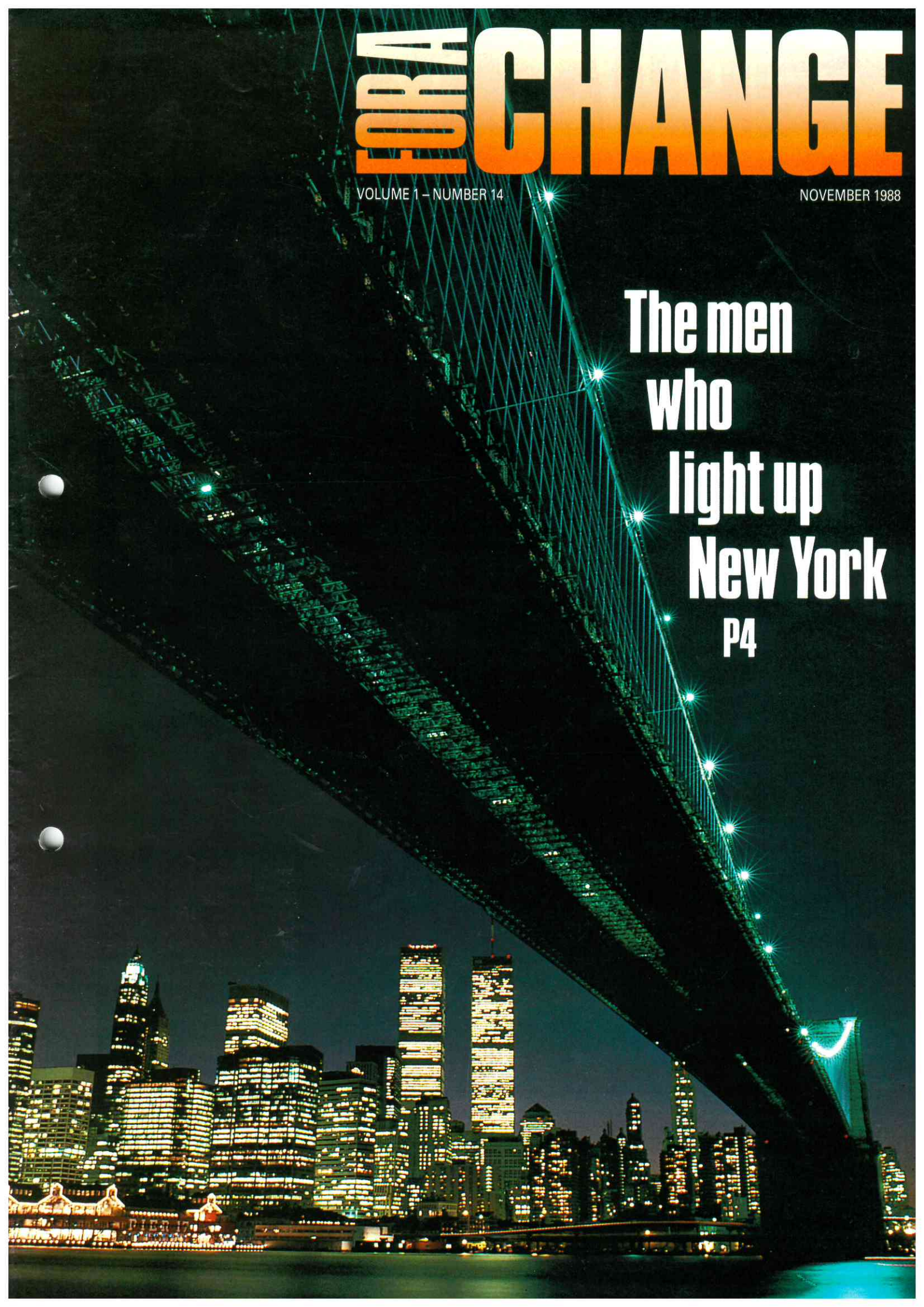


THE CHANGE

VOLUME 1 – NUMBER 14

NOVEMBER 1988

The men
who
light up
New York
P4





by Echidna

FORA CHANGE

in people, in attitudes, in structures

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When our correspondent Mike Smith landed in New York at the beginning of September he didn't expect to be carrying a banner up 5th Avenue the next morning, among the assembled ranks of trade unionists taking part in Labor Day. He was there to report on a pioneering union — Local 3 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. In a rapidly changing industrial environment, the union has served its members way beyond the bread and butter issues of wages, hours and working conditions. It has involved itself in the social issues of New York, such as housing, that would normally be beyond the immediate concerns of trade unionism.

