

KEIR MOVES MINERS

by Don Simpson, who plays the part of Keir Hardie

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DURING THE PAST FEW WEEKS Keir Hardie has been back at the pitheads. The National Union of Mineworkers invited the play *Keir Hardie—the man they could not buy*, for five performances in the Nottingham and Northumberland coalfields. On each occasion a union official introduced the show.

For the miners the play was an authentic voice from the past, recalling them to their destiny. Here they saw a man fighting for fair wages and conditions, not only for his members but for the workers of the world—Indians, Japanese, Africans. He blazed for a new society based on sacrificial human brotherhood.

Many of the miners feel there is something missing in politics today. And this was echoed by the audiences in Sheffield Cathedral and in Jarrow where a cross-section of South Tyneside was invited by the Mayor and Mayoress and by Sir Robin and Lady Chapman.

In the past year there have been 50 performances in all the major industrial areas of Britain. We in the cast have often asked ourselves, 'Is this what the country needs?' But when we recall hundreds of urgent, searching conversations after the play, with trade unionists, management, councillors, people of all political complexions and of all ages, in miners' clubs,

hotel rooms and civic theatres, we are quite clear that it is.

We have met Marxists who say they are disillusioned—because of the China-Russia cold-war, the situation in Cambodia. They are privately looking for an alternative revolutionary concept. They have never heard the full story of Keir Hardie before. They find it deeply moving. His commitment and fight have sparked the hope that there might be a better way than class war.

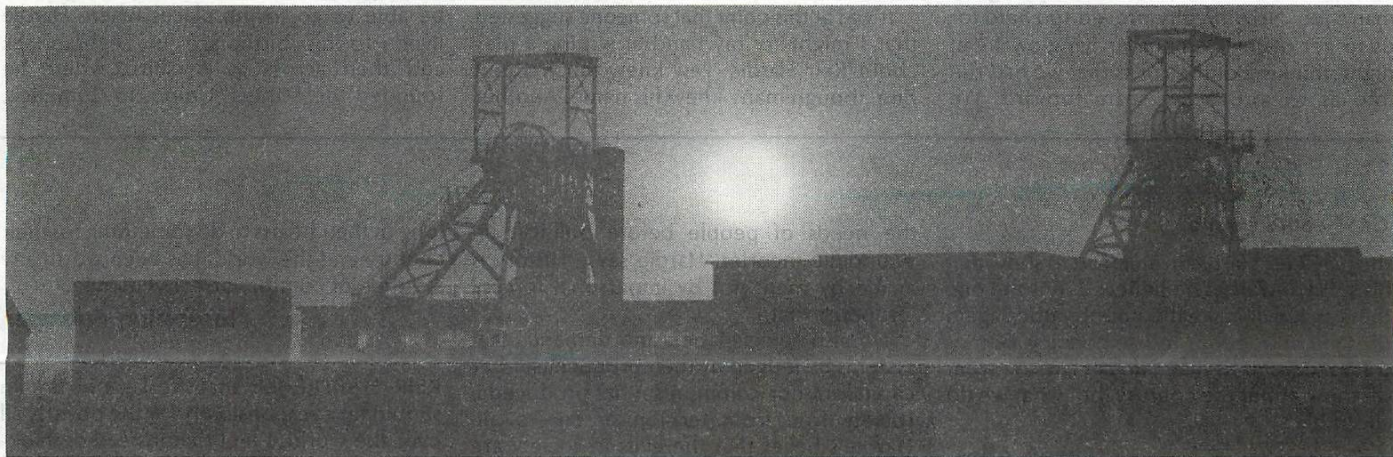
Then there were the Labour 'moderates'. Many seem shocked by being outmanoeuvred by the 'militants'. They criticise people who put their jobs before what they know is right. Their thinking is often a muddled mix of Marxist and Christian ideas. They see in Keir Hardie a man who was no 'moderate'. He believed that the issue was not between Right and Left but between right and wrong. In that battle there could be no 'moderation'. The British Labour Movement was cradled in a spiritual awakening and he knew it needed men and women who would stand alone with God and refuse to be bought or bullied.

Conservatives have told us that the play was a timely reminder of the callousness and hypocrisy that rotted 19th century British society. One employer said, 'This has helped me understand what makes men bitter and

look for revenge.' 'And what cures the bitterness,' added a shop steward in the cast.

