

The Lomé Convention is one of the initiatives which gives most hope for the creation of more just economic and social relationships between rich and poor nations. It is a co-operative venture between the European Economic Community and 53 nations of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP). By its terms the EEC countries guarantee, among other things, to stabilise the export earnings of the ACP countries from the sale of their principal commodities to Europe.

Signed in 1975, the agreement is a big step forward from previous arrangements whereby European countries dealt solely with their former colonies. But the current negotiations for its renewal have revealed considerable discontent with it amongst the ACP nations.

## WHAT AFRICA ASKS OF EUROPE

During the past years, Bernard Zameron, of the Robert Schuman Centre for Europe, and his colleagues have worked assiduously to establish a deeper understanding between the EEC and the ACP nations. At the most recent of a series of meetings they have organised, 12 African ambassadors met with 10 Members of Parliament from European countries. Among the speakers was Irène Laure, former Secretary-General of the Socialist Women of France and a pioneer of European unity, who spoke of the costly acts of repentance and forgiveness out of which that unity had grown. Mr Afolabi, the Nigerian Ambassador to the EEC, described her speech as 'profoundly moving'.

Here Mr Zameron tells why he is undertaking this work:

AT THE END OF SEPTEMBER the Consultative Assembly of the Lomé Convention met in Luxembourg to discuss the updating of the Convention.

Over questions of economics, finance and trade no insurmountable problems arose. Far-reaching moral issues were raised, however, over the way we conceive of human relations, when some Europeans wanted to write guarantees of human rights into the Convention and make economic aid in some way dependent on them.

The discussion, sometimes vehement, revealed what would happen if we Europeans failed to become sensitive to two realities: who we are ourselves; and to whom we are speaking. As regards the first, in our history there has been bloodshed without parallel. As regards the second, how were we treating our partners of today 200 or even 20 years ago? These nations are eager to create with us the first real family of nations; but for lack of sensitivity on our part we could slide into confrontation between continents.

Make no mistake, it is with Europe that all the African nations would like to co-operate. This was pointed out by an ambassador whose country had passed first under Soviet and then under Western influence. But where does Europe stand? She is the biggest trading partner in the world, with undoubted technological capacity, and still with financial reserves. But what aim has she on the ideological plane? What hope does she offer for the future?

Yet Europe may have just the experience which the world needs. She is creating a

community, which has now been extended by the Lomé Convention to include nations of North and South, as well as an Arab-European dialogue.

Why should Europe strain every nerve to play a difficult role in power politics? All that Africa asks, and all that Europe is really able to give, is that we should turn our backs on rivalry and competition and move into a new form of relationship, in which men and nations become a community and a family.

'We are as keen as you are on the fight for human rights, and this is in our own interest,' I was told by the ambassador of one of the first African countries to become independent. 'But if you turn it into a lesson that Europe is teaching Africa, their own dignity will oblige the Africans to be solidly against you. If you make it a condition for granting aid, your aid will be rejected out of hand. At the same time, we accept that you have a right, even a duty, to make sure that your aid really benefits the people for whom it is intended.'

### Late

We are seeing an experiment in new relations between continents. What will make this experiment work so it becomes a factor in creating a new economic and social order in the world?

On our side, it is probably required of us Europeans that we go all the way in honesty and humility. Our qualities and achievements are already known to our partners. Could we not face our failures, our weaknesses and our needs, and ask our partners for help in finding answers?

After all, is our civilisation so perfect that our only aim must be to export it, and our

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only problem to provide others with the means to copy it? The horrific growth of our cities, unemployment, the harm done to the balance of nature, the down-grading of the family—where it still survives at all—the suicidal armaments race—these are hardly evidence that our way is perfect. They suggest that we have gone astray in the pursuit of a progress which is illusory, because we have made a god of it, instead of seeing it as only a means towards God.

We might start a dialogue with our partners in the ACP and Arab world, not about what is lacking in *them*, but about what is lacking in *us* and what mankind needs if we are to find the right road. Together we might find the secret of change for both sides.

It is late, very late. But it is never too late to prepare for the future.

People are waiting. They are ready to bring us all the riches and all the truth of that human dimension of which our civilisation has lost sight in its obsession with the material needs. They say to us: 'The files are there, but not the spirit. Things can be settled, but what about the people?'

This kind of negotiation would open up new perspectives and a search for the truth. Such a dialogue would stir the men of heart in every party, the independent minds of every race. It would point towards world peace.

