

The Forgotten Factor

By W. ANDREW STRANG

PORT ELIZABETH saw something unusual this week, something that captured the imagination of citizens in all sections of the community.

It was a play. Its very name, "The Forgotten Factor", invited curiosity.

The cast were entirely anonymous and yet equal to any first rate professional company. The ideas dramatised on the stage were so potent that everyone in the audience began to think of all the difficult situations and people they knew. If only those involved in these problems could see the play how much easier life would be!

At the P.E. Club bar, in board rooms, around the tool shop, in trade union meetings and at bridge parties, "The Forgotten Factor" was the topic of the week.



THE history of the play, which was written in two days, is a drama in itself, because it is playing a part in building the kind of world everybody wants.

It was written in America during the war to answer the need, increasingly felt all over the world, for an inspired renaissance in our democracies.

Great ideas were on the march which threatened to destroy all that for centuries had been fought for and held dear. People and peoples were confused. They knew what they were fighting against but not so sure what they were fighting for.

Even while the men were at the war fronts, alien ideas were gripping nearly all the institutions which make up a democracy, and were threatening to take them over — ideas of materialism, of the super man, super race or super class, ideas long rejected by the creators of the democracies but once again on the march.



INTO this ideological conflict came "The Forgotten Factor".

It was a weapon in the war to create an inspired world-wide, democratic way of life. Behind it stood the world force of Moral Re-armament of whom Mr. Truman said: "If these people were given the green light to go ahead, there is no industrial bottleneck that could not be broken."

They were given the green light and have performed in 13 countries, in eight languages! Already in South Africa over 60,000 people have seen the play.

Everywhere the "Forgotten Factor" has gone there have been stories of its effects. One phrase alone "not who's right, but what's right"—spoken by the labour leader in the play, as he fights for teamwork with his boss, has been the basis of countless conferences in homes, industries and international affairs which have brought an answer to long standing feuds and estrangements.



ONE very recent example was on the Rand.

A dispute arose in one of the mines. A foreman had been

fired and tempers had risen on both management and labour sides. A Government Conciliation Board was called for.

But meantime the mine manager, the union leader and the foreman had all seen the play.

The mine manager made a new approach to the union leader, and when the hearing began the union leader moved that the board adjourn and give them a chance to work out a satisfactory solution in the spirit of "The Forgotten Factor."

This was done on the basis of "Not who is right, but what is right," and a week later the solution was announced.

In the official report of the incident the Mineworkers' Union stated: "This settlement is a victory for all concerned, in that a new way has been found whereby employer and employee can meet on common ground."



ANOTHER idea, spoken by one of the characters of the play in his curtain speech at the Opera House, has profoundly affected statesmen and the ordinary man in many countries.

"If you want to see the world different," he said, "the best place to begin is with yourself."

M. George Villiers, President of the National Employers Association of France, was so impressed by "The Forgotten Factor" that he came last year to the World Assembly for Moral Re-armament in Switzerland. There he spoke from the platform with Dr. Hans Boeckler, President of the Trade Union Congress of Germany.

Boeckler said: "There are two reasons why this man should hate me. One is that I am a union leader and he is an employer; the other is I am a German and he is a Frenchman."

"There is a third," Villiers replied, "I was condemned to death by the people of your country; I was a political prisoner; I saw nearly all my friends die around me."

"But all that is past. Together, we must find the way to forget the past. The thing we must find is a new spirit."



NO wonder it has been said of "The Forgotten Factor" that it is more than a play, it is a national force.

In over 80 countries this spirit is at work remaking men, creating sound homes where divorce becomes unnecessary because husband and wife approach a subject in the attitude, "Where was I to blame?"

This spirit is at work making teamworks in industry the accepted way instead of strife and class warfare; and already it is at work uniting nations.

In this way a God-inspired ideology for democracy is being created above party, class, race, and point of view, that will lead to a world remade.