Labor Day happened to coincide with the opening, in Britain, of the annual Trades Union Congress. There, the leaders of the electricians were being expelled from the TUC for refusing to comply with a disciplinary ruling. Their departure, at a stroke, reduced the TUC's membership by 330,000. It is now below nine million, or 40 per cent of the nation's workforce, compared with 12 million in 1979.

A similar attrition of union membership has taken place in the United States — down from 35 per cent of the nation's workforce 30 years ago to 17 per cent today. On both sides of the Atlantic the trade unions have been re-thinking their role and the service they offer their members.

Could New York's electrical workers shed light on a constructive role for trade unionism, at a time when the British electricians were the focus of controversy? Read Mike Smith's report on page four.

No longer a lunatic fringe

Poland's liberals are no longer a lunatic fringe but the country's 'most influential and dynamic intellectual group', announces an essay in *Critical Review* by Professor Andrzej Walicki of Notre Dame University, California. He maintains that this group has already had much success 'in changing the intellectual climate of Poland'.

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The liberals, he says, 'are bitterly aware that the system, although imposed from without, has taken deep roots in Poland, that most Poles have become a part of it, and that as a result placing all the blame on "them" — the government and the Party — can no longer be justified. In keeping with this diagnosis they have launched a remarkably successful campaign for a "moral re-armament" in the name of true intellectual independence, a work ethic, economic rationality, political realism and the liberal culture of compromise.'

Music to Stalin's ears

While on the subject of Eastern Europe, a seafaring friend of mine tells a story about Stalin which he heard somewhere on his travels. It may be apocryphal, but it is nevertheless intriguing. Not long before his death, Stalin heard on the radio a piece of music sung by a soprano called Udine. Moved, he sent to Moscow for a recording, unaware that the broadcast had been a live performance and had never been recorded.

Such was Stalin's reputation for arbitrary cruelty that no one had the courage to inform him of this fact. So Udine was summoned and a recording hurriedly made. Stalin was so pleased with it that he sent Udine 20,000 roubles by way of thanks.

Udine wrote back, 'When I got your letter I went to the church I attend each week in Moscow and said a prayer for you that God would forgive you for the evil that you have done, and I gave the money to them.' Stalin's secretary read this letter to Stalin and waited for the explosion. But the old man did not even move an eyebrow. He put the letter down beside him and asked for the record to be played again. It is said that when he lay dying he requested the same piece of music.

Video shop

An American nun, Sister Leonora Wilson, recently took a tour of an area of Dusseldorf, West Germany, where out-

lets for blue films and video nasties are two a pfennig. Dismayed not only by the filth but also by the unimaginative selection available, she decided to open a video shop of her own, carrying a wide variety of material. 'St Paul assumed,' she says, 'that belief made up only a small part of life and one should not neglect the other aspects of life. For this reason we disseminate everything that is noble and human, and that could include a good adventure film.'

Across two worlds

Recently I met a young Palestinian woman, Naila, who was born in Lebanon and now lives in America. She had just attended a conference; she told me, where 12 Lebanese were present. She was afraid that they might not want to associate with her, and indeed one of them did cool noticeably when she discovered that Naila was Palestinian.

Several days later Naila was given the chance to speak to the whole conference. 'I want to let my new Lebanese friends here know that even though I live very far away and don't understand everything that happens, I still care,' she said. 'It's difficult to be an Arab in the Western world, but I feel it's also a privilege to be a bridge between the two different worlds.'

She was followed by the young woman who had been cool towards her. Meeting Naila, she said, had opened her eyes to 'some things that were wrong inside me'. She explained, 'In Lebanon we don't very much like the Palestinians because we keep on blaming them for the war.' She had realized that she was running away from Naila and had begun to get to know her: 'I decided to ask her for forgiveness, because I had this preconception that all Palestinians are bad, and that was not right.'