This must be the basis for the new ACP-EEC Convention and the Arab-European dialogue. It will lead to an equality that is genuine, to forgiveness and a real care. An ambassador from West Africa to the European Community summed it up so well: 'These will make ties of friendship which will unite men on a deeper level than political conventions.'



The approach to the town of Lomé, Togo

## Storms ahead?

1979 CAME IN WITH A STORM. A storm of anger in Iran, where several hundred died in riots on New Year's Eve. A storm of mounting frustration in Europe, where the inability to agree in European Community negotiations makes many despair. A storm of wind and snow that battered the MRA conference centre at Caux, Switzerland, where 450 people from Europe and beyond were meeting to consider the struggle of ideas in their countries, and to plan how to affect it.

The largest number came from Germany. They presented a play, *Zum Beispiel Deutschland* (Germany, For Instance), in which they look bluntly—though not without humour—at Germany's history and its possibilities for the future. Many young Germans disassociate themselves from their country because they do not wish to be identified with the wrongs of the past. This play has helped many to discover a sense of belonging, and a task—to restore the moral and spiritual values which Europe has lost in its overriding emphasis on economic values.

This determination that Europe should give moral leadership, in its own affairs and

in its dealings with the rest of the world, was a keynote of the conference. To this end, 40 young French men and women have called an assembly for Moral Re-Armament in Orleans in April. 'Who can we count on,' they ask in the invitation, 'to give a sense to life, to rouse a new hope, and to carry it to our country?' They have invited the cast of *Zum Beispiel Deutschland* to present the play at this conference.

Southern Africa will clearly be one storm centre of 1979. Black student leaders from South Africa spoke of the situation there. They had taken on the battle for Moral Re-Armament, they said, because the only way to unite the black people of South Africa was on the basis of absolute moral standards. They had had to put things straight with people they had wronged when they had used their position for false purposes. This approach had also brought considerable change in the attitudes of white South Africans, and they had come with a white South African to take part in a training course for Moral Re-Armament at Caux this month.

In many countries the role of the family is increasingly under debate. The United Nations has nominated 1979 as 'the year of the child'. A group of parents and teachers



French and German meet at Caux

met together to plan a session of the Caux summer assembly on families. Announcing this session, the *Neue Zuercher Zeitung* quoted Peter Hegi, a headmaster from Bern, who pointed out that while some suggest that the family is a relic of the past, his experience with his family, in his school and as a social worker has established that relationships in the family had a decisive effect on relationships between people in general.

The theme of the summer assembly will be 'Bridging the gaps'. Among the special sessions planned will be a fortnight hosted by the people of the British Isles on the theme 'Everyone's fight for a just and unselfish world'. **JCB**

## INDIA Though the thugs were hired

AN MRA CONFERENCE in Allahabad, India, opened at a time of widespread violence in that area. Managers and union leaders had been recently murdered and during the conference a curfew was imposed on the city owing to rioting connected with Mrs Gandhi's arrest.

The conference, on 'Does democracy depend on me and you?', was opened by the Minister of State for Small Industries in Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state, Rewati Raman Singh. It was attended by professors and students, the former Vice-

Chancellor of the University, a judge, lawyers, and men of management and labour.

The students, often regarded as a problem, led the way in demonstrating a change of character as the key to vital social and communal change. Senior pupils of St Peter's School, Agra, left the conference with an eight-point programme which included producing a play on Hindu-Muslim unity, doing half a day's community work in the leper colony or elsewhere every month, burning pornographic literature, meeting daily to pass on their ideas and experiences of moral change to other students, and asking the Archbishop to make it possible for them to hold a Moral Re-Armament seminar in Agra.

The day after the press reported 33 murders in 37 days in the Allahabad area, a worker from Hindustan Aeronautics, the nationalised aircraft factory in Kanpur, got

up to speak. Describing how he had planned to kill the man who had stolen his land, he said he had now decided not to murder him, although the thugs had already been hired.

Several other industries had also sent delegations, the largest group coming from Triveni Engineering Works as a result of the new convictions of the General Secretary of their union and a senior engineer, who had attended a recent MRA seminar at Panchgani, Maharashtra.

