

NEW WORLD NEWS

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British Steel Corporation

REGENERATION IN THE MIDST OF RECESSION

Economists tell us of the need to adjust to a new 'industrial geography' in the world. Industries such as steelmaking and textiles, traditionally the monopoly of the industrialised Northern hemisphere, are increasingly being shared with the developing South. Meanwhile, microelectronics is bringing a second industrial revolution to many countries.

The slimming of old industries and the transition to new ones is inevitably painful. Llanwern steelworks in South Wales, for example, is now producing as much steel as two years ago with half as many employees. But the cost has been 4,300 jobs lost. The other option, closure, would have cost far more. The current recession, too, is forcing many industries to make similar decisions.

Such 'slimming exercises' can bring out either the worst or the best in people. They can inflame class war, or develop the compassion of shared experience. A printworker, after a year out of work, said recently that, while he would not wish unemployment on anyone, it had opened his eyes to the suffering of others, and to the generosity of his friends.

Adjusting to the new industrial geography demands a willingness to accept change, to overcome the conservatism which hangs on to the known way of doing things. A father can no longer expect his son to follow him into the same industry. Retraining for two or three different skills in a working life may increasingly become the norm.

Governments, financiers, employers and trade unions must assist this readjustment—not only by caring for the needs of the unemployed, and organising retraining schemes, but also by developing new areas of employment where innovation and patience are needed and financial returns may be uncertain.

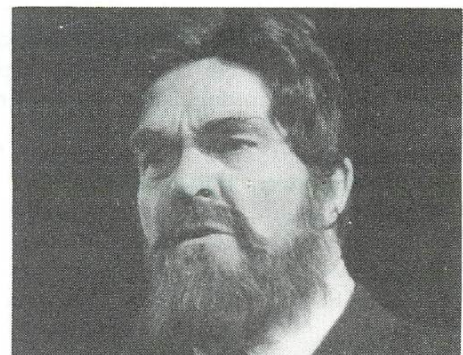
Equally essential are the initiatives of men on the shop floor, or at the office desk, who aim to seek God's wisdom. They can lead to unexpected examples of regeneration in the midst of recession. In this issue we look at the experiences of people who have welcomed change in their own lives, as an ingredient of change in their industries.

Michael Smith



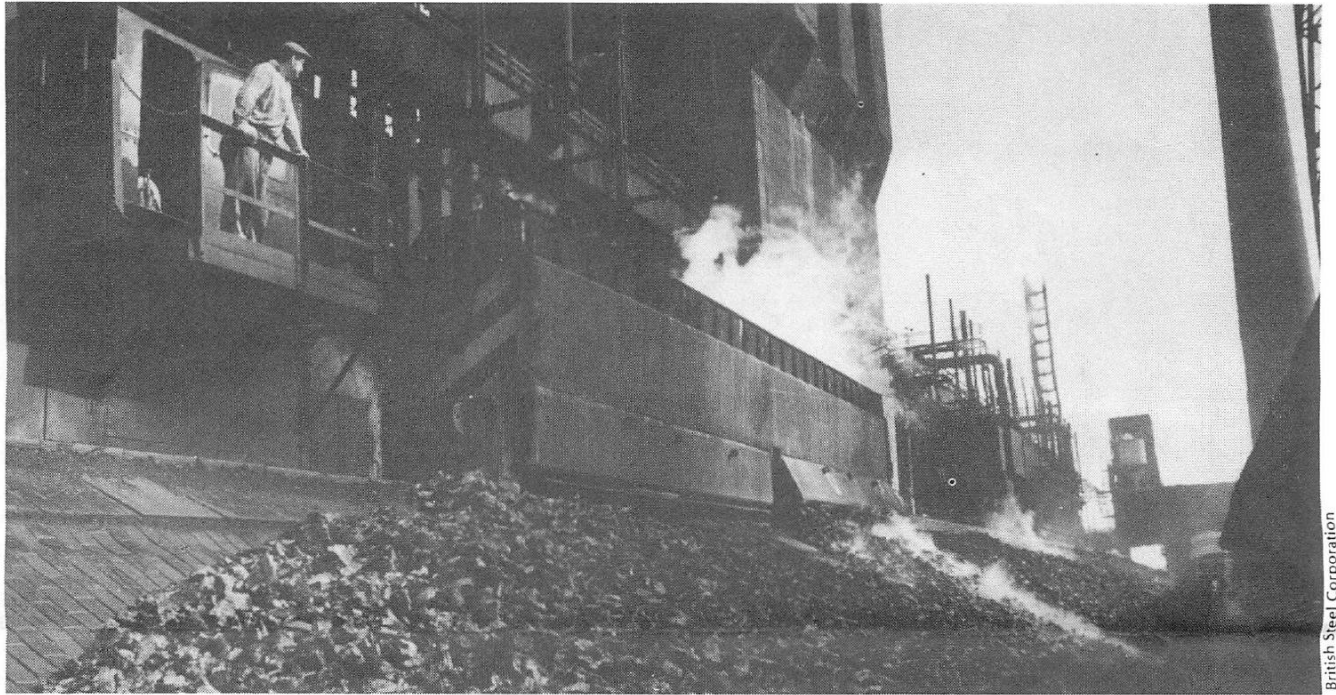
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British Steel Corporation

Coke ovens at Llanwern.

