest words in the English (or any other) language. He also said, 'My strength is as the strength of ten because my heart is pure.'

Take issue

Peter Howard used to say to us in Britain, on many occasions, that MRA should be a permanent hot potato in the life of the nation. He challenged us to take issue on every issue. He knew his own country and was clear that only by moral clash, on every point that came up, whether with ordinary men or with the Establishment, would progress towards the moral rearmament of Britain be made.

Christ was crucified not because on some occasions large numbers followed Him. The Palm Sunday applauders did little to deter the Good Friday murderers. He was crucified because He challenged the Establishment, not on political grounds, but with the clear summons to let God dictate absolutely, personally and nationally, what He wanted done.

Resurrection and Pentecost followed. And thirty-three years later Christians in Rome were challenging the Establishment, and burning as torches in the Emperor Nero's garden as the price of their faithfulness.

Later heresy afflicted the Church. It did not show itself as frontal opposition to God's ways and standards. Its menace to the Christian faith was that it stressed a part of the truth at the expense of the whole. And men who knew the glory of God's truth knew that once it was shaped or re-shaped to stress less than its fullness, the end was not far off. The popular angle of truth might win support and seem to succeed. The Aryan heresy captured

half the world. But steps had painfully to be re-traced and timeless truth permanently enthroned at the heart of the Church.

There is a story of our work in Britain which has not yet been fully told. I happened to be involved in it. It was at the height of the War, when Britain was in danger and America had not yet made up her mind. Certain men from the extreme left-wing and the extreme right-wing were attacking MRA, and particularly Frank Buchman, (then in his home country America), with the cheap smear, plausible in war time, that our national loyalties were in question. A senior investigator was sent by the Government to look into our affairs. He did, was more than satisfied, reported favourably to his Minister, and became a firm and personal friend much interested in MRA.

One day I received a phone call from the office of a senior Cabinet Minister. I was requested to go round and see the Minister privately. When I arrived he and two of his officers were present and he said that he wished to put a proposition to us. The Government, he said, had investigated our work. It was of value to the country. They would be prepared to support it. But these attacks on Dr Frank Buchman were embarrassing. They had no means of vouching for Dr Buchman since he was an American in America. Would we, in return for Government support, consent to issue a statement that though we were grateful for all Dr Buchman had done for us we felt that in time of war it was better to suspend our connections with him and concentrate on the needs of our own nation. The Minister added that we could, of course, resume our global connection, including our links with Dr Buchman, as soon as the war was over.

The Minister had the reputation of being a straight man, though he was clearly under pressure. We too were under pressure. Our men were being enlisted month by month and there was a mighty task to be done by MRA in Britain. I said to the Minister, 'What would you do if you were in my place?' He was silent. Then I briefly told him that all that we in MRA had experienced was due, as far as man was concerned, to Frank Buchman's faithfulness to us through the years, and that the answer to his proposition was, 'No'. The Minister said, 'I rather expected that would be your answer.' And the interview ended.

Britain is under fire through the world for breaking her pledged word. I do not myself intend to break my pledged word to God and man to give all of everything to bring to birth the full dimension of God's idea of Moral Re-Armament for my own land and for humanity. A revolution never seeks sponsors. It hardly worries about support. Its aim is not to win the goodwill of the Establishment, but to change the Establishment. A revolution ceases to be a revolution if it aims to run along with the Establishment. There is no Cross in that.

We talk from time to time about Britain's past history. It has many tones and overtones. But in his dying words Frank Buchman struggled with weakness to send us a message. He said, 'I want to see Britain governed by men governed by God.' For some reason our island was in his heart and mind in those final hours. In his speech made at Visby, Sweden, in 1938, he said, 'I do not want you to come along just because I am here. That would be a poor revolution—a poor fellowship. Let us for a moment see a picture of the Cross of Christ, and let me say, if you join in this great crusade, you will get the way of the Cross. I am not going to lure you by hopes of material success. I am not going to lure you by saying you are going to be heroes. It is a personal experience of the Cross . . . That is my challenge to you.'

Easter Pr THE WESTMINS AT HOME TO

Good Friday, 12 April 7.30 pm Film:

**'MR. BROWN COMES DOWN
THE HILL'**

Saturday, 13 April 10.30 am

**A FILM PANORAMA —
THE MARCH OF ANSWER**

The 90-minute programme features a world broadcast by Dr Frank Buchman; a visit to Caux; MRA's programme in India, including the opening of the new Asian MRA centre at Panchgani; and 'A Man to Match the Hour', on the life of Peter Howard.

2.30 pm & 7.45 pm ANNIE

AN AUSTRALIAN VIEW OF BRITAIN'S DOCKS

JIM BEGGS, a Melbourne dockers' leader, left London this week for Rotterdam after visiting the ports of London, Liverpool, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Grangemouth, Belfast, Bristol, Tilbury and Southampton. In these ports he met the dockers, port employers, shipowners and trade union officials.

Lloyd's List and Shipping Gazette, in an interview of Beggs, reported: 'He felt that dockers in this country—and managements too—had to realise that both sides had responsibilities as well as rights. They had to decide what the docks were meant to do for the country. The alternatives were: they could wreck the economy or they could aid its recovery.'

Below are the main points of the interview published on 1 April in 'Lloyd's List and Shipping Gazette', the daily newspaper of the shipping industry:

The main impression gained by Australian docker Mr Jim Beggs on his tour of Britain's docks is that this country has a long way to go to match the amenities provided for dockers in other countries.