Three hundred and fifty people came to hear Rajmohan Gandhi speak in the auditorium of the Allahabad Polytechnic, introduced by the Principal, Dr Kapoor. As delegates from Jamshedpur, Calcutta and other areas of Uttar Pradesh returned home, 37 from Allahabad met to plan for their city and immediately decided to pay for two representatives at forthcoming Panchgani conferences. **GEOFFREY DAUKES**

## Even bankers make mistakes

SPEAKING IN GLASGOW recently on 'A shared aim for industry', accountant Leslie Fox told of men breaking barriers of mistrust in industry, commerce and banking.

He cited Clemens Boesch of the Aufina Bank who had spoken at the conference 'The economy and society of the future', held at the MRA assembly centre at Caux, Switzerland, on why the public standing of Swiss bankers had sunk.

'We have not opened the windows of our banks enough,' Herr Boesch had said. 'A policy of secrecy was pursued instead of giving comprehensive in-depth information about the purpose and task of banks. Many did not have the courage to stand up for personal, political and religious convictions.'

'Let us admit that we have made mistakes, and stand up for the moral values of a new world,' he said. 'To do that we need courage. We must be Daniels in the lions' den.'

Herr Boesch's conviction had led to his bank 'opening its windows' to parliamentarians and journalists at a conference in August. 'The event was a complete success,' he said. 'The journalists only regretted that we had been so tardy in doing this.'

## Canadian course

**STUDY COURSES** initiated at the MRA World Assembly at Caux last summer have spread to other continents.

From Edmonton, Canada, trade unionist Bill Gray writes of a weekly study course which he and others have launched, to train in the revolutionary application of faith to the problems facing their country.

'Inflation is far more a moral issue than an economic one,' he says. 'But we need to marshal our facts, so we can help our trade unionists, Aldermen and Members of Parliament to fight on the right issues.'

# IT'LL TAKE MORE THAN COCA-COLA

1 JANUARY 1979 marked the restoration of diplomatic relations between China and America. It is an event which profoundly affects the power struggle with Russia for resources and control. India, Australia and New Zealand will be looking at China with attitudes more hopeful than in 1978.

Businessmen all over the West have supported the American initiative and are sharpening their programmes to penetrate this vast market. Already plans have been announced for building a Coca-Cola bottling plant in Shanghai, and one American importer has his eye on Peking Duck. The mind boggles at the oceans of Coca-Cola which one billion people, one third of the earth's population, will consume on hot afternoons. Britain is negotiating the sale of jump jets to China—the beginning of what may be a very big arms sale.

We live by trade. The more we trade, the better we live. Only one god gets universal adoration and obedience—prosperity. We murmur regretfully that the will of the people of Taiwan has had to be disregarded. We comfort ourselves with the comforting philosophy that God helps those who help themselves. We fail to see that they are the victims of our false priorities.

But there is one thing the Western business community should not forget. It was our gunboat diplomacy, our callous opium trade, our arrogance, and our belief that what's good for us is good for the world, that closed China to the West in the first place. The Western businessman, with his free enterprise and his religion, was sent packing.

Many of our businessmen would say they were Christian. But will the Chinese believe it? An Indian in New Delhi told me that to him a Christian businessman was a white man with a cigarette in his mouth, a flask in his pocket, his arm around an Indian girl, going into a club which my friend could not enter. When I remonstrated that such a man might not be a Christian, he replied, 'He comes from a Christian country.'

## The door re-opened to the Chinese people may not be held open.

The aims of the Communist in China have been to get rid of the exploiters (the Western businessmen), to restructure China politically, economically and socially, and to work for a like programme for Asia and the world at large. As far as the Chinese could see, the aim of the Christian was to get him to cut down on corruption, concubinage and foot-binding, and to affiliate with some particular church. Will we act differently in 1979? Are we prepared to share the true riches of our faith as well as our goods and technology?

The door re-opened to the Chinese



by Paul Campbell

people—who are highly intelligent, hard-working, thrifty, trained to work together for one cause—may not be held open without change in the West. The fact that the Coca-Cola company and IBM have recently been asked to leave India underlines this reality. A change is needed that would see the white man putting people before wealth and respecting the worth and dignity of every living soul; that would see us facing honestly where we were wrong last time, admitting it, and so living that we have a universal moral purpose as well as a material purpose. A change that would see us humble enough to believe that the Chinese have something of value to offer the West which can enhance our lives as well as advance our economy and political strategy.