People everywhere want to know why we are doing this. What strange revolutionary urge makes a group of teachers and housewives, shop stewards and students, pensioners and professional people leave their armchairs, their TVs and their electric blankets, to take to the road in a British winter of foggy nights and frosty mornings, to present a play about Keir Hardie? And all without salary or subsidy!

We tell them we want to leave something better than we have now to our children and their children and that we feel *Keir Hardie* represents something which is urgently needed in our politics and in all society. They respond to that. Those miners and clergy and educators and politicians are now hard at work filling our diary for 1980.



A CAST YOU COULDN'T BUY

Russell David

Wales, a surveyor whose grandfathers were coaltrimmers

IN WALES TODAY much energy and time is devoted to the preservation of our language and heritage. Everywhere people are showing fresh interest in their roots.

Keir Hardie's stature as a world figure owes much to the fact that his roots were deep in his faith. This helped him to hold firm against all pressure and adversity.

I have met young Trotskyites, disillusioned Socialists, baffled and weary management, and the average Mr Apathetic after the performances of *Keir Hardie*, all intrigued by Hardie's amazing perseverance. We may well see a fresh leadership arise as more and

more acknowledge their need for deeper roots.

Julie Fitts

Australia, a social worker with the Aborigines and the blind

I HAD BEEN LIVING a self-centred life back home in Australia. Some of the Christian groups and Eastern philosophy groups I have been involved in were concerned only with 'personal salvation' or 'evolving personally'—very important, but it stopped there. Many of us in these groups did not think about the part we should play in helping to present answers to the problems of our countries.

Keir Hardie had a big vision. Being part of

this play has helped me to rise out of my small world, to become concerned about issues that are vital to the future of this country, and consequently my country.

Bert Allen

Birmingham, a branch secretary of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers

THE DECLINE of this country in the last few years is something that concerns everyone who loves Britain and what she once stood for, namely democracy, which is very hard to get but so easy to lose. My wife and myself are giving all our time in our retirement to

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Which hat fits the Labour Movement?

by Henry Macnicol
the author of the play

THE PLAY *Keir Hardie*—the man they could not buy, like Keir himself, was born in the industrial heartland of Scotland. The idea came out of hundreds of conversations, often into the small hours of the night, with workers in the factories of Bathgate, the docks of Leith, and the shipyards of Glasgow and Aberdeen.

Among the shop stewards, foremen, fathers of families and many others who became my friends in those days, I found many who were as concerned as I was to find a new motive for our industry and our life in Scotland.

I met men from a British Leyland factory which had just been built with a government subsidy, to supply alternative employment for those made redundant by the closure of the shale pits between Edinburgh and Glasgow. In its first few years this factory, near Bathgate, had been full of friction, with many strikes and stoppages.

One friend who had gone into the factory after years as a miner, told me, 'Mining is a man's job. No difficulty proved too hard for us to get over. I remember lying awake at night, thinking of the rocks that we had run into as we drove the seam forward. We



Don Simpson with Nottinghamshire miners

found out how to get over that rock, or round it or through it, but we were going to push that seam forward. Thinking how to do it used to occupy my waking hours. Now,' he said, 'all I have to do is to watch an assembly line and twiddle knobs. When I wake at night, the only thing I have to think about is how to beat the management.'

Better goals

Such talk made me burn in my heart that men like him should have a better goal than class war.

It was at this point that someone suggested that I might try my hand at writing a play about Keir Hardie. Few knew much about him, though many knew his name. Another

friend produced an old, tattered copy of a book now long out of print, *The Speeches and Writings of Keir Hardie*.

Reading it, I was gripped by the tones of the man's voice—the depth of his passion for justice, the genuineness of his feeling for what his fellow workers had suffered, his own experience of bitterness and its cure. I read many of his editorials from *The Labour Leader*, the paper he started, and began to realise how hard he had fought to improve conditions in the 1880s and '90s.

I studied for two years, reading many biographies and histories. I was lucky too to be able to go to the places where Hardie lived—to his birthplace in Legbrannock and then across to Ayrshire, where he founded the Miners' Union. In Cumnock,

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the play *Keir Hardie* in an effort to show that his spirit and what he believed in is the one thing that will make this country once again the land of freedom and democracy. Democracy means to us that it doesn't matter what we think about the country, but what we do about it.

Gwen Allen

Birmingham, a housewife

'KEIR HARDIE' is the answer to a lot of problems—on the shop floor, for miners and for MPs. It goes for everybody. This is why I am in it with my husband. The play has brought my husband and me closer. Bert was always watching his TV in one room and I would be in the other room. Now we have got something we can give people.

