

KEIR HARDIE ON VIDEO

In this issue we announce the production of a new video about the life of Keir Hardie, the miners' leader and 'father' of the Labour Party—a venture which has been welcomed by both rank and file miners and union officials. This is the first of a series of projects decided upon at a Moral Re-Armament conference last October when some 120 people considered what God wanted done at this time in Britain. Work has already started on a second video, 'Clashpoint', which features the play by Betty Gray and Nancy Ruthven. Focussing on the prefects and staff of a multiracial school at a time of tension, 'Clashpoint', shows a way out of class, race and family division.

Also in this issue we look at the experiences of people from across the political spectrum for whom, as for Keir Hardie, the application of the principles of their faith comes before their political standpoints.

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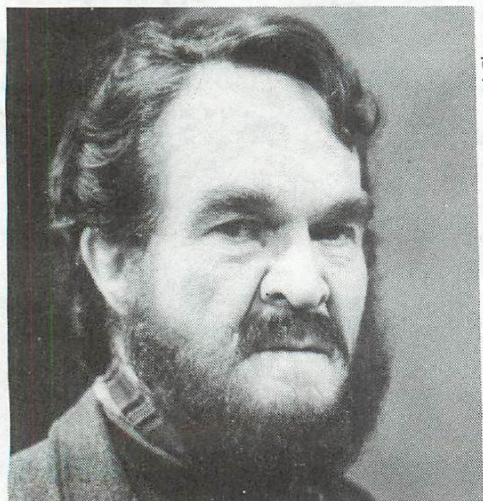
The cameras focus on Keir Hardie (Donald Simpson) during recording of the video at the Westminster Theatre.

KEIR HARDIE— AGITATOR AND PROPHET

HS Addison

'THE AGITATOR WITH A TOUCH OF THE SEER in him,' wrote Keir Hardie on his 50th birthday, 'is a far more valuable asset than the politician.' An agitator with a touch of the seer in him—that phrase describes him exactly. He was in fact in the direct line of succession from the prophets of the Old Testament. Like them, he fearlessly exposed moral corruption, social injustice and economic exploitation in the light of the moral demands of a righteous God. Like them, he held before the people the vision of a social order which would express God's will and righteousness in every department of its life.

His simple and radical philosophy was a fusion of three elements—his experience as a child and young man, his Christian faith, and his vision of a new social order, which sprang from both. His harsh childhood gave him an undying



David Channer

Donald Simpson
as Keir Hardie

hatred of injustice and exploitation, a determination to *build a society* in which they would be no more, and an authority which could not be gainsaid—the authority of first-hand experience. His conversion to Christianity at the age of 20 cured his bitterness and opened up to him the vision of a new society. At a great meeting on 'Labour and Christianity', held when he was one of the best-known Labour leaders in the world, he declared, 'The impetus which drove me first into the Labour Movement, and the inspiration which has carried me on in it, has been derived more from the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth than from all other sources combined.' He wrote, 'Jesus founded no party, formulated no economic doctrine, but he laid down principles so broad and deep that, when the world gets wiser, not only will poverty due to the lack of bread have disappeared, but poverty due to the accumulation of wealth shall also have disappeared from the world.'

His Christianity was more than a 'social gospel'. Human beings, he was convinced, had an innate hunger for God. 'Life without religion,' he said, 'would be so distasteful that, did not religion exist, men would have to invent a religion to satisfy that part of their nature.'

Hardie's faith gave him a down-to-earth view of human nature. 'Capitalism,' he believed, 'is the product of selfish-

ness.' And he added, 'So long as that remains, the evils of the present system will remain. But selfishness is not the monopoly of the rich. The same causes which lead the rich landlord to raise rents, operate just as freely with working men when opportunity and self-interest dictate a like course.' He was generous enough to admit that 'the aristocracy may yield men prepared to sacrifice life itself and all that is supposed to make life worth living to help the workers. Take child labour. Here we have the bourgeois actually legislating in advance of the proletariat, although the latter stood to gain and the former to lose from the change.' (He is alluding to Lord Shaftesbury, the Tory earl who led the campaign to end child labour.)

Hardie challenged Labour and trade union leaders to set a moral example in their own personal living to the rank and file—especially by renouncing alcohol entirely. 'The moral force of the movement,' he wrote, 'would be perceptibly increased were this done; and it is moral force which carries a movement forward.'