When the cow comes home

A Swedish clergyman friend of mine was serving in a mining town north of the Arctic Circle earlier this year. He visited a carpenter who wanted to get married, and met his bride-to-be and four children.

'Have you been married before?' asked my friend.

'Yes,' the carpenter replied, 'to her', and he pointed at his bride-to-be.

My friend was surprised. 'Do you mean to say that you are divorced from her?'

'Yes.'

'And now you want to marry again?'

'Yes.'

'Why?'

'Well,' answered the man, 'you don't know the cow is gone until the cowshed is empty!'

In spite of this unromantic approach, the clergyman confirms that the wedding was a festive occasion. 'And this time it was for keeps,' he predicts.

Hurricane Gilbert

In April we reported on the Jamaican village of Walkerswood, which is becoming a model of community-based development. When September's notorious Hurricane Gilbert devastated Jamaica, Walkerswood did not escape. Crops were laid waste — one farmer said of her beans, 'It was as if a knife had cut them off.' The community centre lost its roof and the food processing company had to close because of the cut in electricity.

Although, as a report in Britain's *Sunday Telegraph Magazine* points out, 'the Jamaicans are resilient', much help is needed from the international community. Any readers with ideas, please write to Echidna. ■



Trade union leaders head the Labor Day Parade up New York's 5th Avenue. Over 200,000 took part.

The men who light up New

by Michael Smith

Outside Manhattan's Roosevelt Hotel political activists are setting up a voters' registration booth. Inside, New York's trade union heavies are gathering for breakfast. A swarm of journalists buzzes around the Rev Jesse Jackson as he passes through the lobby. This is Labor Day and, in election year, officially the start of campaigning for the next incumbent of the White House.

Other Democratic Party notables were at the breakfast — New York State Governor Mario Cuomo and US Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan — as well as a lone Republican Congressman. They were guests of the New York City Central Labor Council, the trade union umbrella that represents over a million New York workers.

As they downed their bacon and hash browns, Jackson reminded them of the 'economic cocaine' that, in his view, was sweeping America: a \$2.5 trillion budget deficit; a trade deficit accumulating recently at around \$10 billion a month; and foreign imports that have eaten into manufacturing jobs.

Elsewhere that day, Presidential candidate George Bush was basking in the light of 17.5 million new jobs created in the USA since 1982. But to tell that to a trade unionist is to

speak with forked tongue: many of those new jobs, he would argue, are low paid, unskilled and non-unionized — 'burger chain' jobs as one unionist put it.

Union membership in the States has declined by three million since 1980 — reflecting the global shift away from manufacturing to service industries. And though the trend has bottomed out, the percentage figure is still going down — 17 per cent of the nation's workforce last year — as more non-union jobs are created.

No one, however, could say on that first Monday in September that the labour movement was dead and buried. Far from it: for five hours, over 200,000 trade unionists — the auto workers, garment workers, teamsters, longshoremen, teachers and electricians — marched up 5th Avenue in a spectacle that had all the atmosphere of a carnival.

Among those leading the parade was Central Labor Council President Thomas Van Arsdale, a man who could be justly proud of what the labour movement, and his own union, stand for. He is the treasurer of the million-strong International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. But his base is as Business Manager — the most powerful position — of

the union's Local (branch) 3, covering 37,000 New York electricians. It is a pioneering union built up by Van Arsdale's father, Harry, a legendary figure in the US labour movement (see p 6). Over the years he transformed New York's electricians 'from a jungle into a union version of the welfare state', in the words of the *New York Times* chief labour correspondent.

These are the men who put the lights into Manhattan's famous night-time skyline — and keep the buildings airconditioned by day. They wire up the computers and data systems in the banks of Wall Street — and even operate the tennis scoreboard for the US Open at Flushing Meadow. They have recently laid over five million feet of telephone cable and a million feet of fibre-optic cable at Morgan Guaranty's new Wall Street headquarters. Some are helping to build the largest civil engineering project in the Western hemisphere: a massive water-supply tunnel, larger than the Panama Canal in volume, through the solid bedrock beneath Manhattan's skyscrapers.