John Craig

a former financial director
of British Steel

WHY DO I, a Tory and lifelong manager, tour the country with a play about a Socialist and trade unionist? I am concerned about the type of society in which our grandchildren will live. I would like it to be a free democracy. That requires policies which put

the needs of people before political or economic theories. Hardie says, 'History is made by men, not by impersonal forces.' I support that.

He also rejects labels and demands that systems be judged by their product. Neither capitalism nor communism has produced a society free from tension or fair to all. Hardie's belief that the evils in society are the product of wrong relationships between men points a way ahead. It relieves me of the futile practice of blaming others. It gives me hope for the future because I can do something about changing my own conduct when I know that I am being greedy or bitter or disruptive.

Maisie Campbell

Glasgow, a housewife

WHEN MY HUSBAND DIED 11 years ago I thought that life had ended for me and I was an extremely bitter woman. Since I have allowed God to deal with that bitterness my life has been transformed.

Taking part in *Keir Hardie* has been one of the richest experiences of my life. The discovery that there are hundreds of people in Britain who are searching for something more to live for than materialistic gain, who

long in their hearts to do something for their country and the world, has been worth any sacrifice of comfort or convenience.

Josephine Buhagiar

Malta, a factory worker

KEIR HARDIE felt that workers in Britain should take responsibility for the poverty all over the world. I feel that instead of thinking how we are going to gain more, we need to think about what we can give.

Ian Maclachlan

Glasgow, a maths teacher

AS A TEACHER I have seen children from the slum areas of Glasgow move into new homes and become better clothed and fed, all of which was needed. But how many now lack the security of a united home, the comradeship of a community and a purpose in life above material gain?

This play expresses the passion of the man to bring needed social and economic changes and yet at the same time to have an immense care for each individual. Each one had a part in creating the new society. As one Labour councillor commented after the play, 'Socialism should be something we live every day.'

my wife and I sat in the home of the Provost, James Keir Hardie McTurk. He told us how as a boy he remembered Hardie and his father talking through the night about how to keep the miners' union going.

I went to London and met some of the men who remembered Hardie's work in founding the Labour Party. One of them emphasised the contrast between Hardie with his cloth cap, the man who knew at first hand what the workers felt and lived through, and H M Hyndman, the Social Democratic Federation leader, who carried his top hat with him everywhere he went, as an unconscious sign of his class feelings.

Fervent spark

In France and Switzerland I talked with veteran socialist leaders. One of them was Irene Laure of France who told me, after she saw the play, of her own hero, Jean Jaurès. Jaurès was Hardie's counterpart and great friend in the French labour movement. The two of them together had started the international labour movement in the early 1900s on a basis of idealism. Mme Laure said to me, 'You British have no idea how lucky you are that your labour movement was founded by a man of God and of character, on a philosophy above the bitterness of the class struggle. So many of our European countries have only Marxism as a basis.'

One phrase which sums up my impression of Hardie is the assessment of G D H Cole, the socialist historian. He said that it was Hardie's 'moral fervour' that provided the unifying spark which made the British labour movement 'gel'. 'It is doubtful,' he said, 'whether it could have been done on any other basis.'

Harry Howlett

Australia, a TV producer

POWER NO LONGER rests with the Establishment or a select few. It is now on the shop floor. The ordinary man and woman, whether they want it or not, hold the destiny of the world in their hands. If democracy fails in Britain, many other countries will give up the struggle. They will say, 'If Britain can't make it work, then it is no use our trying.' Can the British people find the courage and faith to stand up and be counted in the fight for what is right? We believe that they can, and that is why we, a couple of Australasians, have sold our home and left family and friends to use our dramatic talents and media experience to join in the 'battle for Britain'.

We are working with the play because we believe that what Keir Hardie had to say is relevant for today's world. The faith that he found and which turned his grim and heart-breaking experiences from destructive bitterness into passionate compassion was the motivating force in his life. In this same revolutionary faith, that will sacrifice everything to bring God's will on earth, lies the only hope for mankind.