LLANWERN— BEHIND THE 'MIRACLE'

by our industrial correspondents

LLANWERN, the giant South Wales steel plant, is enjoying a good press these days. *The Times* headlined a recent report, 'a steel success story'. Yet, only a few years ago, one newspaper dubbed Llanwern 'the festering sore of Welsh industry'.

The British Steel Corporation opened Llanwern in 1962. It was equipped to the highest standards but last year, after massive financial losses, it faced possible closure under plans to reorganise the whole corporation. Then, through a demanning exercise known as 'slimline', productivity improved massively so that the plant is now comparable with any in Europe and many in Japan. In the Seventies a workforce of 9,000 at Llanwern was producing 2 million tonnes a year. If production figures continue at their present level, the same tonnage will be produced this year by only 4,700 people.

The Times' article states that Llanwern is today 'held up as an example to plants in other parts of Britain'. The writer adds, 'Absenteeism has dropped dramatically and little overtime is required. There have been radical changes in working practices and manning standards, with most demarcation barriers swept away.'

Sir Douglas Bader, writing in the *Daily Express*, quotes an example of what this means. A blast furnace section manager told him, 'Changing the nozzle on a clay gun used to take two riggers, two fabricators, two fitters and a fitter's mate. Now it is done by one production man who has extended his basic skills. It is quicker, easier and cost saving.'

Clearly, Llanwern has done what many industries aspire to do—become more efficient. Port Talbot, the other large

South Wales steelworks, has also improved efficiency considerably and remains operative. Peter Hill writing in *The Times*, says that over the past 18 months there has been a quite remarkable transformation of management-union relationships in the two plants. He comments, 'The vigour and vitality, which is almost tangible at Llanwern and Port Talbot, seems paradoxical at a time when the steel industry is experiencing its deepest crisis since the Thirties.'

David James, who is secretary of the foremen's negotiating committee and on the Llanwern works council, left us in no doubt that things looked just as different from within the plant. 'Llanwern is a miracle—there's no doubt about that. Slimline has brought a dramatic change in the way the plant works. We saw the benefits immediately.'

'What convinced your union to accept slimline, despite the loss of jobs?' we asked. Mr James took us back to early 1980: 'We were faced with the imminent closure of the plant. BSC management had come forward with a plan for the 1980s which included the closure of Llanwern or Port Talbot, or half of each. We felt that this would not be viable and that it was only a matter of time till we had no steel industry in South Wales at all.' This would have had a much wider impact, closing, for example, the coal mines which existed to supply the plant's coking coal. South Wales would have become 'an industrial desert'.

Speaking personally, he said, 'I am 42 and this was the first time in my life that I had been threatened with not finding a job at all. My career was suddenly under threat, having been brought up in the industry.' Mr James concluded that slimline was the best chance of keeping the plant going.

The threat of closure was the main factor in persuading the workforce to accept slimline. This view was expressed by several people we talked to—leading members of the works council, officers of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation (the steelworkers' main union), and representatives of BSC management from Llanwern.

Several spoke of the 'commitment' to keeping the plant open—morale has never been better according to one of the management. David Williams, South Wales Worker Director, wrote in the *ISTC Banner*, 'The thing to remember

at Llanwern now, is that everyone who is here has decided not to opt for redundancy, but to stay and make a fight of it. That's why morale, despite recession, is good, and commitment total. What has been achieved at Llanwern is, I think, a minor miracle.'

'We realised that we could not keep going on the former basis, with our order books as they were—nearly empty. We needed a wider viewpoint,' said Mr James. 'A group of us who were committed to the survival of the plant came together, mustered with the help of people committed to MRA. We had the will to succeed. We set about convincing people that there was a future if we did slim down. We knew we could produce the goods. We convinced the Board in South Wales.'

Gwilym Jenkins, a computer operator at Llanwern and an ISTC branch secretary, agreed that attitudes had changed. 'Couldn't care less—that was the overriding attitude that characterised life at Llanwern; that was the attitude that needed to change, and that was the attitude that did change.'

'What about your own attitudes, Mr Jenkins?' we asked. 'As an individual, as a typical South Wales steelworkers' representative, where did your own attitudes need to change?'