Construction is booming in the Big Apple. And it is keeping Local 3's membership buoyant. But in manufacturing — from light sockets to lampshades — the union is feeling the winds of foreign competition. Membership

LEAD STORY

tions from all over the world'. Similar partnerships exist with employers in manufacturing and maintenance.

The list is, indeed, impressive:

- higher education for every union member at employers' expense;
- education scholarships for family members;
- multi-employer pensions and annuities;
- medical and dental services paid for by the employers;
- interest-free loans to union members;
- a self-insurance scheme run by the industry to cover accidents at work;
- low-cost housing for union families.

Today, for every \$100 paid in wages, the employing contractor pays a further \$30 in union benefits.

All this on top of a basic \$1,000 wage for a 35-hour week. Little wonder that as many as 80 per cent of New York's electricians are unionized, bucking the national trend, while school-leavers clamour for a piece of the action. The union recently received 7,000 applications for 500 vacancies to its apprenticeship programme.

And the pay-off for the employers? 'The best trained craftsmen in the construction industry,' says the union's Financial Secretary Bill Blain.

They are also among the most highly educated labour forces in the world. The union believes that shop-floor workers need to be as well-informed as their employers. Every apprentice completes a two-year associate degree course in Labor Studies, through night classes twice a week. In other countries labour leaders, and even shop stewards, may go to university — such as Ruskin College, Oxford — but Local 3 is probably the only union in the world where every union member becomes a college graduate with a degree recognized by the State University of New York.

'It is unique in American labour,' says Bernie Rosenberg, Chairman of the Labor College Advisory Board. The courses are paid for entirely by the employers. 'The electrician doesn't pay a dime,' says Rosenberg, who himself was a construction electrician and now, as an official of the union, is completing his thesis on the history of the British labour movement for his Ph.D. — at the age of 61.

Bill Blain showed me around the union's headquarters in the borough of Queens where, in a 1,200-seat auditorium, apprentices and journeymen (qualified electricians) are kept up-to-date in the latest skills. Here, he says, they learned how to handle fibre-optic cable

Local 3 IBEW



Laying electrical conduit at the top of the World Trade Center

long before it was in general use. Elsewhere in the building there are doctors and dentists attending to union members and their families. And in the basement — a 148-lane ten-pin bowling alley.

Earlier I sat in on a joint labour-management review of apprentices who had been repeatedly late or absent from work: 15 minutes for each person to explain himself. One had been an alcoholic and had gone on to cocaine. AA and Narcotics Anonymous were helping him lick his problem. The review panel were impressed by his honesty. 'If you win your battle I'm going to ask your help with other apprentices,' Local 3 President Dennis McSpedon told him. ('Crack', other drugs and alcohol are all too easily available on or near some work sites.) He, like the others that morning, was put on probation but not sacked.

But perhaps the most remarkable aspect of Local 3 is its long-term involvement in the housing needs of New York. Forty years ago, at a time of high unemployment and housing shortages, the JIB set about building its own 2,000-apartment 'village' complete with shopping mall. Once the site of a golf course, 'Electchester' is now an attractive tree-lined community in Queens where many union families live. Financed jointly by the union and management, it has provided quality low-cost housing to those who might not otherwise afford it, including families outside the industry. Union members buy the five-room apartments often with interest-free loans from the union, or rent them at half the normal cost for the area. Electchester has attracted urban planners from as far as Japan and India.

Now the union is looking to the need for housing in the wider community beyond its own members. Thomas Van Arsdale says that

Continued over...

7 York

here has declined by 3,000 since 1980 as manufacturers seize the benefits of low wage costs in Third World countries. When General Instruments moved to the Far East a decade ago some 600 New York jobs were obliterated. More recently companies have been moving to Mexico where wages are less than a dollar an hour compared with an average \$11 in New York.

Faced with this reality the union is looking ahead to new areas of employment and the skills that are needed in a hightech environment. 'Our industry has the brightest future. We are only limited by our imaginations,' says George Schuck, Chairman of the Joint Industry Board of the Electrical Industry (JIB). He looks forward to the day when every home and office is wired up for the electronic age.