It was on moral grounds that he rejected out of hand that form of industrial action which in his day was called 'ca' canny' and today is known as 'go slow' and 'work to rule'. He called it a 'demoralising doctrine'. 'No man,' he said, 'can act dishonest without becoming dishonest. The tradesman who cheats his customers is cheating himself more. The workman who robs his "master" is robbing himself of that which his "master" can never take from him—his manhood.'

Toiling millions

'It matters not how high may be the ideal underlying a cause,' he wrote. 'It will assuredly fail if there be even a suspicion of self-seeking or insincerity on the part of its champion. Character is more important to a movement than doctrine—a fact that is apt to be overlooked.'

Hardie's Christian faith, reinforced by the writings of the great social prophets of his time like Carlyle, Ruskin and Morris, led him to socialism. 'The Labour Movement,' he declared in his address to the electors of South West Ham in 1892, 'is the outcome of the quickening of the public conscience towards the conditions of the toiling millions and of the extremes of wealth and poverty which at present exist.' Socialist measures to him were always a means to an end. 'Socialism,' he wrote, 'is much more than a political creed or an economic dogma. It presents to the world a new conception of society and a new basis on which to build up the life of the individual and the state.'

In the light of this philosophy Hardie rejected outright the doctrine of class war. 'A movement having nothing more substantial as a basis than a determination to overthrow

KEIR HARDIE VIDEO SPECIAL OFFER

Special prices till 31 March 1985

PAL video (UK, Australia, New Zealand, S Africa, Zimbabwe) £40

NTSC video (Americas, Canada, Japan) £85

Order from MRA Productions, 12 Palace Street, London SW1E 5JF, stating whether VHS or Betamax video cassette is required. (Cheques payable to MRA Productions.)

one class in order to supplant it with another,' he wrote, 'contains within itself the elements of its own destruction.' He would have nothing to do with attempts to foment class bitterness. He had experienced bitterness in his own life. 'I have known as a child what hunger means,' he recalled, 'and the scars of those days are with me still and rankle in my heart, and unfit me in many ways for the work waiting to be done.' For a cure to his bitterness he turned to God. 'Life is already barren enough,' he wrote, 'without voluntarily adding to its bitterness.'

He also rejected the doctrine of violent revolution as the only means to transform society. 'No revolution,' he maintained, 'can succeed which has not public opinion behind it; and when that opinion ripens, as we have seen over and over again, it breaks down even the walls of self-interest.'

No man fought harder than he to win for the workers a larger slice of the national income, better conditions,

higher wages, shorter working hours, and more political power. But what lured him on was more than an economic blue-print. It was the vision of a wholly new society which would express, at every level and in every department, a new quality of life, rooted in moral values, inspired by moral motives, and serving moral ends. He put his vision into words in a magazine article which appeared just a month before the outbreak of the First World War. It was a vision of a 'Merrie England—without a sweated drudge, a miserable pauper. Each English man and English woman free to develop the best of which each was capable, not working for self, but for the common good. Holding their powers, mental and physical, as talents for the proper use of which they will one day have to give account, and realising that as the powers have been freely received, they should be freely given in assisting those less fortunate than their possessors.'

It is the vision of a Christian society. ■



Keir Hardie in the Welsh miner's cottage

FROM GLASGOW TO THE WORLD

JAMES KEIR HARDIE, who became the first Independent Labour Member of Parliament, is widely regarded as the father of the Labour Party. Born in 1856 in Scotland, he was brought up in the poorest of Glasgow's slums. Since his stepfather was usually away at sea, Keir became the family breadwinner at the age of seven, working in dangerous conditions in a shipyard or being callously exploited as a baker's messenger boy. From the age of 10 he worked underground in a coal mine for 12 hours a day. He taught himself to read and write, studying Thomas Carlyle, Robert Burns and the Bible, which had a revolutionary effect on his life and thinking.

When Hardie began to speak up for the miners and strikes followed, he was sacked and blacklisted and had to leave the area. He moved to Ayrshire as a miners' official and soon started a paper, 'The Miner'. This paper, later

renamed 'The Labour Leader', became the weekly voice and conscience of the British industrial worker.