'Well,' replied Mr Jenkins, 'as a matter of fact I found that almost all of the attitudes I had been brought up on were irrelevant in the face of this threat of closure. For example, I had a deep-seated hang-up about the Tories. As a dyed-in-the-wool socialist in the South Wales tradition I took the view that I shouldn't even sit next to a Conservative, let alone talk to one.'

However, it had become obvious that if the closure was to be averted, they had to get into a dialogue, albeit informally, with representatives of the government of the day, who were Tory. 'Having decided to put my anti-Conservative prejudices on one side,' he went on, 'I was amazed to find that it was possible to have a meaningful dialogue about Llanwern with people who I disagreed with politically.'

Dinner

'The next attitude that had to change was my approach towards the customer,' Mr Jenkins went on. 'I was standing on the picket line outside the works during last year's national steel strike when a manager came out from inside the works and had a go at me. "You'd better get your lads back to work, Gwilym," he said, "because the customers are disappearing fast, and if you don't believe me, come in and look at the order book for yourself."'

To Mr Jenkins' dismay, the order book was practically empty. He went home that night and wracked his brains and, although not the praying type, he prayed about those lost orders. The next day, he happened to see a TV programme where the then Chairman of BSC was talking with Harold Williams, a South Wales employer who bought his steel from BSC. 'Something about Mr Harold Williams made me phone him up and ask for his help even though at the time I was picketing his works. To my surprise he agreed to come to a "Save Llanwern" meeting that I was helping to organise.'

Harold Williams was impressed with the 'statesmanship' of some of the trade union speakers at that meeting. 'Up until today I couldn't have cared less whether the South Wales steel industry lived or died,' he said there. 'I was so totally sick of the whole scene—the endless arguments about manning levels and who does what, the prices that were too

high, the quality that was too low and the delivery that was too late.' He offered to lay on a dinner for six of his colleagues who were also leading customers of BSC to meet the appropriate representatives from trade unions and management at Llanwern. 'We the customers will tell you why we don't buy our steel from BSC any more and you can tell us why we should,' was Harold Williams' challenge.

At the dinner, a spokesman for the Llanwern workforce spelt out the new attitudes: 'We the trade unions at Llanwern are prepared to take our share of responsibility for what has gone wrong in the past. We are prepared to play our part in helping to achieve customer satisfaction in the critical areas of quality, reliability, delivery, service and price.'

The customers, impressed almost to a man, left with a promise to come back to Llanwern for their steel if those words were converted into improved performance at the works.

How important were these meetings with customers? Mr James again: 'The average customer thought the workers were there purely and simply for the ride. They thought we didn't care about the costs, the quality, the output or the customers. But through the dinners they began to see a group besides management who cared about these things. Talk was not enough. We had to deliver the goods as well. We have improved quality and output and have been meeting the needs of the customers. Now there is a commitment to meeting production targets.'

A leading member of the Llanwern works council sums up, 'What has happened here is more than just a story of getting manning levels right or allowing a man to carry out a job provided he has the skill to do so. You could never have produced the conditions, the turn-around, we have brought about if attitudes hadn't also changed.' ■



Participants at a Moral Re-Armament conference held in Gladbeck, Germany, during the last weekend of October. They are (l to r) Franz Josef Mertens, SPD Member of Parliament for Gladbeck, Hubert Eggemann, a retired miner, John Soderlund from Sweden, and Folker Mittag, a German businessman. At the conference, which was called 'Facing Facts', Dr Mertens said, 'I am convinced that people's dissatisfaction with politics would not be so strong if we politicians would accept moral standards to a greater extent.'

The Lord Mayor of Gladbeck, Wolfgang Roken, was patron of the conference. He received delegates at the town hall. ■

The Warwickshire branch of the National Union of Mineworkers, the full-time Birmingham officials of the engineering workers' union (AUEW), and the Rugeley Trades Council, Staffordshire, have each sponsored recent performances of a play about Keir Hardie. The Pioneer Theatre production of *Keir Hardie—the man they could not buy* is seen by one of the cast, PATRICK O'KANE, as being particularly relevant in the Midlands at this time. He explains why below.

HARDIE IN THE EYE OF THE STORM

THE MIDLANDS is the flagship of British industry. It has been buffeted and damaged by the economic storms swirling around the world.

BL (once British Leyland), more than any other enterprise, symbolises the greatness and the troubles of the Midlands. Some of these troubles are caused by the growth of other industrial nations, in particular Japan, and the resulting competition. Related difficulties are the sterling exchange rate, high interest rates and the recession.