A former shop floor electrician, Schuck now presides over a remarkable union-management partnership that goes back over 45 years, the first of its kind in American industry. Bringing together the union with some 300 electrical contractors, the JIB administers bargaining agreements and a range of benefits which, says the *New York Times*, have turned Local 3 into 'a magnet for inspection by academics and labour-management delega-

R Lancaster



Left to right: Jay Mazur, President of the International Ladies' Garment Workers; Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan; Thomas Van Arsdale, President of the New York City Central Labor Council; Rev Jesse Jackson

R Lancaster



George Schuck looks out over Electchester

Photos: R Lancaster



Dennis McSpedon



Bill Blain



Bernie Rosenberg

the union is exploring with a real estate company how to finance and build an 'affordable housing' project on a non-profit cooperative basis.

They are not the only union to take such initiative. The New York State AFL/CIO has placed \$21 million from union pension funds with a bank to support house renovation in the Catholic diocese of Brooklyn and Queens. This ecumenical project is renovating 125 houses in a largely black and Hispanic area. Local 3's stake is \$8 million. The State AFL/CIO is also aiming to convert a disused hospital in Harlem into 192 apartments.

Meanwhile in the Bronx, Local 3 volunteers together with a contractor have built a soup kitchen and shelter for 16 homeless teenagers.

This is trade unionism with a social con-

science — at a time when the union movement has been under attack from those who see it as a bastion of mere self-interest. Some unions may have used their collective strength to line their own nests. But unionism at its best has always championed social justice. And while Local 3 has delivered the goods for its members, it maintains an overwhelming concern for those at the bottom of the heap — whether 'organized' or not — along with a refreshing absence of class recrimination.

Not that everything in the industry is hunkydory: veteran union negotiator Louis Stein tells of a recent six-week strike by 190 workers at a wire cable firm before they settled the new wage contract.

But as Frank Barbaro, a former taxi-driver and now Chairman of the New York State As-

sembly Labor Committee, once put it, 'There need not be the class struggle between management and labour — that is the driving force of the Joint Industry Board.'

Certainly Local 3's innovative approach to such issues as housing, health-care and community service represents a new dimension to trade unionism. Some may argue that the unions are picking up the bill that government alone should foot. But that would be to miss the point, which is to encourage a sense of service to the wider community. And in a city where housing and rents are increasingly beyond the reach of even middle-income earners, and where there are thousands of homeless families, any initiative is a welcome one.

As far as Thomas Van Arsdale is concerned, this is the next great challenge for Local 3. ■



Harry Van Arsdale (left) in 1982, with Fred Small, then Vice President of the International Longshoremen's Association in the port of Brooklyn. In the early 1960s, Van Arsdale welcomed the first black apprentices into the electrical industry.

The knight from Hell's Kitchen

Short in stature and built like a tank, Harry Van Arsdale Jr was the son of an electrician and was raised in 'Hell's Kitchen', the tough area of south Harlem. It was a rough and tumble school of life which, says his widow Madeline, gave him an abiding conviction 'to help those less fortunate than himself'.

In 1934 he assumed control of the electricians' Local 3 by an overwhelming vote. He had ousted a corrupt old guard at a time when union meetings were so violent that they were packed with police. He set about transforming the union — outlawing restrictive practices and making the union's expen-

diture, 'from soap to paperclips', accountable to its members. It was 20 years before such practice became mandatory by law. Since then 'there has never been a whisper of corruption', says Armand D'Angelo, a lifelong colleague of Van Arsdale.

He negotiated the highest wage rates in the world at the time and an extraordinary range of benefits for the members, though he insisted that 'to gain more you must give more'. The union even came forward with its own productivity package, believing that it was the key to survival and jobs.

'Harry Van Arsdale looked after the welfare of people rather than lining their

pockets,' says George Schuck, Chairman of the Joint Industry Board. 'He urged people to live within the means of their take-home pay.'

At the same time, his appeal to management was simple, says Schuck. It was to touch their conscience rather than make demands — and so the employers responded. After all, believed Van Arsdale, should not shop-floor workers be allowed the same benefits that the employers enjoyed? Thus many of the benefits, says Schuck, 'were won through cooperation and encouragement rather than through hard bargaining. The you found the other fella didn't have horns.'

