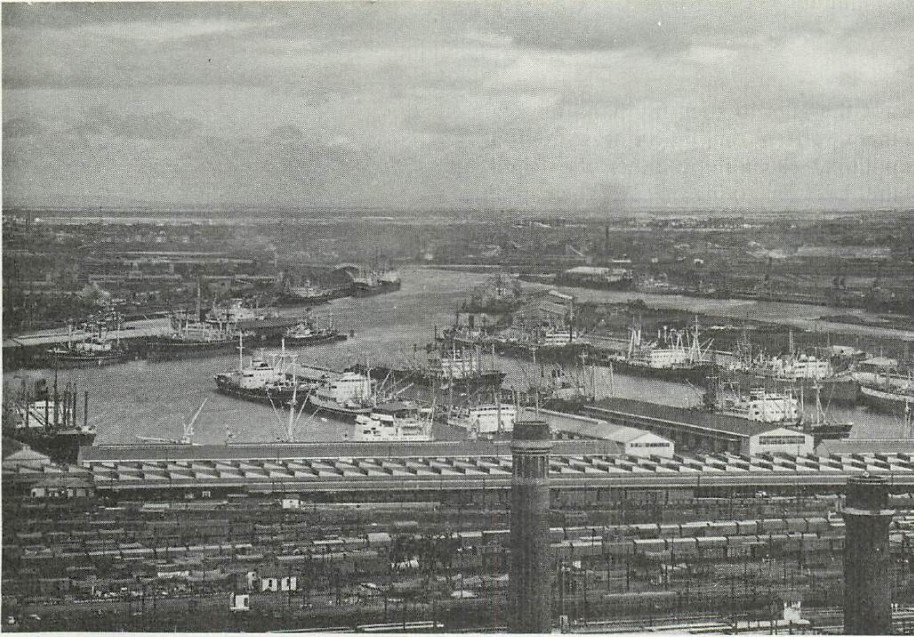


# NEW WORLD NEWS

FOR MORAL RE-ARMAMENT



Melbourne docks

photo: ANIB

When people think of the waterfront it is mostly associated with headlines of 'Strikes and Violence'. But this is not the real waterfront that I have known for the last 24 years. The waterfront is made up of the ordinary family men who have made our port of Melbourne one of the most productive in the world.

They are the men who have taken it from the bull-rope days, where a good, strong arm and a hook was an essential part of the wharfie's equipment, to today's great container terminals, where our members drive machinery valued at millions of dollars and handle cargoes at ten times the rate with a work force that is rapidly disappearing.

A container ship will do in 30 hours with a handful of men what a general cargo ship will do in two weeks with 100 men. Twenty-four years ago we had about 30,000 waterside workers in Australia. Today there are only about 15,000.

As a union, we are not opposed to this. It is progress. There is a quiet revolution going on on the Australian coast. You read of strikes today, they aren't the wharfies. In the last 12 months of all the industrial unrest in Australia the waterside workers were responsible for only just over 2 per cent. We have not lost our militancy, we are directing our militancy in a way that is benefiting the members of the industry to such an extent that we, as workers in this country, probably enjoy the best conditions and wages of any other labouring industry in Australia. What does concern us is: Will the whole community benefit?

It is still a hard life on shift work, as our wives will tell, rarely knowing when you will be called out; starting at midnight and especially so in the winter months on the open decks and wharves. We had an old fellow on the waterfront called Hughie Sykes. Hughie was 85 years old when he got blown into the drink one day, got pneumonia and died. Hughie spent 55 years of his life on the waterfront. We think he has 37 grand-

## Putting the clock forward

by Jim Beggs

President, Melbourne Branch of  
the Waterside Workers Federation

**Jim Beggs, a leader of the Australian dockers or 'wharfies' as they are known, has just returned from a visit to Europe where he met men in industry in many parts of Britain and the continent.**

**'We've concentrated too much,' he says, 'on the material things of life and opted out on moral and spiritual issues, the very foundation on which the labour movement was built.'**

**On the waterfront they sometimes give Jim the nickname 'Daylight saving'. Why? One of the first steps he took in the new revolution which he writes about was to return a car clock he had stolen from the wharves. He put the clock back!**

**The 'Herald', Melbourne, once called him 'King of the Wharfies'.**

children, nephews and relatives working on the waterfront in Melbourne. His love of it was so great that on his day off you would find Hughie with his straw-decker hat riding around the Melbourne waterfront to see the ships were all tied up ship-shape and the boys were working and the job going on. That was Hughie's life. When he died, after 55

years service to an industry, and I mean service, his family got nothing. This type of thing resulted in the bitterness that has been in the industry for many years.