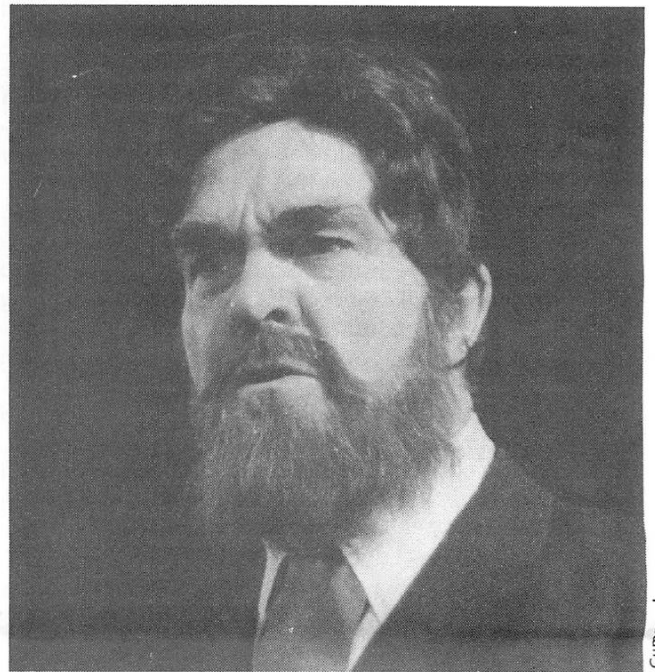
However, the greatest problem within some Midlands industries must be the failure to work unitedly for survival. Our history has caused polarisation into 'them and us' attitudes, not only on the shop floor but also in politics. Our future prosperity, and freedom itself, may depend on bridging this chasm.

It may seem strange that a play about James Keir Hardie, the 'father of the British Labour Party', could be a unifying factor. He spent his life mobilising the working man to shape society and helping him gain his dignity. He was the main inspiration for the labour and trade union movement at the beginning of the century.

Hardie, a man of faith, could not go along with an industrial system that degraded man. Neither could he agree with the 'class war' philosophy of Karl Marx, for it, too, degraded man. Hardie's idea—the brotherhood of man



The branch secretary of Daw Mill colliery, Angus Johnson (centre), who sponsored a performance of 'Keir Hardie' on behalf of the NUM, and training officer Colin Morgan (left) with members of the cast.



Don Simpson as Keir Hardie.

under the fatherhood of God'—included everyone. He believed that God's will had to become man's will if man were ever to create a conflict-free world. He said that 'the Christianity of Christ' was the inspiration which first of all drove him into the labour movement and which carried him on in it.

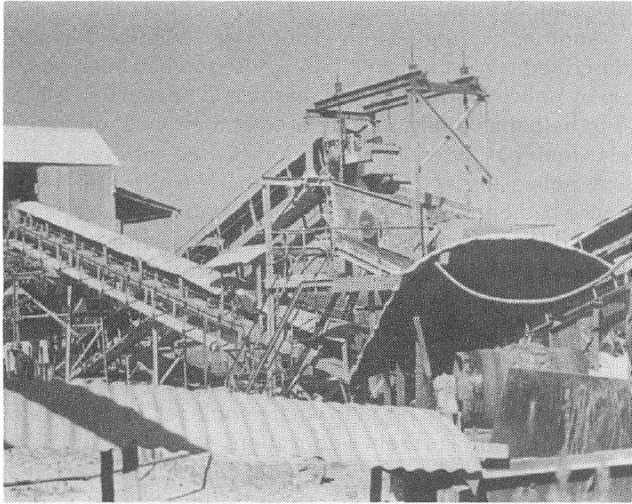
The play traces his life from humble beginnings in Scotland through the coal mines and Parliament to the formation of the Labour Party. It draws on his experiences of hardship, his answer to the bitterness these created, his refusal to be bullied or bought. That incorruptibility gave him the authority to speak out against wrong and proclaim what was right.

The struggle, he believed, was not right against left but right against wrong. 'The pursuit of wealth corrupts the manhood of man,' he once said. 'We are called on at the beginning of the twentieth century to decide the question propounded in the Sermon on the Mount as to whether we will worship God or Mammon.' He burned that people should be free from whatever enslaved them, not only in the system but in their hearts.

This is grassroots theatre—a group of 20 from all walks of life, some retired, others studying, trade unionists, housewives and grandmothers, gathered from many parts of Britain to stage the play. We were the first to put on any kind of play in the three recent venues—the Daw Mill and Lea Hall miners' clubs and the AUEW hall in Birmingham, where a week later BL workers were debating their wage claim.

Bert Allen, one of the cast, spoke after the performance in the hall. Despite retirement he is still an active AUEW branch secretary. He said that performing the play in front of his colleagues in that hall was the third great honour he had received there. The first was chairing the opening of the hall as AUEW District President for Birmingham. The second was the Meritorious Award of Honour for 40 years of continuous office in his union.