In 1957 Van Arsdale became President of the New York City Central Labor Council, representing nearly a million workers. He remained in charge of Local 3, yet he continued to draw only one salary — and preferred to go to work on a scooter rather than in the back of a Cadillac. He gave away his own car to one of New York's taxi-drivers — the men he had earlier organized to form the taxi-drivers' union.

His reputation went with him and he held the friendship of New York State Governor Nelson Rockefeller, who described him as 'a true knight of labour'.

Van Arsdale's personal rapport with Rockefeller's brother, David, then Chairman of Chase Manhattan Bank, proved decisive during New York's financial crisis of 1974 when City Hall threatened to declare bankruptcy. The two men chaired a crisis committee and Van Arsdale gave union support to bailing out the city by releasing billions of dollars held in municipal pension funds.

Not everything Van Arsdale did was in the best judgment. An attempt in 1945 to boycott electrical goods not made in New York State



Feeding power cable into a manhole at Long Island railroad yards



R Lancaster

Vincent McElroen, 38, helped to light up New York's famous Trump Tower where he put in electrical conduits right to the top, the 66th floor. 'You take the Manhattan skyline for granted,' he said — though not the risks involved. He still remembers the first time he saw someone killed on the job — crushed by falling concrete. The memory is even more vivid than his Vietnam War experience where he served in the first US Navy destroyer to sail north of the demilitarized zone.

Since then he has known periods of real hardship — and during a recession in construction at the end of the Seventies he travelled as far as New Orleans and Washington State to find work. Not for nothing are qualified electricians known as journeymen.

His parents were not in the industry, though they were active trade unionists. His father organized the bus drivers of Yonkers while his mother organized the Catholic Lay Teachers there. On the day he was born his father went out on strike. 'It took them 11 weeks to pay off the butcher's bill.'

Now he is Managing Editor of the union's monthly journal. Not that he was trained as a journalist. As an apprentice electrician he was talent-spotted by former union boss Harry Van Arsdale. McElroen had just completed a week's study course at Bayberry Land, the union's Long Island estate. On the Sunday evening he received a 45-minute call from Van Arsdale, urging him to take up higher education. 'I would never have gone to Labor College without that push,' said McElroen. 'But I thought if that guy can take that time out of his busy life for me then it must be worth it.' McElroen went on to complete his bachelor degree in Labor Studies.

The study course in 'critical thinking in human relations' at Bayberry Land had proved to be a turning point. 'It gave you a better perspective on any problem you were facing,' he said. 'It allowed you to break out of your own stereotype. It was like looking at yourself at the hub of a wheel from down the spokes. It definitely led to changes in my personal life' — though he declined to spell out the details. McElroen is one of nearly 23,000 union members who have completed the study course, sponsored by the Joint Industry Board's educational and cultural fund. The course has temporarily been suspended — there is too much work in construction at the moment to take people off the job. But it has been a prime way of developing leadership qualities in the younger generation coming into the union.

on sent union officers there. For Local 3's Business Representative Bernie Rosenberg, 'being party to meetings like that gave me a whole new perspective on the world' — and, he says, an understanding of the Japanese from those he met there.

It was after Van Arsdale's visit to Caux, says D'Angelo, that he would often ask, 'How do we get people to join the human race?' It was a reflection, says D'Angelo, of his constant thirst for knowledge and wider horizons.

Van Arsdale's influence is still felt at union headquarters and beyond. 'Harry loved people and he loved working with people,' says union treasurer Bill Blain. His first encounter with Van Arsdale was a personal turning point: 'That is the night I made up my mind what I was going to do with my life. He had that kind of effect on people.'

Edward Cleary, who has risen from Local 3 to become President of the New York State AFL/CIO representing 2.3 million workers, says of Van Arsdale, 'He left me with a sense of service to individuals. I had to decide whether or not to remain making a lot of money — or to do this kind of work for people.'