By 1888 Hardie had begun to attend international Labour conferences. Convinced that the workers' voice must be heard in Parliament, Hardie stood as an independent workers' candidate, scorning the Liberal patronage. He was unsuccessful, but in 1892 he was elected as Member for West Ham. He caused consternation by arriving at Westminster in a tweed suit and deerstalker cap. In the years to follow he constantly reminded the House of Commons of the facts of social injustice and poverty.

In 1893 in Bradford Hardie founded the Independent Labour Party which embodied his socialism based on Christ's Sermon on the Mount. By 1900 he united the ILP with the trade unions and the Marxist Social-Democratic Federation to form the Labour Representative Committee. In 1906 Hardie, now MP for Merthyr Tydfil, was joined in Parliament by 28 other Labour members. He became the first Chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party. During the next 10 years he travelled in India and Australia, South Africa and North America, always speaking passionately against oppression and poverty.

David Channer

THE MAKING OF A VIDEO

Hugh Williams, Producer of the Keir Hardie video

THIRTY TALENTED PEOPLE—actors, technicians and designers—worked together for three weeks to make the video production of *Keir Hardie*—and that figure does not include a host of others: musicians, set builders and painters, property makers, needle-women (and men!), caterers, accountants and, above all, hundreds of folk up and down the land who have been raising the money to make it all possible.

Assembled in the auditorium of the Westminster Theatre was nearly one million pounds' worth of electronic equipment, which meant that, after preparation and rehearsal, the whole play could be recorded on 'broadcast-quality' video-tape in five days, under the direction of Mike Pritchard, ably assisted by his wife Sally.

Four of the scenes were shot on the stage of the theatre, which was used as a studio, complete with a false floor to overcome the 'rake' on the stage and to make camera movement easier. The sets were erected sideways-on to the auditorium seats, two at a time. Two other scenes were shot 'on location' in Fulham and Westminster.

There followed two weeks of editing—first on time-coded VHS tape, which is much cheaper. In the final few days the one-inch master tape was edited, following the time-code, on equipment that costs upwards of £1,000 a day to hire. During this time the music was recorded in a studio in Islington and the sound effects were added. So, five weeks from the commencement of rehearsals the finished master-tape was complete, ready for copies to be made and distributed. ■

From the film set

DONALD SIMPSON, who plays Keir Hardie in the video production, writes:

FILM ACTING demands a sustained, single-minded yet relaxed concentration. But at odd moments in the past few weeks, surrounded by lights, props and sophisticated video equipment and by a body of dedicated actors and technicians, I have thought of some of the people I hope might see the video.

As I have had to feel myself into Hardie's passion 'to create the brotherhood of all men, whatever their class or creed, or colour,' I have thought of the British miners, their wives and bairns, among whom I was brought up. I have been in many mining homes during these last agonising 11 months, and have heard the bitter vows of life-long estrangement as family members have taken different stands in the dispute. I have seen and shared their tears of despair.

It was some of those families who first responded to the play about the man who founded their union in Scotland. The miners deserve something better than just a 'settlement'—something much, much deeper, a society where the compelling motive of ordinary folk and their leaders is not to win power or buy privilege but to understand, to open people's hearts, to heal their hurts and give them hope.

I have thought too of many good friends in Africa and other parts of the world. So many there have caught a glimpse of freedom and justice, only to find that their aspirations have been 'hijacked' by some dictator or self-perpetuating clique who, because of bitterness or ambition, offer a 'socialism' they cannot possibly deliver and which results in starvation and despair.

These disappointed people also deserve something different. This was Hardie's passionate concern—a mighty awakening of the conscience of the whole human family. I know it is for them and millions more that this play was written and it is for them that we are trying to bring the story to life.

But I cannot forget the men and women I have known and loved over the years who are quite convinced that human beings can get on very well without any 'outside

help'—even if 'It' did exist! What is more they have constructed a rational, dogmatic world-view to reinforce their convictions, a materialistic faith which now dominates much of mankind.

In his time Hardie introduced thousands of workers, who had been alienated by callous piosity, to the revolutionary teachings of 'the working carpenter of Nazareth'. I deeply hope this film will enable him to reach out to the sad and searching hearts of such men and nations.

