

Them and us

— an exercise in detente

by Peter Hannon
in Cape Town

DETENTE AND DIALOGUE today are 'in' words. How to bridge barriers? How to communicate?

Of course it is not only here in South Africa that these questions are discussed. They are heard in industry, in politics — and in families — around the world.

'If only *they* could understand what I really feel'; 'If only *they* could appreciate my point of view'; 'If only *they*...' So it goes on.

A cynic or a realist might say, 'Perhaps the trouble is *they* do!'

It is a puzzle why we should expect a better understanding of *my* viewpoint to help towards agreement. The fact is that *they* do not want my view. They are interested in

something entirely different.

Many people have a vested interest in division. Division feeds power, privilege, profit, or revolutionary passion. *My* way often seems to pay — in the short term.

In this country I know sincere white men and sincere black men whose interests are entirely at odds. The white man feels the black wants to grab and take control, and he'll be damned if he allows that. The black man feels that the white, however liberal or charitable, will, in the last resort, protect what he has. The one fears the future. The other is convinced that time is on his side.

I am an Irishman. In Northern Ireland it is the same. There is no solution in terms of negotiating on the entrenched positions of *them* and *us*.

To many, the concept of dialogue is ballyhoo or betrayal unless it deals with 'who has the final say?' No changes of approach will amount to anything if the end result remains *my way*, however gift-wrapped it is presented.

I have talked to black men who simply are not interested in making any present system work, because it has been decided by the whites. Clearly some wholly new factor is needed if violence is not to be the inevitable end.

In this situation, is not the realist he who

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decides, in a practical way, to listen to God for His fresh thinking?

That may seem a facile thing to say. But a man who does it is a man who faces the facts. He accepts that a new authority beyond *them* and *us* is both needed and possible. He answers the question of 'who controls' by

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To finish the job



Scottish schoolchildren watch a presentation from 'Song of Asia'.

Photo: Rengfelt

A SIMPLE THOUGHT a year ago to take some responsibility for the finances needed for *Song of Asia* led to total receipts in Britain in 1975 of over £40,000.

The cast and stagecrew of *Song of Asia* — some 70 people — have been accommodated and have travelled, together with four tons of equipment, north, south, east and west through Britain. They are now based at Tirlay Garth preparing for their next moves.

People in their hundreds have given and all bills to date have been paid or are provided for, and we wish to thank

everyone who has contributed.

We now estimate a need of £3,000 to send *Song of Asia* on its way in this new year to Holland and beyond with all bills paid.

Those who wish to help draw this chapter to a close should send their gifts, large or small, to P L George at 12 Palace Street, London SW1E 5JF (cheques should be made payable to P L George, *Song of Asia* Travel Fund).

'Song of Asia' Travel Fund Committee

handing over his rights to that authority daily.

For a man of faith this should be normal practice if his faith is to be logical. For the pragmatist who questions faith, it is open for trial.

To make it practical I would suggest the following minimum conditions:

1 Set the alarm clock, however reluctantly, to wake you half an hour earlier in the morning.

2 Ask God, in a time of quiet, to prompt your thoughts on the basis 'not my will, but Thine be done'. Expose every area to the fresh searchlight of His will, especially where you have already decided what can and cannot be done. Let Him speak about motives, relationships, fear, bitterness, dishonesty.

3 Write down honestly the ideas that come.

4 Act on them, even if you are scared.

Make a practice of this for the next month. Test if it has made any difference. If it has not, you have lost nothing and can go back to where you are now.

So much on my plate

If it has, you might consider saying to the person whom you find difficult, 'Look, I realise I don't know all the answers. Let us be quiet, and on the basis of "not who, but what is right" can we see what ideas come to both of us together?'

'But,' I can hear the busy churchman, politician, businessman say, 'I have so much on my plate as it is! I can't add anything more.'

In recent weeks I have talked with a number of men here in Cape Town. One is a Dutch Reformed Church minister; another a business executive; another a headmaster; another a student leader. They are of different colours, different persuasions. Because of their calibre and their trustworthiness they all carry heavy responsibilities.

Living under pressure

They have another thing in common — they all live under pressure. Events and demands pile in on them. One would shudder to lay one more straw on their backs.

Yet, how else than through a time of quiet reflection each morning to search for God's perspective and God's plan can the vicious circle of pressure be broken?

Only if time is set aside is there chance for the unexpected ideas about priorities and people to come; a chance for new insights, new direction and a new sense of steady, pressure-proof purpose. It is something very different from taking time to pray for God's blessing on my plans. It is the change from 'What am I doing?' to 'What does He want done?'