A pamphlet, 'Keir Hardie, Father of the British Labour Movement' by Garth Lean, published by 'The Industrial Pioneer', is available from Grosvenor Books, 54 Lyford Road, London SW18 3JJ, price 20p, with postage 32p. ■



Zimbabwean gold mine

ZIMBABWE Miners in the lead

THE INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS OFFICER thumped the journal lying on his desk. 'You can throw this industrial relations book out of the window when you've been to Coolmoreen,' he said. 'The issue in industry in this country is fear, and Coolmoreen is dealing with fear.'

He was referring to the series of weekend industrial seminars being held at Coolmoreen Farm, the MRA centre near Gwelo, Zimbabwe. The last one brought together 50 managers and workers' leaders from 14 firms.

The *Herald*, Zimbabwe's largest daily, headlined its report of the seminar, 'The miners are beating racialism'. It quoted John Chirimhani, group industrial relations officer of African Associated Mines, who gave two examples from his group.

In one mine, he said, the 4600 employees, mostly black, had elected a white Zimbabwean to their workers' committee, defeating a black candidate. In another, six black members of the workers' committee pleaded to management for a white foreman who was about to be dismissed for hitting a worker. 'Mining work is tough and people lose their tempers,' said Mr Chirimhani. 'The committee felt that in this case dismissal was too harsh a punishment.' The man was retained.

The report, which also appeared in the Bulawayo daily, *The Chronicle*, went on to quote Phil Lodge, Works Manager of Cotton Printers, Bulawayo. He had brought the managing directors of two Bulawayo companies to the seminar.

'The challenge here is to look at yourself,' Mr Lodge said. 'When I did, I realised I needed a change in attitude. That's not something to be scared of. It lays a basis for constructive thinking.'

The article also quoted Moses Mazithulela, Vice-President of the Transport and General Workers' Union, who said that the seminar had made his work easier: 'I have found that if I am prepared to change where I see my attitude is wrong, it brings a response from the other man.'

Another trade union organiser found the same. While attending the seminar, he had stayed with a white couple in Gwelo. 'The way they looked after me opened my mind to the idea that co-operation between the races was possible,' he said. He returned to Salisbury determined to try again to

talk to a managing director who had refused to let unions into his firm. The manager was not pleased to see him. 'Give me two minutes,' said the union organiser. The two minutes extended to 30, at the end of which the manager amazed him by opening the firm to the union.

'The ideas we worked out at the Coolmoreen seminar are bringing new trust right across the board,' said the union organiser. Now he is organising a similar seminar in Salisbury.

John Bond

Cutting the overheads

by Miles Paine

'WEAK MANAGEMENT is much more of a problem for the trade union leader than over-tough management,' said the union official, somewhat to my surprise. His comment made me reflect on some of my own experiences as Works Engineer and Works Manager.

It was as a junior production engineer that I was first introduced to the idea of spending time every morning listening for God's direction. One of the first results was that I decided to try to get to know the Convenor of the factory's 5000 employees, who happened to be working in my department. I'd seen him every day for the last five years, but I only now discovered that his wife had rheumatic fever. He worried about the large family that she was unable to look after properly. We began to understand each other more.

'I tend to do the things that tax me least,' a friend of mine used to remark. Even now seldom a day passes without my thinking of this. Out of six phone calls is there one that tends to get carried over to the next day? That hour each morning helps me to sort out my priorities and decide to do the things that seem difficult.

Seeing staff

For example, at one time I was responsible for a number of production engineers whose salaries were reviewed every six months. It was easy enough to tell the glad news to those who had received a rise. But those who had not waited in vain for a call to my office. I decided, difficult though it might be, to see every one of my staff at least every six months and discuss their progress.

Then, in a later position, there was my Managing Director. He was a personal friend and few days passed without my spending some time in his office. But I began to get increasingly annoyed by his failure to make decisions which only he could make, such as whether to buy a particular machine tool. He invariably asked for more information, which I knew was just an excuse for further delay.

I complained to other managers in the company about my difficulty in running the factory under these circumstances. Then, one morning, I knew that I must explain my difficulty to the Managing Director himself. He had a violent temper and I wasn't sure he would take kindly to my criticism. However I made a date to see him, put my point, and waited for the explosion. He was quiet for an unusually long interval. Then he said, 'I do find some decisions difficult to make. But as you were speaking I realised it can be as wrong to make no decision as it is to make a wrong one.' Our relationship was transformed from then on and this was felt throughout the organisation. For one of industry's major overheads is often relationships within management. ■



left to right: Andrew Balladin, Deputy Senior Community Relations Officer from Merseyside, Roddy Edwards, Mrs Lane and David Lane, Chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality.