## Anarchy

More may hang on this than we realise. For while we explore and develop the Chinese market, forces are on the move to deny the West the oil of the Persian Gulf and the mineral resources of Southern Africa. If that happens the production lines in the West will slow down at the very moment China asks for our goods. On the basis of self-interest alone, these facts demand that the businessman take responsibility for the whole world and the way it goes. We need a commitment to build a world that works—and keeps working.

As we enter 1979 the Communist philosophy seems to be losing its grip on men's minds even as Russian military power gains momentum in Vietnam, Ethiopia, Central Africa and Afghanistan. But already another force is showing its head. It is penetrating the family and political and social structures of our nations. More ominous for the future than Communism or Fascism is our self-developed anarchy. Contracts agreed upon and signed, both in marriage and industry, are given scant regard. Here in Britain strikes and lock-outs curtail hospital, bread, transport, press and TV services. They have become a way of life—like the rain, Britain is bad enough, but is surpassed in days lost through industrial dislocation by Canada,

Italy and two or three other countries.

We have sown permissiveness and reaped not liberty but anarchy. 'Nothing can be all bad, and by the same token nothing can be all good,' runs the argument. 'Who is to say what is right and what is wrong? It all depends on the circumstances at the time.' So now we suffer the erosion of the sustaining structures of a free society. We can watch a person being assaulted on the other side of the street without raising a finger to help. We have lost the will to be involved with the struggle against evil unless our own interests are seriously threatened. The outcome of such vicious self-interest is the barbarism of our century.

## The outcome of vicious self-interest is the barbarism of our century.

The civilisation we inherit, and which according to the wall posters the Chinese would like to have, was not built by people who watched from the other side of the street. Prophets spoke fearlessly, often at the cost of liberty and life; Christ was killed for calling men to obey an authority above self-interest and the State; St Francis with his love and discipline, Lincoln, and thousands less renowned, bought with their own conviction and commitment our democratic freedoms of thought, speech, assembly, movement, the power to elect and to dismiss our leaders. 1978 had its martyrs in the fight against barbarism—the Russian dissidents and men like Arthur Kanodereka of Rhodesia/Zimbabwe.

Will the Western business community go to China with the answer to anarchy? For if we in the West can change, there is hope for the world. On this basis we can invite the Chinese to join with us in opening a door to Russia to the most needed of all revolutions—the radical transformation under God of ourselves and our nations.

### From THE LISTENER, '40 Years Ago' column:

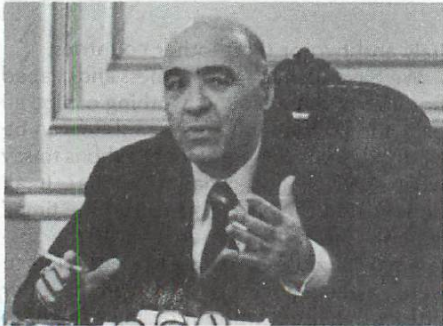
*SPEAKING IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS on the remedy for the nation's ills, Lord Salisbury said recently: 'In the words used by a great movement in this country today, what are needed are God-guided personalities to make God-guided nationalities to make a new world....'*

*In industry the forgotten factor is that God has a plan. Industry can be the pioneer of a new order.*

*To be valid in these decisive days our religious experience must once again become a marching, fighting, conquering world force. A nation led by God will lead the world.*

*'Chaos against God' by Dr Frank ND Buchman. 'The Listener', 1 December 1938.*

# Lessons from Egypt



Dr Mahmoud Darwish, Vice-President of Cairo University, who invited the students.

WHEN WESTERN TOURISTS visit the world's most ancient countries, they return with vivid impressions—and picturesque snapshots. But what impression is left behind?

Dr Abdou Sallam, once Egyptian Minister of Health, met a group of British young people who visited Egypt recently as part of a programme to build links on the basis of the spiritual heritage common to Christianity and Islam. He pointed out that Egyptian youth often think that the price of the West's economic development has been to forget religion and moral values.

The group found that this view of the West was widespread. 'I didn't like Egypt's image of European life when it was reflected in students' attitudes to us,' said one of the group, Mary-Jane Richards of Norwich, reporting on the visit at an evening in London. 'But I realised it is the result of the way we have lived. When I was a student I was mainly interested in enjoying myself and rejected the moral values I'd been brought up with. Films and magazines from the West give this picture. What did we have to offer that was different?'

'One of those we met was a sportsman

who had lived in Britain for two years,' said another of the group, Peter Shambrook. 'He had seen the materialism of our society.' This man was so intrigued to meet young people from Britain who were trying to live their faith and who were ready to sacrifice for it that he dropped what he was doing to look after the visitors, and invited them to his home. 'We had a marvellous evening with his family, who had spent hours preparing a beautiful meal for us.'