When Van Arsdale died in February 1986, 3,000 people packed St Patrick's Cathedral in New York for the funeral mass conducted by Cardinal John O'Connor. AFL/CIO President Lane Kirkland described him as 'one of the great figures of the American labour movement... an extraordinarily committed and dedicated man', while a message from Frederick Philips, former President of the worldwide Philips Electrical Industries, whom Van Arsdale had met at Caux, referred to his 'global vision and caring for the needs of labour, industry and mankind'.



Madeline Van Arsdale



Armand D'Angelo



Edward Cleary

was outlawed as monopolistic; and his bid in 1962 for a basic 25-hour work week was regarded by the White House as inflationary and drew a public rebuke from President Kennedy. 'You get unrealistic when everyone is treating you so nice,' commented Van Arsdale, who kept Kennedy's signed photo in pride of place in his office.

An internationalist in outlook, Van Arsdale sent union and JIB officers on study tours around the world. In 1982 he took part in Moral Re-Armament's industrial conference at Caux in Switzerland, and from then

Photos: R Lancaster

Local 3 IBEW

by Alan Faunce

Tyneside, North East England, is famed for its seven bridges linking communities north and south of the river Tyne. Hari Shukla's job, as Senior Community Relations Officer for the county of Tyne and Wear, is building bridges of another kind — between communities of different race and culture.

With over 2.4 million British citizens of Third World origin (1981 census figures), he and other community relations workers occupy the hot seat in Britain's multiracial society. It's a role for which early training and background specially fit Shukla, who in 1984 was decorated by the Queen.

In the race relations hot seat

In the living room of Hari and Ranju Shukla's home on the outskirts of Newcastle upon Tyne, 12 graduation photos signal their extended family's achievement since arriving in Britain from Kenya 15 years ago. A symbol of more ancient culture looks down from a niche above the hearth — Ganesh, the elephant-headed Hindu god of prosperity.

But if fortune has smiled on the Shuklas' decision to come to Britain, the transition itself was not easy. Arriving in midwinter with four young children and a sick mother-in-law, Ranju Shukla wept for two months, begging her husband to take them back to Africa, or to India. Moreover when Shukla first took up his post in Tyne and Wear, he inherited a situation so soured by events that few people wanted to work with him.

A friendly, unassuming man in his fifties, Shukla was born in Uganda and spent ten childhood years in western India, before returning to East Africa where he qualified as a teacher. These early years, and a western-oriented education, awakened his concern for other races and cultures. He first visited Britain in 1961 for a course at Exeter University, then taught at a leading secondary school in Nairobi, Kenya. He also organized the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme for young people. He and Ranju married in 1957.

'People began to trust me'

Concern for their children's future prompted the Shuklas to emigrate to Britain in January 1973. It was bitterly cold. Ranju recalls coming home in tears from the laundrette because she could not make herself understood, and having to ask her son, then aged 13, to go for her. Shukla's mother died soon after their arrival.

After a year as a warden of a multiracial community centre, Shukla decided to look for more challenging work — and found it in Newcastle upon Tyne. He became the only full-time community relations worker in an area of over a million people, of whom some 40,000 belonged to Asian, Afro-Caribbean or other minorities. In some localities they made up 60 per cent of the population. His job involved working with central government and five Labour-controlled local authorities on issues affecting these minorities — including immigration, housing, employment and education — and promoting understanding between them and the rest of the community.

No one had warned him that the Community Relations Council (CRC) for the area had previously folded up, due to the confrontational methods of his predecessor. Funding had been withdrawn and even the minority leaders alienated. People were unwilling to get involved.

Shukla determined on a different approach. 'Right from the start I decided to follow a policy of cooperation and not to engage in

'The entire atmosphere in the locality improved'

confrontation. I also decided to be frank.' He threw himself into his work but progress in enlisting support was slow.

Help came in an unexpected way. Northumbrian Police had established a unit to liaise with Tyneside's growing immigrant population. One night the police liaison officer took Shukla, quite unannounced, to call on two acquaintances, Rex and Betty Gray. Rex was a civil servant and Betty had been a teacher, and the policeman knew that their concern about race relations was inspired by their belief in the ideas of Moral Re-Armament. These ideas, he told Shukla, could help him in his work.