Spoooner

REALISING BRITAIN'S GREAT ASSET

A WEEKEND GATHERING at Tirley Garth, the MRA centre in the North of England, earlier this month was attended by community leaders, civic workers, police and the Chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality, David Lane. The weekend was the third in a series on 'How can our multi-racial society help to unite a divided world?'

People spoke frankly of their difficulties in what Hari Shukla, Senior Community Relations Officer for Tyne and Wear, called 'the business of learning how to live together'. A person working in community relations had been assaulted and had had his car and house vandalised by people who opposed his determination to maintain relations with other groups. 'To speak of honesty is to put one's physical being at risk,' he said. 'In my area everyone is against sitting down to speak rationally. It is not done to speak of good relationships with the police.'

'The silent majority is more silent than ever. I've been threatened but I'm quite prepared to stand up for convictions. One must face hardship. We need your prayers and we need people who will give of their purse and their purpose, their person and their personality.'

In talking about these realities, the accent was, in Mr Lane's words, 'on the positive and constructive, as opposed to the divisive and the destructive'. He would return to his office 'greatly heartened', he said. Speakers told of initiatives to build trust. In Coventry, where tension has grown because of two racist murders and high unemployment, a vicar organised a multi-cultural day of discussion and festivities. On Tyneside, political and community leaders, the chief constable and the bishop all visited the family of an Asian who had died after a racial incident. Several speakers praised the constructive role of religious organisations.

From South London, Jyoti Nagi, a student, reported on a group which she and friends had formed to bring people of different backgrounds together. 'I was quick to blame the British for their superiority, without realising my similar feelings towards West Indians and some of my own people,'

she said. She had apologised to those concerned.

Another young South Londoner, Miguel Richards, described a West Indian family whose son had been picked up by police for no apparent reason and beaten up. 'My job is to help that family, in spite of what they have suffered, to play their part in creating a prejudice-free society,' he said.

A police inspector from a northern city told how the police had organised a camping weekend for young people from different communities. There had been a good response to the plan, but then youth workers had withdrawn their co-operation, as a result of an incident which had led to arrests. The issue had become 'political'.

Alfred Stocks, Chief Executive for Liverpool, described his city as 'embattled and at war with itself'. 'The Council recently decided to listen to what people felt on four major issues that affect them—education, the 'social services, housing and employment,' he said. 'One outcome was that we decided to carry out an informal study to discover how many of our 30,000 employees were black. The figure was 169—only a tenth of what it should be, taking account of proportions in the population as a whole. At first we were apprehensive about what would happen when this became known. But amazingly, when the facts were published, people were relieved that the truth was out in the open.'

'The leader of the Council is moving a resolution on recruitment so that a fairer policy can be established,' Dr Stocks went on. 'We now find ourselves in a strong position to go to other employers in the area and ask them about their employment situation with regard to coloured people.'

'A Community Relations man recently said to us, "I do not believe that you are racist by intention, but you are racist by default." It was a generous assessment,' concluded Dr Stocks.

Spotlight

Superintendent Michael Mulroy, Community Liaison Officer for Greater Manchester Police, said that the summer's troubles in Moss Side had spurred people in the churches and West Indian community to work together to alleviate the area's problems. Police were continuing their previous policy of public relations work in schools, participating in workshops for the unemployed and organising mixed camping weekends for young people.

The number of police on foot patrol had already been increased in the Manchester area so as to achieve better contact with local communities, Superintendent Mulroy continued. This was now being given even higher priority. Police training must be improved and cadets taught to react more helpfully in difficult circumstances.

Those who had come to Britain in search of security had a responsibility towards the country, said one of the chairmen, Subbiah Kistasamy, who was born in South Africa and now teaches in London. 'We have to stand by the British with their problems,' he said. 'A country that gives me the right to citizenship deserves a loyalty that is total. Are we to continue demanding justice? Or should we rather decide to be responsible with others to see that justice will reign?'

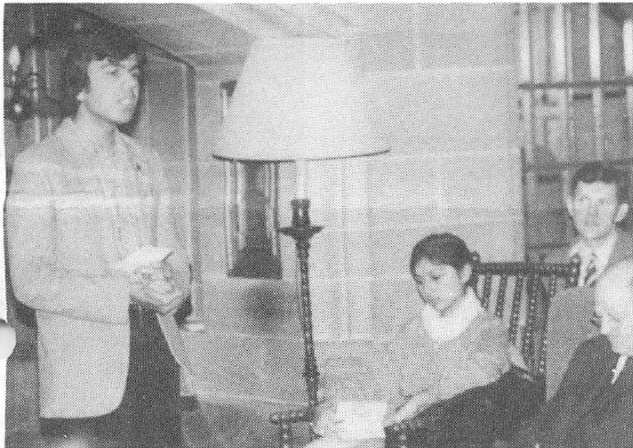
Ranju Shukla from Newcastle upon Tyne gave an example of the difficulties women of different cultures and languages face when they arrive in Britain. When her family left Kenya nine years ago, she had not spoken English for 20 years. For the first two months she had cried, beseeching her husband to take them back to Kenya or to India. He had helped her to take part in social events and learn to speak English again, and now she was glad that they had stayed.