Mr Beggs, who works in the port of Melbourne, and is a prominent member of the Australian Waterside Workers Federation, has spent the last month touring Britain's docks.

He said he was surprised how far behind Britain was in dock amenities. The only port he could really exclude from this was Glasgow. There, he saw an excellent canteen which was

kept so clean that office workers, both male and female, had no qualms about going into it for their meals.

Mr Beggs said he had seen a great deal of evidence in the port of London that the port authority were tackling the problem but he felt a lot more could be done. He also spoke of the effect the labour situation in Britain's docks had on Australian dockers.

Misleading reports

During the eight-week dock strike in London that followed the introduction of decasualisation he said there were attempts made by men in Australia to bring out dockers in sympathy. These men, he said, belonged to what they called the Peking Communists.

For a while, too, there was a danger that they would succeed. 'The first reports we read in the papers' he went on 'suggested that the whole of the port of London was on strike'. Had this been true I think the union in Australia would have found it difficult to stop the dockers striking in sympathy.

'I had contacts in England, however, and I was able to quickly establish that in fact only about a fifth of the port was on strike. We were, therefore, able to avert a stoppage'.

Fewer disputes

He said they had fewer disputes in Australia because there had been built up a better understanding between the men, union and management. One point that had helped this had been the election of a men's representative in each ship that was



Jim Beggs

worked. This had meant that problems could be sorted quickly, and were not allowed to fester.

He felt that dockers in this country—and managements too—had to realise that both sides had responsibilities as well as rights. They had to decide what the docks were meant to do for the country. The alternatives were: they could wreck the economy or they could aid its recovery. Mr Beggs is a supporter of the Moral Re-Armament movement. His fare to this country and expenses were paid by contributions from dockers in Australia.

Besides visiting all the major ports in this country he has lunched with the directors of the port of Bristol, and with Lord Simon, chairman of the Port of London Authority.

In addition he has met London and Liverpool dockers in their homes, and has held a friendly forum with a party of London dockers. He spent nearly two hours discussing the docks with Mr Jack Dash, who has been one of the most militant unofficial leaders in dockland. 'It was a very interesting discussion,' he said. 'Jack Dash's name is known throughout the water-front of Australia'.

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An Index has been prepared of Volume 15 of the MRA Information Service. If you would like to order a copy, price 2s, please write to: MRA Information Service, 4 Hays Mews, London W1.

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STER THEATRE THE WORLD

Easter Sunday, 14 April 11.00 am

THE WESTMINSTER THEATRE
AT HOME TO THE WORLD—
AN EASTER MORNING FOR ALL

3.00 pm Film:

'VOICE OF THE HURRICANE'

Easter Monday, 15 April 3.00–5.00 pm

OPEN HOUSE, WITH TEA, AT
45 BERKELEY SQUARE, LONDON W1

7.45 pm ANNIE

EUROPEAN REVUE GOES TO FRANCE

SPEAKERS FROM Birmingham and Liverpool addressed a meeting in London last Sunday entitled 'A new pace for Britain'. Parties from Liverpool, Birmingham and Hull, numbering 175 people, attended the crowded meeting in the Westminster Theatre Arts Centre.

Ian Bllock, a member of the Liverpool Trades Council, was among Merseyside speakers who said the visit of the European revue, *Anything to Declare?*, had given a new unselfishness of living to people in Liverpool's docks, schools and colleges. (For a fuller report of the effect of the musical's visit to the Merseyside and the Midlands, see previous editions).

This week *Anything to Declare?* arrived in Thionville in Eastern France to participate in an MRA conference for Lorraine and European industry, called 'Each Man Counts In Remaking the World'. Later they will visit Austria on the invitation of the Governor of Salzburg Province and the



The Vice President of Cyprus, Dr Fazil Kuchuk receives British trade unionists enroute to India. The British workers met leaders of both the Greek and Turkish communities during their visit to the island. They are the second group of British workers to go to India in response to an appeal for assistance from Rajmohan Gandhi, one of the men chiefly responsible for MRA's programme in Asia. They are Frank Abbott, shop steward at London Airport; Duncan Corcoran from Glasgow; (Dr Kuchuk); Les Dennison, Chairman of the National Federation of Building Trades Operatives in Coventry; and John Mackenzie, a Clydeside Boilermaker's branch secretary photo Grandy

Mayor of Salzburg. Manfred Müller-Rienzburg, an Austrian member of the 15-nation cast of the revue, said that Austria could build bridges between Eastern and Western Europe.

'*Anything to Declare?* should make clear to all the Austrians this responsibility they have and give them an aim worth living for,' he said.

3 New Pamphlets out soon

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'VOICE OF THE HURRICANE' IN ETHIOPIA

ERITREA IS one of the cockpits of violence on the African continent. In this province the Ethiopian Government has been fighting a battle against the guerillas of the Eritrea Liberation Army. In Asmara, the capital of Eritrea, 2000 students last week saw *Voice of the Hurricane*, a story of assassination, racial clash, and God's power to change both the arrogant and the hate-filled.

Ato Teame Mebrahtu, an Ethiopian teacher, commented, 'This is a powerful and timely story which challenges all of us.'

Screenings of the film are being attended by a cross-section of Asmara, including the Italian community.