In recent weeks, the British media have been full of the name Blunt. Until recently, Sir Anthony Blunt was seen as an elderly, respected art expert, who had been Surveyor of the Queen's pictures, and had enjoyed a discreet wartime career in British intelligence. Now it is revealed that he was recruited as a spy for Communist Russia while at Cambridge University, before the Second World War—at the same time as Burgess, Maclean and Philby. LAWSON WOOD, who was at university at the same time, writes:

BLUNT TRUTH

THE ANTHONY BLUNT AFFAIR brings into fresh focus the trends of the Thirties, the years in which he and others were recruited for Communism. For years to come men will try to discover where truth lies.

One thing is clear. The philosophy which recruited Burgess, Maclean, Philby, Blunt and many others in other parts of the world is a challenge to all of us who profess the Christian faith. It challenges the verve and vitality with which we live this faith and the realism and effectiveness with which we relate it to the world. Any failure to do so opens the door to those who seek the needed change in society through materialist philosophies of Right and Left.

Compelling alternative

Many in the universities in the Thirties turned to the same philosophy as Blunt. But, at the same time, there was another force at work in the universities which captured the hearts and minds of many—Moral Re-Armament, then known as the Oxford Group. The men and women then involved have since taken it to the ends of the earth and continue to do so today. MRA offered—and offers—a compelling alternative to the conflicting ideologies of Right and Left and sets out to win Communist and non-Communist alike.

Its appeal lay in its power to bring to life old and familiar truths and give them fresh vigour by revolutionary application. While many were content to tackle symptoms, MRA took the more basic approach of dealing with human nature with the knowledge and expectancy that God could change it, creating new attitudes between man and man, nation and nation and eventually a new society. Here was something anyone and everyone could do in a world where so many felt powerless to influence events.

Too late

A Communist dockworker once said, 'No idea as powerful as these four absolute moral standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love has ever come out of the Kremlin.' His training enabled him to grasp the upheaval in society which such standards would swiftly bring about. In the same way those who have served an alien ideology in our society recognised the threat to their aims as Moral Re-Armament gained greater momentum. This helps to explain such attacks upon MRA as those of Tom Driberg, also a 1930s recruit to the Communist Party and, according to Chapman Pincher, sus-

pected by MI5 as an 'active agent of the KGB'. The careers of some committed to MRA in the diplomatic service or elsewhere have been adversely affected by subtle forms of smear or suggestion. One known to me had reported Burgess as a security risk three years before he fled to Moscow.

When such issues arise as that posed by Anthony Blunt it is worth noting that the man who is morally straight is more likely to perceive ideological commitment in others.

At the time Mrs Maclean disappeared through Switzerland to join her husband in Moscow, I was at a conference at Caux, above the lakeside town where she left her car. The incident prompted a friend who had been a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford, and subsequently studied in Cambridge, to recall a conversation with Maclean when he had tried to win him to MRA. Maclean told him, 'You are just three weeks too late. If you had talked to me three weeks ago you might have got me, but I have decided for the Communists.' So narrowly may a man's future and fate be settled.

Pawns

This is a challenge to us all, so to live that such men have the chance to find another way, as many who might have followed Burgess and Maclean have done. Some who did decide for their ideology have been turned around later—among them so many Communist miners in the Ruhr that, according to the *Manchester Guardian*, the West German Communist Party had to be reorganised.

The Blunt affair may serve as a timely reminder of the unceasing nature of the war of ideas—it may indeed awaken many to the existence of this war. But it is more important that it should arouse people to the necessity of creating a new world, in which humanity's troubles and sufferings are answered, rather than used as pawns in a power struggle.

Due to Christmas holidays
there will be no issue of
New World News
dated 29 December

SOUTH AFRICA

Courageous voice from the Western Cape

AFTER HIS FIRST YEAR in office South African Prime Minister P W Botha is proposing changes which arouse heated controversy within National Party circles. Some say he is abandoning traditional principles and try to block him. The editor of the largest pro-Government newspaper in the Transvaal, on the other hand, represents many when he appreciates the Prime Minister's courage and urges him to bold implementation of his initiatives.

Black and brown comment is mixed. Some dismiss the proposed changes as 'cosmetic'. Others express a genuine hope.

Most Afrikaner leaders of thought are united on one point—the future is going to be different from the past. Debate, therefore, is the order of the day.

One courageous contribution to this debate is a recent letter in 'Die Burger', the oldest-established pro-Government daily, based on Cape Town. Written by JANNIE MALAN, head of the Department of Biblical Studies at the University of Western Cape, it was published as the main letter on the editorial page under a three-column headline, 'System Creates Suffering, Frustration'.