Egypt could teach some lessons to Britain, the visitors felt. Vince Handerek, of Imperial College, London, said how impressed he had been by Egyptians' readiness to work hard and their determination to tackle their economic problems. Others spoke of the strong family relationships they had seen in the homes they had visited.

## Britain's relations

Their reports astonished a visitor from Pakistan, who was present at the evening. 'This is the first time I have seen a group going from an "advanced" country—so-called—to a "developing" country who have come back praising it and looking honestly at the troubles at home,' she said. 'We usually hear about the flies, the dirt, the filth and poverty.'

The group were invited by Dr Mahmoud Darwish, Vice-President of Cairo University, who arranged for the visitors to meet student leaders and to visit places of historic and development interest—including the monuments of ancient Egypt.

But for Mary Embleton, who is studying history in Cambridge, Egypt's more recent history was a revelation. 'Last term I did some work on Britain's relations with Egypt in the nineteenth century,' she said. 'But when we went to the Egyptian Naval Museum at Alexandria, and saw their exhibits on the British occupation of Egypt in 1882, and on

the Suez crisis of 1956, I suddenly saw what British domination had meant, from the Egyptian point of view.

'At first I found many things were different to what I was used to. But as I prayed to be free from preconceived ideas of the British way of doing things, a love began to be born for the country. I began to glimpse a quite new dimension to the size and riches of God's people on earth.'

## Economist

The group met some of those who had taken part in earlier visits of Egyptian students to Europe, organised by the Association for British Arab University Visits. These visits included ten days' leadership training at the Moral Re-Armament World Assembly at Caux. 'One girl spoke of the "frustrating relativity of values" stressed in her sociology course,' said Peter Riddell, who has looked after many of these groups on their visits to Europe. 'Her time in Europe had reinforced her belief that there were some values that were absolute, fixed and unchanging.'

'Another who came some years ago is now a leading young economist, working for a foreign firm. He told us how he had made tax returns for the firm on the basis of absolute honesty, in spite of the opposition of his immediate superior. To his surprise, their boss supported him.'

'The practical and physical needs in Egypt are apparent—the gap between the rich and those who live only in mud brick houses or shacks, the crowded buses, the dust and the lack of material comforts,' said Mary-Jane Richards. 'Thirty years with four wars have left their mark on the economy of the country and on people's spirits. But underneath you feel a very strong family bond—and a real faith. Here in the West we have the superficial glamour and efficiency, but do we have the same strength behind it?' JML

## Hill thoughts

by Sally Baynard-Smith

Written after a walk in the Welsh mountains on New Year's Day:

AS I WALK the pure white hills and ponder strife-torn Britain, I glory at all the free gifts God bestows on us.

The snow in its total white purity—what on God's earth is more beautiful?

As the sun rises and sets I gasp at the glory of colours no artist can truly portray, and after the sunset the stars sparkle up to speak of the night.

As the seas beat their drums endlessly on the rocks and shores, no power of man can match their strength.

So it is that sea, sun, snow and stars speak to us of a power that cannot be touched by man's highest striving. They are free for every person on earth to enjoy. They speak of freedom to live, laugh, love and praise. Yet in our selfish dreary ways we look for other things to love—possessions, intellect, comfort, man's approval—but what are they when all is said and done? Nothing in God's kingdom but passing fancies.

Where do we look for our delight? To such fancies? Or are the free gifts of God our spirits' strength?

Where are our hearts to feel and care for those whose lives preclude the chance to laugh and enjoy living?

When reading of 'boat people', refugees and prisoners of conscience, my head says, 'Tut tut, how horrific, but it's all happening over there. Here we are free to follow our

own selfish ways.'

What can we do, what can we say that makes anything different anyway?

Have we ever stopped to think that changes come simply when men begin to care? That change can be just round the corner when stony hearts, tightly locked, are opened wide to provide miracles as yet unborn?

This year could bring hurricanes of horror across the world or it could bring a hurricane of care from thousands of ordinary people everywhere, who will not stand aside and mutter, 'Tut tut—it's all over there', but will, with hearts unlocked, pray and fight for unselfishness to be born.

There is no time too late, no country too far-gone for God in His wisdom to give life, joy and inner freedom to countless millions across the earth.