But with all this we have a sense of humour, and you could not wish to work with a more generous group of men. If a wharfie knocks out his mother-in-law you'll read about it in the papers, but you don't read about the \$40,000 we levied ourselves for, to put a bakery on an island for the local people, or the \$100,000 we raised for the families of the men on strike at Mt Isa, or about the \$1,000 that is collected nearly every pay-day for some wharfie's family in need - or other needy causes outside the industry.

A lot of jokes are made about us, and we take it in good part - like the leading citizen who once said that a depression would never reach the shores of Australia because the wharfies would be too lazy to unload it. But the fact is that we are the life-line of our country, through us the wheels of industry and agriculture turn. There is a photo in our union rooms of some of the old members at a meeting of our Federation in the early days. Three of them were Prime Ministers of Australia - Watson, Fisher and Hughes. So our contribution to the life of the nation has been great. The dedication and the spirit which characterised the life of Keir Hardie, that man of faith, who pioneered the British Labour Movement and became the first Labour member of the House of Commons is needed today.

He said, 'Socialism makes war on a system, not a class. To narrow it into a class struggle will lead men's minds away from the true nature of the struggle. Mere class antagonism, class instinct, will never give us socialism. 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.'

Many forget that the early beginnings of the Trade Union movement were formed by men with a real faith. I refer



to the Tolpuddle martyrs who were challenged and inspired by the teachings of Wesley. They fought against the wrongs of their day without hate—the brotherhood of man under the Fatherhood of God.

The problems facing industry today are enormous. Only a new spirit in men can bring a new spirit in industry. Industrial relations are basically human relations. We have got to a stage where we realise just going up and knocking the boss out and then when he comes to, sorting out the problems, is not the way to do things any more. Up to 1967 on the Australian waterfront the wharfie was a casual employee. In other words he came to work one day, if there was a ship in and the boss wanted him, he got a job and if not the boss gave him 30 shillings and sent him home. That was our life, no guaranteed wage. Wharfies didn't only have to marry a wife but a chartered accountant to balance the budget in those days!

Then a historic agreement was signed in our industry without one hour of work lost and not a drop of blood shed. It brought new conditions, but even more important it is helping to reduce the threat of redundancy that has hung over our heads for generations. This agreement pioneered the way for the 35-hour week, the first time a national industry ever introduced a 35-hour week in Australia. We wrote into our contract that no man would be made redundant from the industry compulsorily. Our annual leave and wages went up. Many people even today say, 'How the devil did the wharfies get that?'

But there's more to it than a secure job and a higher standard of living.



When I first went on to the wharf someone asked me, 'Why did you go to the wharf?' Jokingly, I said that I'd heard that I would get the wages of the Prime Minister and half the cargo. It wasn't quite as good as that but my motive for going there was not much better and my approach to the job wasn't much better either. I had the great philosophy that I'd never be late twice in one day. Whenever I got to work late, I'd always leave early.

For seven years that was my attitude to the industry and the union. I would occasionally go to stop-work meetings, there I voted with the majority although sometimes I disagreed with them. I had

not the guts to stick my hand up against them. Often the union was used as a political football by either the Right or the Left in trying to use their politics to run the show and manipulate our union. So rather than get involved I would go and have a game of golf or go duck-shooting.

But then I met a revolutionary Christian idea called 'Moral Re-Armament'. And the introduction of this idea put me on a completely new road with my family. At that stage I had plenty of rows and plenty of fights on the waterfront, but they were nothing compared to the ones my wife and I used to have at home. We were finding it difficult as a young couple to get on together. Married life was not as easy as we had expected. It was at this time that we met this idea through our next-door neighbour.