It could be the change from ineffectiveness to effectiveness.

Universal policy

A report from Isaac Amata

'A FRANK SPEECH by a man who has made it,' said W G Tracey, Secretary of the Nigerian Employers' Consultative Association, about Frederik Philips, who had just spoken to a well attended luncheon of the Association in Lagos. 'I am most impressed,' he added, and it was clear from other comments that many of the 100 people present, representing the leading companies in the city, shared his feelings.

Mr Philips, Chairman of the Supervisory Board of the World Federation of Philips Industries, had been invited to address the Association by its President, J Ade Tuyo. He and his wife were staying for a week at the MRA centre in Lagos.

Systems of the heart

His subject was *The Task of Industry Today*. He told of his father's experiences in the early beginnings of the company from



Alhaji Abbas Sanusi, Councillor for Finance in Kano Local Government

1891, and went on to the lessons they had learned about manufacturing in other countries. He was proud of the advances made in giving as much information as possible to their workers, and emphasised that their employees were 'not people work for us, but people who work with us.'

In their company, he said, they had found that they could give the ordinary man much more responsibility than in the past, and that it was not a question of systems but of attitude. He said he felt this would be very effective in Africa, because there people are

It can be catching

by Negussie Asseressie

a technical worker in the Electricity Corporation of Ethiopia

A FEW MONTHS AGO my cousin, Mulugeta, came to stay with me in Addis Ababa. He was looking for a job, but he did not succeed and he went back to rejoin his parents in Gondar. Later, he wrote me a letter accusing me of something which I had never thought of. I felt very hot about it. It made me despair about people. I wrote him a letter telling him how wrong he was, but I was not satisfied and kept it without mailing it.

Write another letter

As I was thinking, walking alone, I had the thought, 'The letter you wrote may have some truths in it, but it may not be what God wants you to do about it.' So I decided to sit quietly and listen to the inner voice. The

guidance I got was, 'Be patient. You are bitter. You have lost hope and that decreases your faith.' For several consecutive days I got the same thought. Then I wrote down, 'Regardless of the wrongs others may do against you, obey what God puts into your mind. The people you hate need your help. Even if you do not know the wrongs you do, apologise for your bitterness. Don't try to justify yourself. Mulugeta may not respond, but he will understand.' So I wrote him a simple apology and friendly letter.

Visibly different

Some months later I went to the Province where he lives, on a personal matter. When he heard I was there, he came to see me. I stayed only two days and we didn't talk much. But I could see that he was completely different. To my surprise he went to the bus station and reserved a seat for me on the overcrowded bus. In the bus station he asked me if I could lend him a copy of a book called *The Art of Remaking Men* which he had seen in my house. I had only one copy and I me and I gave it to him. He also took a few copies of *The Black and White Book*.

A month later after I left Gondar, I got a letter from someone I do not know. He introduced himself to me as Asfawossen, a



Mr and Mrs Frederik Phillips during their visit to Kano.

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Off to Egypt

A DELEGATION of British university students left London for Egypt this week for a fortnight's visit as guests of the Egyptian Ministry of Youth.

They have been invited to meet Egyptian student leaders concerned with the building of Arab-European relations upon the moral and spiritual values common to Christianity and Islam.

Oxford, Cambridge, Durham, Cardiff and Aberdeen Universities are represented in the group.

industry in relation to the Philips companies. 'We produced a booklet called *Some Basic Considerations on Industrial Policy*, and that is what I now may call our constitution. It was rather interesting in the beginning: some people said, "It is very good for Europe but not outside Europe." I said, "We must have one policy — a policy that goes into every branch and factory all over the world. If that is not the case I don't give a damn for the policy." So this is then the policy that is accepted for our worldwide organisation.'

very out-going. They have a big heart and when they were included in the problem then they would really start to work.

Stressed change

He touched on the ideological attacks levelled at industry, often by those with little real experience of working conditions. He spoke of the things management could do to build a right spirit in their companies, and stressed that such changes must come from management.

He concluded by referring to the aims of

boy from Gondar who went to primary school there and was well looked after by his parents and 'was promoted to high school with very good results'. His letter, translated from the Amharic, goes on, 'In the high school I found different friends with different attitudes and interests. So I chose to be one of those students who claim themselves to be very modern and new-fashioned. As our friendships grew nearer and stronger, I had to struggle to learn many of the things they do which I had never done in my life — smoking, drinking alcohol, going to night-clubs and sleeping outside my home. A gap was created between my parents and me, and they stopped helping me. Our relationship was closed with an iron curtain. I found myself unable to proceed successfully with my studies. At last I stopped going to school as I needed more money for the habits I was addicted to.'