One of Britain's greatest assets was her multi-cultural

society, said an initiator of the weekend, James Hore-Ruthven. 'Members of my family spent their lives in sacrificial service in other parts of the world,' he said. 'I do not decry all that was done at that time.' But the ancestors of today's black British had been exploited by British colonialists, and white British must understand this fact. Britain should pioneer a prejudice-free society for the world.

The world's spotlight rested on Britain, said Sam Pono from South Africa. Such news as this summer's riots tended to reinforce reactionaries in South Africa, who believed that their present policies could avert similar troubles. Hari Shukla said, 'Overseas visitors have told us that they expect Britain to give leadership in how to have a successful multi-cultural society. We have a global responsibility. We cannot afford to fail.'

Tom Jones



Nitin Shukla speaks at Tirley Garth.

Spencer

USA

Over the ceiling

THE CHASM BETWEEN black and white people will never be bridged by social agencies alone, says Conrad Hunte, the former West Indian cricket star. 'We need a new factor of forgiveness and compassion.'

Mr Hunte was lecturing on race at Portland State University during a three-week visit to Oregon and Washington. Speaking of Britain, he said, 'In the mind of most white people there is an unconscious ceiling above which they do not expect black people to rise. In the mind of most black people there is a barrier beyond which white people are not allowed to pass.' A drastic change was needed in both attitudes, he said. 'But in order to change an apparently irreconcilable situation one has got to love both sides.'

A Ghanaian student asked Mr Hunte what he could do to answer racism. 'Remove the psychological scar of racism from your own heart, then speak the truth without anger,' he replied. 'For the anger that destroys the other man becomes self-defeating.'

Mr Hunte's speaking engagements included a dinner in Portland given by the English-speaking Union and the World Affairs Council and an address to the Foreign Policy Association on the theme, 'Britain faces up to a multi-racial society'. In Seattle, home of the famous Seattle Sonics pro basketball team, he addressed meetings of the Foundation for International Understanding through Students and of the Campus Christian Students at the University of Washington.

A page-width article and photo in *The Oregonian* re-

ferred to Mr Hunte's commitment to MRA and his work to build trust and collective leadership in the West Indian team. Two half-hour programmes were recorded for the radio in Klamath Falls in Eastern Oregon. In a live broadcast on KBOO Portland he described his aim: 'We've got to raise up 10,000 people of the conviction of Martin Luther King who will decide to match hate with love, to match violence with non-violence and to match whatever anyone does to discredit or destroy us with forgiveness and atonement. Victory will come to truth, not falsehood.'

Afghan exiles meet

THE 'STATESMAN-JOURNAL' of Salem, Oregon, reports a meeting of 40 Afghans during the MRA conferences in Caux, Switzerland, this summer.

The Afghans, now living in Europe and America, came together at Caux to seek unity. 'They heard from other refugees from Laos and Ethiopia, they listened to speakers from Zaire and Nigeria on their experience with freedom and they had frank talks with each other,' writes Michael Henderson in the paper's 'guest opinion' column. "If I had known you were coming," one admitted to another, "then I wouldn't have come." Misunderstandings were removed.

'Noor Delawari, an Afghan who is now a bank executive in Los Angeles and who initiated the gathering, says, "The spirit of Moral Re-Armament's standards of absolute honesty, purity, unselfishness and love had a positive effect on the entire atmosphere. It moved people to put aside differences so that they could see what is right for Afghanistan rather than who is right." He adds, "We couldn't have had this meeting as successfully any place else."

Mr Henderson's article describes the special sessions of the Caux conference and the reactions of participants from Oregon. 'What impressed me most was the respect of participants for each other and for the needs of other human beings,' says Professor Frank Munk of Portland State University. 'I was struck by the unusual combination of idealism and realism.'

Marjorie Higgins, also from Oregon, took part in a session hosted by young people with her daughter and teenage grandchildren. 'We all learned to be honest with one another,' she told Mr Henderson. 'It was not always easy but it freed us.'

The Oregonian and two other Oregon papers, the *Lake Oswego Review* and the *Newberg Graphic*, also carried articles on the Caux conference.

There will be an 'Open house for the New Year' at the Caux conference centre from Dec 27 to Jan 3.