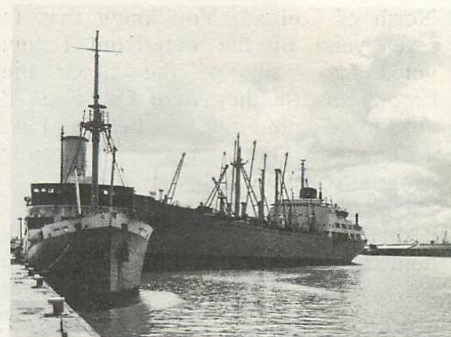
He began to tell us how he tried to run his life, not the way he particularly wanted to run it perhaps, but the way God meant it to be run. One day he said to me, 'Jim, do you believe in God?' Now I'd been brought up in the Presbyterian Church, but seven years on the waterfront had worn most of my faith away. What with cutting corners and compromise, I'd lost my faith and I really had to think to find out if I still did believe in God.

So I said, 'Yes, I think I do, Tom.' He said, 'Well, do you believe in prayer?' I replied that I was a bit rusty on that and it had been quite a while since I'd last prayed. He said, 'Do you think that God can ever talk to you?' I felt there wouldn't be a chance in the world of that. But he said, 'We listen, my wife and I. We listen to our inner voice, or conscience, or God, or whatever you like to call it. We believe it is God who speaks to us and that God has a plan for every living soul on this earth. And that the only way to find it out, of course is to listen to that inner voice.'

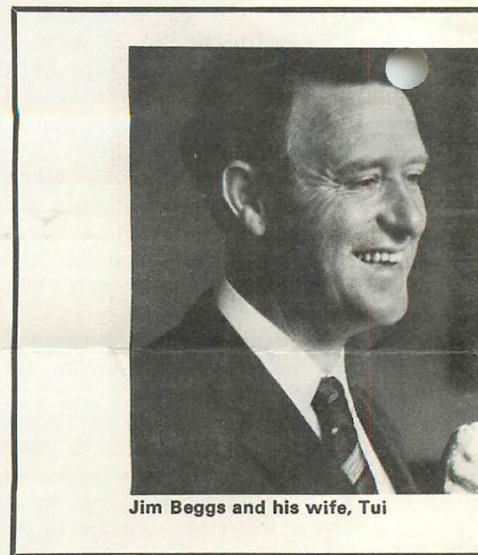
So he asked my wife and me if we would try this experiment of listening. 'You never know,' he added. 'It may help you personally or it may help your industry and beyond. If you trace back history you'll find that many great decisions that have altered the course of history were made by people listening to this inner voice.'

We had nothing to lose, the wife and I, so we tried this experiment, listening and writing down the thoughts we got. When I first started, sitting there on the end of the bed before I took off for work, I thought, 'If the boys could see me now, they'd think me stark raving mad.' But we did get thoughts about our relationship where apologies were necessary between us. Those simple apologies completely united my wife and me.

I realised that no union official, no employer, no politician can demand unity from the people that he represents if he doesn't live it out in the very place that he ought to—in his home. That



was a new start for us, it put us on this revolutionary road. I'd always accused the employer of being a dishonest scoundrel, but it did not stop me from stealing his cargo. So I had the simple thought one day that I ought to return it. Now it's very hard to knock something off from the Melbourne water-



Jim Beggs and his wife, Tui

front, but it is twice as hard to take it back! But I did.

Not because I wanted to become another of those goodies that exist in society today who want to clean up their own lives and go no further, but I felt that someone ought to start somewhere putting things right that they had done wrong in society. In a way, I'd been part of a problem in society and I wanted to get on the side of the answer.

I began to be responsible for the union. Instead of complaining about the union officials and the employers, I began to share in their responsibility. To try and help solve problems, to go back to stop-work meetings. I also had the rather uncomfortable thought to apologise to a Catholic in the port who used to knock out my mates at stop-work meetings. That was his caper. He was a professional boxer.

But I had the thought to apologise to this fellow—my father was a very staunch Orangeman who came from the



North of Ireland. You know that for seven years on the waterfront I never voted for many of the Labor men simply because they were Catholics. I'd vote for Communists, not because I was a Communist, but because of my bigotry towards the other religion.

One day at a stop-work meeting I decided I'd make a contribution. We hold our meetings down at the West Melbourne Boxing Stadium. Conveniently they leave the ring down for us. This Catholic fellow made a very bitter attack on the opposition from the platform and they followed it with a very bitter attack on him. And I could see the old, old story—the fellows, the rank and file, the blokes in the middle, just getting up and going out because they did not want to participate in this question of one political view against another.



photo: Mayor

I got up and made my maiden speech. It was a pretty rough one but I tried to get across what I felt. I named the two of them—the two leaders of the Left and the Right who were attacking one another—I said, 'It's time you fellows, with all your talents, combined them so that the rank and file got something productive at these stop-work meetings instead of using them to serve your own politics. If you did that there would be more of us, like me, who have kept away from the union meetings, who would come back. You'd get far more respect from us if you forgot your politics and got stuck into the real bread and butter issues that we've come here for today.'