It is in moments like these that I have felt so painfully inadequate to portray the story of a great-hearted man and his God-given ideas.

But the Director has just called me back to the set. The technical hitch has been resolved. 'Once more from the top. This time we go for a take.' ■



The Hardie home in Cumnock

D. Channer

Australian tour

ABOUT 75 YEARS AGO Keir Hardie visited Australia. There his host was his schoolboy friend, Andrew Fisher, who had gone to live in Australia and became one of its early Labor Prime Ministers.

Now the spirit of Hardie returns to Australia through a full production of the play, *Keir Hardie—the man they could not buy*. It will be performed by a partly Scottish, partly Australian cast, commencing in the steel and coal city of Wollongong in April. Some of those who appeared in the production which toured Britain have accepted an invitation to take part in the Australian tour, including Don Simpson as Keir Hardie.

On the initiative of a retired coalminer, dramatised readings of the play were presented during 1983 in the coal-mining region of the Hunter Valley, in Sydney and in Canberra. It was at one of the readings in Parliament House, Canberra, that an MP representing a coalmining area near Wollongong asked if the play could be presented there.

Personalities

Not everyone agrees that consensus is desirable. But in Australia it is being tried as the answer to confrontation and the fairest basis of creating policies that can be made to work. The key to its success will be whether the principal personalities involved can sustain the oneness of mind, heart and purpose to make it last.

Hardie gave the Labour movement direction as well as impetus because his leadership was based as much on the way he lived as the policies he fought for. Of the movement, Hardie stated, 'It is a moral force more than a mental one and if you proceed to take the heart out of it you will rob it of its vitality, its urge, its inspiration.' This is the kind of leadership that could see Australia using her resources in synchronisation with the assets of other nations to grapple globally with the twin scourges of unemployment and poverty. It would mean the sacrifice of some lesser issues to undertake the greater tasks. It would also mean living unselfishly in order to recognise what the greater tasks are and how to tackle them. As Hardie put it, 'The meaningless drivel will give place to the burning needs' through 'earnest men whose hearts are on fire with the love of their kind'.

Keir Hardie—the man they could not buy will bring the hope of this happening to Australia.

David Mills

JARROW INVITATION

IN 1936, during the Great Depression, 200 people from Jarrow, in North-East England, marched to London. Through their dignity in frightful adversity, they succeeded in touching the heart-strings of the nation in a way that no political or trade union leader had done. Many who know of the march do not know that it was initiated jointly by local Jarrow Labour and Conservative councillors.

One of the most significant performances of the Keir Hardie play when it toured Britain was that in Jarrow Community Centre. This also came about through the joint initiative of local political leaders. LADY CHAPMAN of Cleadon, South Tyneside, tells how this happened:

WHEN I SAW *Keir Hardie—the man they could not buy* at an MRA conference in Caux, Switzerland in the summer of 1979, I thought that it would be wonderful to have it in Jarrow.

My husband and I have been involved with working for the Conservative Party in the North East, and in our parliamentary constituency of Jarrow for many years, and I felt here was a chance to do something in conjunction with some of our Labour Party friends.



Lady Chapman

Cllr Vincent Fitzpatrick (leader of South Tyneside Labour Group) whom I approached, responded warmly to the idea of inviting the cast to come to Jarrow. He and I then talked to the Mayor, Cllr Albert Elliott, and he was very warm in his response to host the play with my husband and myself.

So began a friendship with another South Tyneside Labour Mayor and his wife.

I have felt deeply about the mining communities in our area especially, and long for us in Britain to remember the truths of our Christian heritage, and to live them out.

When the present sad miners' strike is over, we will need many initiatives to build trust in our mining communities, throughout this country, as also in our national life.

Coming as we do from a very privileged background, I am all too often aware of the arrogance which has contributed to the 'class war' that some would like to exploit, to divide our nation, and to which I have contributed.

I want to be used by the Almighty to help in reconciliation, and to build trust, and to be an 'instrument of peace'. ■

Activist's view

BERT REYNOLDS, a member of the Electrical, Electronic, Telecommunication and Plumbing Union, from Birmingham, writes:

KEIR HARDIE has for long been held up to Labour and trade union members as an example to follow in building a compassionate socialist society. However, it was not until I saw the play on the life of Hardie that I really understood his battle. I saw the impact he made not only on the society of his day but for posterity in bringing about change while still holding on to the democratic tradition.