Zambian brief

250 DELEGATES from all parts of Zambia saw the MRA film *Freedom* as part of the official programme of the recent 5th Women's Council and Workshop Meeting of the United National Independence Party Women's Brigade. The film, written by Africans working for the political independence of their countries, dramatises the further struggle to free a nation from hate, fear and greed. It was shown at the President's Citizenship College, Mulungushi.

Who will grasp the nettle?

'DEVELOPMENT—what's it got to do with me?', the second in a series of MRA public meetings at the Westminster Theatre, London, took place against the backdrop of the World Bank's recent report on Africa South of the Sahara. The report states that 26 African countries are facing famine, and that one in four Africans die before they are four.

Speakers stressed the urgent need for reform of the world's economic structures and the Christian imperative to work for the change of attitude in rich and poor countries which would make this possible. They included Benjamin Bol, a former agriculture minister of the Southern Sudan, and A R K Mackenzie, assistant to Edward Heath on the Brandt Commission (see NWN 31 Oct 1981).

The 'human factor' was important even on the highest levels, said Geoffrey Lean, author of *Rich World, Poor World*, who had just returned from the Cancun summit in Mexico. The positive atmosphere there had meant that leaders from North and South could learn from each other, even though the final result of the summit was disappointing.

If the Third World were to prosper, it must be allowed to develop manufacturing industries and export their products, he went on. This would mean rationalisation in the 'First World'—and entail retraining of those who might otherwise lose their jobs. 'Which politician, trade unionist, businessman, will have the courage to grasp the nettle and devote five years of their lives to working out how the changes can be achieved as painlessly as possible?' he asked. ■

Chinese train

TWENTY-FOUR STUDENTS at higher education institutions attended an MRA training course at the Chinese Culture University outside Taipei recently. They came from eight of the 18 MRA Sing Out groups in Taiwan. The course, arranged by young people, included seminars on subjects ranging from personal faith to world affairs.

A university lecturer said, 'In 1966 eight per cent of households had television. Now virtually 100 per cent have one TV set and most have two. But social problems have resulted from affluence—thrift, traffic chaos, extended families breaking up through apartment living, and mental problems due to pressures in society.'

After seeing the MRA film *Happy Deathday*, a student teacher said, 'Now I understand that Jesus Christ sacrificed Himself for all humans.'

At a public session everyone in the course expressed what they had learnt. Comments included:

• 'I have found here the courage to face my faults. I have written honest letters to my brother and father. I told my

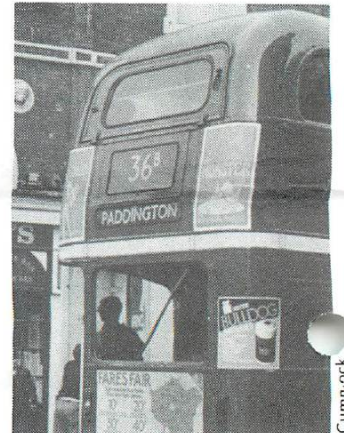
brother how jealous I had been of him.'

• 'I have decided to listen to God each morning in a time of quiet, to understand the problems of my country and care for the world.'

One of the course leaders said, 'This has been a turning point for me.' She said that people relied on money and relationships but she wanted to rely on the promptings of her conscience.

Television executive Mr Hu Joe-yang led a seminar. 'We are not Chinese for ourselves,' he said, 'but have the responsibility to care and think for the world. Patriotism is too narrow. The decision to take the world onto your heart is the most important one in your life.' **Alistair Miles**

Gavin on the buses



POSTERS on the backs of London buses heralded the opening of *Gavin and the Monster* at the Westminster Theatre last week. Before the first night over 15,000 school-children had already booked.

Interviewed on BBC Radio 2's *Around Midnight*, director Denise Coffey described the show as a 'fantasy adventure with a lot of music'. 'Hugh Williams and Kathleen Johnson have created a play that's very magical and at the same time very tough and full of adventure,' she told another interviewer on Capital Radio's *Midnight Special*.

Matthew Ryan and Roy Alexander who play the show's heroes, Gavin and the White Knight, were interviewed on the London radio station LBC. 'We're not giving away too much about the monster,' they said, 'because at the end there's a great sting in the tale.'

Hugh Steadman Williams, interviewed twice on LBC wasn't giving away too much either. 'You are known as committed Christian—how is this play going to differ from pantomimes in that sense?' asked his interviewer, Cindy Kent. 'I thought what was the most precious thing I would like to leave with my kids when they grow up,' he replied. 'A real sense of right and wrong is one of the most valuable things you can give any kid in the modern world. That's why I wrote the show.'

But wasn't the struggle between good and evil the theme of most pantomimes? The difference, apparently, lies in the ending. And we won't say anything about that either. But we will report on the opening next issue. ■

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