I could sense as I spoke that this was what the rank and file wanted to hear and I got a bit carried away in the end and I said what I thought the wharfies could do for the nation and the world. In fact they refer to it now as 'Beggs' God, Queen and Country speech'.

As I got off the platform this little professional boxer was standing at the bottom. I thought the worst, that he was going to iron me out, but he said, 'Listen mate, what you just said, I agree with.' He had heard about my involvement with Moral Re-Armament, he had heard of me going back to my Church and returning cargo. I think he felt I'd been out in the sun too long—but anyway he wanted to know what the rules were that governed this idea.

I said, 'There are no rules, it's based on four absolute standards and the guidance of God. These standards of absolute honesty, purity, unselfishness and love are things on which all of us can unite and your membership depends only on whether you have a go at living the quality of life or not. At times our religions seem to divide us, but on these absolute standards we can find unity.'

As he was about to go I said, 'I'm sorry for many of the things that I've said against you and your religion on this waterfront. As Christians we ought to be working together. Our division has often placed people in positions of power in this union.'

He never said a thing to me that day but about three weeks later he came up to me and told me he had tried this experiment of putting right the things that you do wrong. He'd been in a fight with a bloke on the job a few days earlier. He'd knocked him out because he'd had a go at his religion. He said, 'Jim, I've never apologised to anyone in my life.' And he shook his fist under my nose and said, 'This is the only thing I know how to control people with. But I went up to this bloke that had the fight with me, in front of all his mates, and I apologised to him. I said, "I was supposed to be the Christian amongst us the other night but I didn't act like one, and I want to say sorry." Now this fellow got such a shock he nearly fell into his coal basket but he said, "If you really mean that I'll never say another thing against your religion."'

And to my friend that was a miracle because this chap never lost an opportunity to have a go at his religion. I think he learned the secret that day of how to turn enemies into friends. It's a secret we all need to experiment with.

That fellow, the Catholic friend of mine, was a spent force on the waterfront. The crowd he'd supported had been thrown out of office because of division and corruption. But from then on as he took this new approach to win people and to really live out his Catholic faith, he began to have a positive effect on the docks.

He has held every major position in our union since then, from President to Secretary to Federal Councillor. He was one of the men who helped to introduce this new system of work in the ports of Australia. He was the man who stood out back in 1961 to fight for a new leadership in the national waterfront and

was successful in helping to get our General Secretary elected to the job.

I'm a great believer that large doors swing on small hinges. My wife and I are just an ordinary couple, with three kids. We have nothing in particular in the way of talents—we've got very limited education. But I believe that God has got a plan. If a person seeks that plan he can be marvellously led. You may ask why I was elected President. Some say, 'Fancy Beggs, that Bible-bashing so-and-so, getting the President's job on the Melbourne waterfront.' Many people think I got it in spite of my Moral Re-Armament and my Christian beliefs, but I believe I got it because of them.

When I first was elected to the job of President some three and a half years ago, I scraped in by 40-odd votes, perhaps because the opposition were divided and put up three candidates and they split their vote. The last election was some fourteen months ago and there was only one candidate against me. I was a bit concerned that if I was meant to be the President I was going to have some real trouble because the opposition was now united. I was finding it difficult to get out and have job meetings at lunch times on the wharves with the fellows to tell them why they should put me back as President.

Then a chap came into my office one day about a week before the elections and told me how one of my previous opponents had got up in front of two hundred men and called on them to support me as President.



I don't say this is because of my ability. I think it is because God has put His hand on my shoulder to do a job. And it's not me but Him doing it. I believe in revolution—and I sincerely mean this, that if we are not involved in a revolution from within our hearts, if it's not this generation then it will be the next generation, who may have to be involved in a revolution from without, that will bring bloodshed and tragedy to the peoples of the world.

We talk a lot about the brotherhood of man and the unity of the workers, our great catch-cry is, 'workers of the world unite'. But I've learned through Moral Re-Armament that the real job of the workers is to unite the world and that everyone has a part.