A killing habit

'Then I was employed as a temporary worker in the Malaria Eradication Service. Of course I got more money, but I used it to buy a more killing habit — I started taking drugs. My parents announced publicly that they had dropped all responsibility for me (in accordance with the Ethiopian custom

whereby parents can legally disclaim all responsibility for a child over whom they have lost control).

'One day one of my schoolmates, Mulugeta, came to see me. He gave me *The Black and White Book* to read. That book helped me to look at the life I was living. I also saw carefully the life my friends around me were living. Then I understood that we were all completely confused. As a start of change I threw away the drug I had at that moment in my mouth. I went out of the house where I was and cried, putting my head in my arms. But then I was encouraged that I can start life again. I felt strongly that I must go and apologise to my parents. I thought also that my friends can change.'

'After a few days I shared all my change and feelings with my friends. Most of them laughed. Some thought I was mad. Then I thought I needed to share everything with you and write you this letter. I just want to let you know that I am free from every sort of habit I was addicted to. And I am trying to help my friends change. I would very much value your help.'

Asfawossen was helped by my cousin, Mulugeta. It has made me understand how effective and miraculous it is when I listen, whenever I am confused, and I obey, even when it seems difficult and hard. Change can be catching.

Britain's real interests

by A R K Mackenzie
formerly Minister for Economic and Social Affairs, UK Mission to UN
This contribution first appeared as a letter in 'The Times' of 23 December

HAVING JUST COMPLETED three years' service with our mission to the United Nations, I should like to comment on the current discussion (Bernard Levin, *Panorama*, etc) arising from the vigorous speeches of Mr Moynihan, the chief United States delegate.

The special attention being accorded to Mr Moynihan might give the impression that he is the only delegate who speaks up against the accusations and innuendoes directed — all too frequently — against Western countries. This is not so. Anyone who has listened to Mr Ivor Richard's interventions in the Security Council and the General Assembly knows otherwise.

But the discussion raises a deeper problem: what should be the aim of Western policy at the United Nations? Should one treat it simply as a verbal battleground, forgetting that the Charter calls it 'a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations'? Undoubtedly certain countries do just that. It is tempting to follow them. But would it be in the real interests of Britain?

One or more of the super-powers may think that they can go it alone. That option is not open to us. Britain is compelled — by every consideration of economics, security and tradition — to encourage the concept of world interdependence. Our role has to be that of the bridge-builder. This does not mean that we should suffer unfair criticism silently. It does, however, suggest that our tactical responses should be calculated in relation to the pursuit of our higher interests.

Fortunately, there is evidence that the United Nations is not necessarily so unmanageable as is often supposed. The Seventh Special Session of the General Assembly in September ended, to the surprise of many, in a genuine consensus between all member-states on ways to tackle the thorny problems of world economic development. Without belittling the contributions of other countries, it can be fairly claimed that from the start of the preparations British initiatives regarding both procedure and substance helped to shape the positive outcome. Britain did not fail to use her right to rebut attacks but — more important — she used her influence in the Commonwealth, OECD, EEC, and in Washington to ensure that positive proposals emerged for dealing with the intolerable gap between the wealthy and the poverty-stricken areas of the world. When this happened, the mood changed and Mr Moynihan himself hailed the outcome by saying: 'The system works.'

One fervently hopes that Mr Moynihan's outspokenness will produce more much-needed objectivity and moderation in United Nations debates. One also hopes that it will

BRITAIN'S INTERESTS contd p4

When Britain went without

We asked our readers to send us any evidence, any experiences that show 'one person does count'. MARGOT STALLYBRASS sent us the following:

I GREW UP on the Dee estuary when unemployment was at its height between the wars. My nurse told me of miners' children being wrapped in newspaper to keep them warm. I saw the unemployment queues in Liverpool and heard businessmen around me saying that it was the best thing for industry. Once at a dinner party with my father's friends I said how I hated this system and later received a letter from a young man who had been helping the butler, asking me to address a Communist cell he belonged to! But I was looking for an answer to the deepest longing in people's hearts for great living and not just the solving of material problems.

At the end of the war, Marxist-trained men tried to bring the dockers out on strike to disrupt our slender supply lines. I raged inside at my helplessness and longed to go down to the docks and offer my services.

Then a similar thing happened with the housewives: we were incited to rebel against the even stricter rationing imposed by the Government. There were people telling us that German women were living on the fat of the land whilst we did without. I knew that this was not true and that we could not afford to end rationing then.