The question is often asked—what is the relevance of his life and fight in today's world and in particular for a Labour movement which aspires to become the Government of the day? I believe it is very relevant indeed. As an activist in the movement for over 40 years, the key to any real achievement has always been through the qualities which Keir Hardie portrayed—vision of what is needed, the courage of one's convictions and honesty. At work, in Telecom, this brought teamwork, initiative and often humour which honest challenge between labour and management can stimulate.

Undergirding it all must be the right motivation. For Hardie it was Christianity and this became the chief inspiration and driving power of his life. This way, I believe we shall not only survive but win hearts and minds across the present divide, and bring renaissance appropriate to the 20th century. ■

TO CURE WHAT'S WRONG

A LEADING FIGURE in the coal industry said recently, 'Our greatest need is to rebuild trust.' He could have added '...as in many other areas of our national life.' How is trust going to be rebuilt—in the coal industry, between political parties, in the civil service or local government? Clash and disagreement there will always be. They are attributes of a healthy democracy. But rancour, intolerance, hate and deliberate confrontation are destroying the fabric of our national life.

What is proving so divisive in our political and industrial life is the polarisation of attitudes and the pigeon-holing of people that goes with it. 'He or she is beyond the pale' is an attitude from which few of us would claim to be free. But the self-righteousness from which it springs is unlikely to encourage the change in the other person which we regard as so necessary.

Trust will not come on the cheap. For our pride—that commodity so particularly precious to every Britisher—will suffer! Those truly concerned about the growing division and bitterness in our society—and that means most of us—must be honest enough to admit that we ourselves, our

group, our party, need change too.

Ignoring the past can be as unproductive as living in it. Learning from the past why people think and feel as they do is essential for dealing with the future. Past hurts and hates produce today's feelings and attitudes. These feelings are facts, as valid and important as any economic statistic. Those who plan for the present and future, ignoring this truth, involve themselves and the nation in frustration, hardship and great expense.

Like race war, class war, whether fought from the Left or the Right, is an out-of-date and deficient concept for today's world. If anyone had reason to be bitter, Keir Hardie had. But he turned his back on class war because, he said, 'bitterness degrades a man and enslaves him. And it doesn't cure what's wrong.' Hardie's passionate fight for social justice was based on the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God. He knew how to hate the wrong without hating the wrongdoer. He was trusted by both those who agreed and those who disagreed with him, because he was scrupulously honest and sought no power for himself.

A difficult year

RALPH PRIESTLEY was until recently the Chairman of a retailing company operating in the Yorkshire area.

YOU CANNOT LIVE IN THE MIDLANDS AREA without being acutely aware of the shattering effect on many men and women of being made redundant.

I know of many people, both management and workers, who were given *only one week's* notice of the termination of their employment, often after many years' service. Even with redundancy pay and other entitlements, these people often suffer a devastating loss of self-confidence and find it hard not to be bitter.

For 30 years we have tried to run our company under the direction of God, seeking his guidance on policy, day to day decisions and relationships within the business. We adopted standards of honesty and integrity where the needs of people were paramount, whether staff, customers or suppliers. Experience has shown that trust is created by being open and honest with employees about the policy of the business in good times and bad. I found that loyalty is created out of simple acts of care and appreciation for staff, often when they are going through personal difficulties. Such acts cost little except time and thought.

The last four years have been the most difficult in the company's history. During this period the annual increase in sales has not kept pace with the increase in expenses, and profit mark-up had to be cut to meet competition.

Just over a year ago it became clear that the company could not survive unless we drastically restructured the whole group. This meant disposing of a number of shops and reducing staff in all departments from the directors down. I myself accepted early retirement last September.

Another director and I personally informed all members of staff made redundant under the scheme. We gave them



Ralph Priestley

at least three months' notice so they could seek other employment whilst still in a job and obtain helpful advice when they were attacked by despondency. One senior manager was honest about the feelings of bitterness which assailed him at times but was determined not to let them destroy the relationships built up with our family and his colleagues over 20 years.

Only two members of staff left the company during the period of notice although several had jobs to go on to. Many who stayed on to the last day expressed understanding of our situation as well as their own. For others, there was real hardship with no job to go to and yet financial commitments to meet at home.