# 'Don't forget the people who do not have unions'

from an address by Peter Howard to a seminar of officers of labour unions in Southern California, Los Angeles, 1964

WE STAND strongly in favour of trade unionism. I wish the whole world were properly united and the workers unionised. I wish the unions themselves were united.

We are utterly opposed to any discrimination of class, colour, creed or race. We will fight to the death to bring intelligence to humanity and end all discrimination.

We are out to end the hatred in human hearts created by human arrogance and pride, and to end the human arrogance and pride which creates that hatred. Of course we believe in legislation, of course we believe in laws to make men live as men should live, but we believe that neither environment, education nor laws go far enough in the times we live in. We have got to train men to step forward into a new age where we live together as sane people and as brothers.

## Unforgettable

I hate poverty. In 1962, according to the figures, one million American farming families lived on less than £1,164 a year. That is terrible. But may I also tell you that many million families in Asia live on a total income of less than £350 a year? I have sat in their huts with them. I have shared their food—a couple of handfuls of rice for their family. They share it with you! If you have gone through that, you have either got to have a heart of steel or you will never forget it. We need that passion for people in our hearts to make us tick.

I thank God for the conditions you have achieved. I know the struggle you have had. But I beg you all by the mercy of God, do not forget the people who do not have unions. Do not forget the people who are still oppressed. Do not forget the people who this day as we sit here are going to bed hungry, and waking up tomorrow without hope. If we in the free world forget those people for one instant, the world we create is going to be destroyed.

Moral Re-Armament happens to be revolutionary. We challenge every selfish

man, whether he is unionist or industrialist, black or white. We challenge you to change. Not everybody likes that. We believe that the price of a new world is the decisions made in individual human hearts, starting in our own. A lot of people can tell you about the rugged ill-nature of some steely capitalist, and I know they are selfish! And if you go to the other side of the fence a lot of people can tell you about the bull-headed selfishness of certain union leaders!

Do not believe we can be bought by management. We don't take a cent of salary. We cannot be bullied or bribed. We have only the money that people give us. We have no big 'sugar daddies'. If anybody want to bribe us or bully us, let them come and try. We happen to be—with God's help—incorruptible.

I give every cent from my books or plays, before they are published, to the work of Moral Re-Armament. I do it not from any spirit of nobility. I happen to believe in this work. I wouldn't want to make money out of it. I want you to understand that, because we talk here together sensibly. I may not meet you again. I want you to understand the reality of how we are financed. We are

'Labour united  
can unite the nation.  
Labour led by God  
can lead the world'

FRANK BUCHMAN

at a luncheon given in  
his honour by the National  
Trade Union Club,  
London, 1938.

financed by the voluntary sacrifice of hundreds of thousands of people all over the world who pitch in because they care.

I have a farm. Any profits from it go to Moral Re-Armament. The men who work with me know that, they know what I am living for, and they chip in too.

I would like every capitalist in America to give us large sums of money. They do not. I can think of no better use to which the money could be put. But if you think any capitalist can buy us for the purposes of the right wing you are crazy. We are not for sale. That is one reason why we get attacked—by extreme Right and extreme Left.

## World surgery

Don't think I am here to make people better. This is an important point because many people think we are a kind of evangelistic concern that comes up and says: 'Have you got an itchy pimple? If you'll scratch mine, I'll scratch yours.' If you think a man like me would give his life to that, you are nuts! We are in a massive job of world surgery, and the world is a very sick patient. In order to do that job of surgery, we have to clean our hands, but cleaning our hands is not surgery.

Moral Re-Armament exists only in so far as it is lived and applied by people. In terms of people around the world who have been affected by it, the numbers run into scores of millions. That is literally true. It does not mean that they are all saints. It does mean their lives to a greater or lesser extent have been affected by this work and they are still in touch with it. We never will have a membership because the moment we did that we would become a kind of rival concern to other rival concerns. We do not want to run a rival union; we do not want to run a rival church—or a rival political party.

## Till death us do part

When I set out as a newspaperman to investigate Moral Re-Armament I found people who were making the most intelligent attempt I had yet seen to answer the contradictions of our age. And I still believe that to be so. If you can tell us how to do our job better, you will be our friends. We have got to do it better. But as far as we are concerned, we are in there with every drop of our blood, every cent of our money, every ounce of such brains as we have got, till death us do part.

We want to remake the modern world. That is our revolution, and your revolution, and we will carry it through together.