Deliberate act of policy

Germany, according to Prime Minister Attlee, was 'down to her last potato almost...India was very badly off and couldn't look after herself...We had to decide, as a deliberate act of policy, that Britain would have to go without in order to help.' I felt that this was more the spirit for which our men had fought and died. I talked these things over with a few housewife friends and together we visited some of the leading ladies on Merseyside. We drew their attention to what was happening and asked for their help. We asked them all to sign a letter which we had drafted to the *Liverpool Post*, which said:

'The seriousness of the world food situation has come as a shock to all British housewives. During the blitz we fought the bombs with dogged courage and, above all, a sense of humour. We must not lose either of these qualities now.

'We British housewives are at the heart of a world-wide family of nations. We have heard what this family is doing. From the Dominions to the smallest British Empire countries, they are sending us more food, thus willingly accepting further restrictions themselves. Every time we eat a Canadian apple, an Australian egg, a South African

orange or New Zealand meat we can remember this.

'We in Britain must determine to play our part. We can continue the war on waste, outlaw the black market, and take only our fair share of supplies. In these days of food and fuel shortage good housekeeping needs more skill and imaginative planning than ever. In this way we will build up the nation's morale as well as its health, and have it fighting fit for the battle for peace and reconstruction.'

The signatories included a Labour MP and the wives of important men in other parties, the wife of a Bishop, and two JPs. It happened that each of these ladies was addressing large gatherings of women over the next days and each one spoke up against the abolition of rationing.

I received letters from women in other parts of the country saying that they had followed our lead and sending articles and letters which had been published in their local papers. The BBC telephoned to ask, 'What lies behind this story?'

The tide of public opinion turned, and rationing stayed for several years until the country — and the world — could afford to end it.

The Silent Aftermath

by Robert Noble

*In the silent aftermath of a bomb blast,
what do I hear, deep within my heart?*

*Is it the red-hot burning anger
of a new-found fear,
as our world is torn apart?*

*Or is it hatred, against those who kill,
who shatter lives, and ruin hope?*

*A desire to hang, or even shoot,
the ones who did it, killed our folk?*

*But don't these wishes simply mean that I,
at heart, am just like them?*

*They kill and maim and I condemn
and wish that I too could kill them.*

*What else is found within my heart,
in that still and silent aftermath?*

*In the silent aftermath of my anger,
what still remains, deep within my heart?*

*Could it be the quiet voice of Love,
the voice of God,*

*Who says, 'The time to hate is gone,
you follow me and say as I, "Forgive them",*

The time to heal has come;

That is my own peculiar art,

*I'll bear your pain, so you are free to start,
To prove that hatred can be shed,*

*as you absorb my love instead,
That walking in my Power will build,
where bombs can only smash and kill.'*

Hard done by?

The following talk was given by Aline Faunce on Radio Medway

GOOD MORNING — when I was eight years old, my father left my mother and later they were divorced. At first, when my father left home, I was convinced that he had been run over, and nothing my mother said could shake this belief. So she finally had to arrange for a friend to take my sister and myself to meet him.

As I grew up I became very bitter against my father, and this coloured my whole attitude to life. During that time my mother met people in Moral Re-Armament who helped her to find a faith in God and a purpose in life which was to transform our home. From being very self-righteous, she accepted where she had been wrong and helped to cause the breakdown of her marriage.

The change of attitude in my mother made me stop in my tracks. Then I had the thought, 'Stop thinking how badly you've been done by, and start to think how you can be of some help to your father now.' I made the effort to go and see him regularly, even if we didn't agree on many points. When I became very ill, my thought was so to help that he found a faith. Whether he did before he died, I do not know. But I do know that all trace of resentment had gone from my heart.

My husband and I had an exciting start to our married life. Instead of a wedding in the village church near my home, I flew out to India to join him taking my wedding dress in my suitcase. Four weeks later we were married in St Thomas' Anglican Cathedral, Bombay.

Although in the eight and a half years since then we and our daughter have moved around a great deal, I have been so grateful for the security of a happy marriage and of feeling at one with my husband. Of course we have our moments, who doesn't? But coming from a broken home myself, I do appreciate this security, based on the firm belief that God has put us together for a purpose.

And I do know, from experience, that bitterness can be cured, if we let God help us. And people whose bitterness has been cured, may be best able to help change a divided and hate-filled world.

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not push the moderates of the developing world (including many of the Commonwealth) back into the arms of the extremists. Time alone will show. But whatever level of dialectical response is appropriate in New York, surely there is no doubt that the overriding need — and especially for Britain — is to use the organization, despite all its weaknesses, to promote peaceful and constructive interdependence.