Over the last six months I have been in touch with many of those made redundant. One manageress who has got another job wrote, 'I hope you keep your promise and pop in to see me.' Another who has no job wrote, 'The thought comforted me at a time when I needed it most.' Another wrote, 'I hope to hear from you again in the near future.' ■

FROM IDEAS TO IDEOLOGY

Roger Watson, health service worker

'WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE!' Thus ends *The Communist Manifesto* by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. In the build-up to this stirring command lies its justification, according to the authors, and a vision of what might be achieved were it obeyed. It struck me, on reading the Manifesto recently, that a vital ingredient in the recipe for social change was missing—the means by which workers were to be united. The missing ingredient is, of course, the new worker, with new motives which extend beyond the interests of trade union or political party.

To illustrate how this can be achieved, here is the story of one worker who became a new, though far from perfect, man.

I was once asked about the motivating forces in my life and replied that I had no interest in anything 'unless it was socialism'. It was true to say that I believed in socialism but, far from being a motivating force in my life, it was the label I conveniently attached to the views I held. These views, examined in the light of my present thinking, were ultimately determined by the desire to lead a life unhindered by any sort of moral precepts.

Skin deep

There were a great many ideas which I held dearly as a result of my beliefs—for instance, women's liberation, provided I was getting what I wanted from them. I firmly believed that religion was the 'opium of the people' while I drank myself into oblivion most nights of the week. Rich men and company directors who swindled the Inland Revenue were despised; but this did not prevent me from fiddling the gas meter in my council flat. It would appear, therefore, that such ideas can be only skin deep—they often lose their appeal when there is the slightest chance of them being applied to your own life! I had never grasped the fundamental principle that you cannot make a good omelette out of bad eggs.

Where, then, does the secret lie in changing a man whose ideals, whatever their merit, are rendered ineffective by the way he lives? How can men like him be challenged and shown that their lifestyle contributes to the chaos in society, despite the programme of freedom and social justice to which they aspire? The answer lies in providing them with an ideology which is bigger and better than all of their ideas. A sound ideology can not be easily dismissed and set aside when inconvenient but should, according to Bishop Rendtorff, grip a man and change him, bringing a whole new spirit to his life. It should be total and absolute and concerned with man's final destiny.

In my own case change took place as the result of a head-on collision with absolute moral standards. These standards were: absolute honesty; absolute purity; absolute unselfishness and absolute love. They are the basis of the Sermon on the Mount which was central to Hardie's thinking. My life fell far short of these standards. I was dishonest, lacked purity, my motives were entirely selfish and I hated anyone who did not share my beliefs. In other words, if a new society were to be built, I was in no shape to be one of the



Roger Watson

bricks. By taking the challenge seriously, I found an ideology which changed me from the inside and effected change in many situations around me.

The interests of socialism should extend beyond the boundaries of class and nation. Any political programme should provide freedom from the hatred and greed which only unite people on one side of the class barrier. This can only work if the programme gives sufficient importance to the provision of new men and women, as well as providing a new system.

I would be inclined to believe that this was all 'pie in the sky' had I not observed the results for myself. I have seen how an ideology based on absolute moral standards can unite people of all backgrounds and give them the common aim of building a God-led society. At one time I could never have imagined working with people of an opposite political persuasion and meeting their elected representatives, but it has happened. I maintain a passionate interest in the fair and equitable distribution of the world's resources but I realise that it will take more than just the efforts of the workers to achieve this.

How to begin building a new society is now clear to me. Despite the wrong inflicted by other groups and individuals on your own, any battle to put things right will be lost unless your own house has been put in order. Expressed more simply—'If you want to change the world, begin with yourself.'

Economic health

A director of a family firm in northern England writes:

SOME WEEKS AGO our agent in a West European country phoned the office. We had tendered for a contract there but now, as he explained frankly, 'I need five per cent to grease the palms.' In accordance with long standing practice in our company, we refused to pay any such bribes. Not to our surprise, we did not get the business. Often, virtue has to be its own reward!