We print part of his letter:

WHEN WE CHANGED our place of residence recently, among all the paperwork were two forms which made me deeply unhappy. On one I had to confirm that we had sold our former house to whites, and, on the second, that as buyers in a white neighbourhood we really are white.

In fact the forms did not only make me feel unhappy: they also made me feel guilty. They are a classic part of a man-made system which has caused indescribable suffering and frustration to those who are fellowmen in God's creation. They are part of a system which has left us ignorant and uncaring of each other.

Now I well know that many whites, among them outstanding and influential men, refuse to feel guilty about this system. But can such avoidance of blame be reconciled with a Christ-centred approach to life?

The starting point of a Christian way of life must always be the honest confession of selfishness—not only towards God, but also towards people concerned. Anyone, however, who wriggles out of this basic honesty clearly reveals a final hangover of childish self-centredness and/or an early symptom of atheistic unbelief.

I therefore direct the following plea to all leaders who mean business in maturity and faith:

Let us openly recognise that shameful and appalling wrongs have been committed. On ground of skin colour alone masses of people have been rounded up and penned together. A multitude of families have been split from their established homes and the sentimental, social and economic values which those very homes and gardens had for them. In most cases they had to end up in

some impersonal and distant scheme, sometimes even in ill-smelling surroundings, so far away that much of their food-money has to go on shoe leather or bus fares.

Let us put right these wrongs of ours. Real honesty demands not only apology, but to restore what can be restored, without shrinking back because of 'sacrifices'.

Is it not a basic human right that a man may choose freely where he wants to live, taking into account his financial, social and working circumstances?

Garrulous

So let us get rid of ungrounded fears and prejudices. Let us make it our business to get to know each other as people of dignity. Let us look forward to welcoming as neighbours people of the same lifestyle.

I would like to predict that whites who may still have their reservations will be surprised at the true quality of their brown and black fellowmen. They will discover in them far-reaching insights and, even in present circumstances, in many of them an infectious joy of living. They will discover among them true friends in time of need.

I base such predictions on personal experience, but unfortunately there is not space to enlarge on this here.

Come and let us search for God's guidance on how we can put right our wrongs of apartheid. Let us replace our garrulous prayers, where we try to ask God's blessing on our masterplans, with receptive times of quiet where we ask Him how we can live together, and work together, with our fellow-citizens, brown and black.

AFRICA'S SOUL

NINE MEMBERS of the Swedish parliament met recently, under the chairmanship of a member of the parliamentary foreign affairs committee, to hear about the politicians' conference held at Caux, Switzerland, this summer.

A former Ambassador from Africa, now involved in the struggle to liberate his country from foreign domination, described his experience of meeting there with men 'who have devoted years to the cause of their people'. They came, he said, 'to seek inspiration on how to strengthen the moral fibre of their people'.

His movement has had experience of working with Communist forces. But, he said, 'I am very concerned about the intervention of communism in Africa. Its aim is not only political. It also intends to destroy moral and Christian values.'

'These values need to be given with much more strength. When I read at Caux about Arthur Kanodereka, who was killed while working for reconciliation in Zimbabwe, I thought of Stephen, the first martyr. But I thought too of Saul who watched his murder, and who later became the great Christian, Paul. There will be other Stephens and other Pauls. Africa's soul will be manifested by such people.'

Aid plus

When the members questioned him on Swedish development aid he replied, 'You should take a more active interest in Africa, not only with development aid. Sweden has given a lot of money. Something else is needed too. You need to use moral principles as your criteria, and work for reconciliation. Give because it is right, rather than spending such effort trying to foresee whether it is in your interest. The results of this approach will be important for the world.'

Picts for Christ

IN 585 two missionaries, Columba of Scotland and Mungo of Wales, met on the banks of the Molendinar, near Glasgow, to join forces in a campaign to win the Picts for Christ. Last week *Columba*, a play which tells of their work, was presented in Glasgow Cathedral where Mungo's relics lie. The *Glasgow Herald* wrote, 'The production manages—by its very simplicity—to carry a true feeling of the conflict between Christian monk and pagan Druid, the man of peace and the man of war.'

The Sunday before, *Columba* was performed at St Joseph's Church. After the play Fr Charles MacFadden commented, 'Liturgy expresses what we cannot express in other ways. As I watched the play I was watching liturgy—an invisible but utterly central value came across with simplicity. This is an extraordinarily beautiful way of expressing the truth.'

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