Yet 50 years' efforts to apply a code of business ethics based on absolute moral standards in our firm suggest that what is morally right has always proved economically valid. In the present difficult trading circumstances, many companies are financing themselves by delaying payment of their suppliers far beyond their credit terms. We have decided not to do this despite the obvious disadvantages for our own cash flow. Yet during the recent docks strike our

suppliers gave us preferential treatment because we pay our bills on time.

The founder of a famous chain of tailoring stores came to our city, determined to find a site for a new branch. After a day walking around the city centre, he said, 'I have decided not to establish a store here. I see that there are enough tailors and outfitters to meet the demand. If I moved in and undercut these men, they would be out of their livelihoods.'

Such an act goes against the usual practice of capitalism. Capitalism has been so successful because it has relied on man's self-interest, one of his strongest passions, as its motor. Socialism has been a noble cause because it has appealed to man's communal and fraternal instincts. But both have failed in some ways. Capitalism, although its historical excesses have been ameliorated by progressive social legislation, fails today to provide work and a satisfying purpose for millions. Socialism has a poor economic record in many countries and, where it has carried centralised control to excess, it has led to the enslavement of millions.

But if self-interest does not have to be the determining factor in decision making (whether for individuals, families, unions and management, or even nations), a new economic system can be established.

It is impossible to produce unselfish people by offering material incentives—we will only have long-term economic and social health when we have moral and spiritual health. ■

British gift to Mahdi's grandson

Peter Everington, recently in Sudan

ON 26 JANUARY THE SUDANESE celebrated the centenary of El Mahdi's capture of Khartoum. In St Paul's Cathedral that day several hundred British commemorated the death of General Gordon at what we usually call the fall of Khartoum.

Sudanese and British can look back on that event with joy or sorrow, pride or indignation. But what is meant to characterise the next hundred years of relations between a European country that is Christian in tradition and an African country that is in large part Muslim?

In Khartoum on 26 January 1935 the British Governor of the city, E G Sarsfield-Hall, arranged a ceremony to mark the 50th year since Gordon's death. Present were a few of the officers and men who had fought loyally with Gordon and to whom the General had presented a medal struck by himself with the Arabic inscription 'Siege of Khartoum'.

Among his treasures Sarsfield-Hall had one of these medals, which later took pride of place in his collection at his home in Keswick.

His daughter, Carol Sarsfield-Hall, now that her parents are dead, has been seeking inspiration on where best to place the things she has inherited. One decision she made was to send the medal to El Mahdi's eldest surviving



Sayed Ahmed El Mahdi

D. Channer

grandson on the occasion of the centenary. Part of her letter to him reads:

'I believe General Gordon loved your country and loved his God—and so did your Grandfather. No doubt they suffered from the frailties common to all our human natures but they were brave men who inspired bravery and loyalty in their followers.

'Today I thank God that Christian and Muslim alike we are called to fight side by side against the forces of evil in the world—which are but an enlargement of the forces of evil in our natures, selfishness, greed, ambition, bitterness, fear, hatred—there are so many. God can unite us by speaking to our hearts and helping us to go forward together to find His Plan. While we still hold onto our own particular revelation of the faith it is not meant to be a cause of division between us.

'I give you this Gordon Medal in appreciation of the long association between Britain and Sudan, as a bridge between our two faiths, and as a token of how much we feel for you and your country these difficult days.'

Sayed Ahmed El Mahdi in Khartoum said, 'I am deeply moved to receive this gift and the sentiments of the letter. They are in accord with an interview I recently recorded for Radio Omdurman. I said that our destiny is to continue on the path of reconciliation with former enemies in Europe that my late father pioneered. In particular we Muslims must have a fraternal spirit with the Christians in our country and abroad.'

Miss Sarsfield-Hall also sent to the Sudanese Director General of Antiquities a flag of the White Flag League, whose founders were the first to raise an alliance of Sudanese nationalists with Egyptians against the British. Their leader Ali Abdel Latif is one of the heroes in the Sudanese school textbooks. No other League flag is known to exist in Sudan. The Minister of Culture has decided with the Director General that it will be specially exhibited in the National Museum.

Miss Sarsfield-Hall's father had expressed the wish that some of his collection be returned to Sudan. She is glad that God gave her the thought that the centenary was the right moment, though it is always hard to part with family treasures.

By chance it was two days before Epiphany when the final decision was made. Are there more rare gifts from British homes that could help build bridges with other nations? ■

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