The Grays invited the Shuklas back for an evening. 'By the end of it,' says Betty Gray, 'we felt as if we had known one another all our lives. The Shuklas had a strong Hindu faith and appreciated the value of asking the "inner voice" what to do about the situations that confronted them in Hari's work and in their personal lives. We began to build a friendship which has come to mean so much to all four of us that we regard one another as "family".' They began to work together: the Grays joined the CRC and in 1976, when community leaders on Tyneside created an informal 'Committee for Racial Harmony', Rex Gray was asked to be its chairman.

The Grays invited Shukla to an MRA conference at which, he says, 'the missing factor' came home to him. 'I found that I needed to be honest myself before I tried to work with others.' He realized that at all costs he must avoid playing one individual or community against another. As a result, 'people began to trust me and respond to my initiatives'.

With Shukla's encouragement, the different minorities began to cooperate and to form bonds of friendship. When one group was in trouble, another came to its assistance. For instance, when a West Indian without money or family died, Muslim, Chinese, Sikh



and Hindu friends helped pay for his Christian burial. Actions like this created respect among the white majority.

Shukla describes with relish the time when the Chinese community asked his help with their New Year celebrations. He was to prepare curry for 1,000 people. He enlisted the help of two police officers, and the Sikhs offered the use of the kitchen attached to their Temple. 'So two Christians helped a Hindu, peeling potatoes and lifting heavy pots, to make curry in a Sikh Temple for the Chinese New Year!'

He goes on to describe a graver incident, when the Mosque in Newcastle was seriously vandalized, causing much distress and insecurity to the city's Muslims. The CRC invited all the minority and religious leaders, MPs, councillors, officials and senior police to a meeting. As a result the police promised greater support in the area of the Mosque and the local authority pledged resources to improve conditions in its vicinity. 'The entire atmosphere in the locality improved,' says Shukla. Vandalism was brought under control.

In 1984 events in India put Shukla's work to the test. The storming of the Sikh Golden Temple in Amritsar by Indian troops and the assassination of the Indian Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, by a Sikh plunged parts of India into communal violence and aroused strong feelings among Sikhs and Hindus overseas.

Shukla and his colleagues felt the situation in Newcastle was explosive and moved to defuse it. They called together the city's

community leaders, its Director of Administration and the region's chief of police. Their meetings averted a clash at a memorial ceremony for Mrs Gandhi. Later members of all communities took part in a service of reconciliation in Newcastle Cathedral, with prayers in the language of each group for peace in India, Britain and Newcastle. Looking back, Shukla praises the community leaders' restraint, as well as the part played by senior officials.

Last year the future of the CRC was once again in the balance when disagreement arose over its chairmanship. At Shukla's request two prominent local Conservatives, Sir Robin and Lady Chapman, invited all those involved to their home. Sir Robin, although a sick man, presided over the ensuing meeting — one of his last services to the public before his death. The dispute was resolved by a decision to allow the chairmanship to rotate among the communities.

For all groups

Today Shukla works from a modern office suite in Newcastle's much rebuilt city centre. Opposite his desk hang religious pictures from different faiths: 'Small things like that,' he says, 'show that I'm for all groups, and not for one.' He has 12 full-time and 30 part-time staff, and most of his work is unspectacular, promoting racial equality through case work, committees and personal contact, and through organizing events that bring different communities together. He is in daily communication with the police — a relationship he believes vital if the confidence of the minorities is to be maintained. In the CRC's Annual Report for '87/'88 Shukla expresses 'cautious optimism' about progress, while CRC Chairman KJ Nayyar states, 'The basis of our success has been a unique partnership between all the main institutions and the CRC.' It is noteworthy that the North East has been spared much of the violence that came to a head in many British cities in 1981.

Shukla's work has reached out beyond Tyneside. In 1985 a delegation from the Lyon region of France came to Newcastle at his invitation to study the city's race relations. What impressed them most, according to Newcastle's *Evening Chronicle*, were the city's Statement of Intent promoting racial equality and the part played by structures like the CRC in linking the minorities with the rest of the community. From 1976 on he has initiated, with the Grays and others, a series of informal meetings between black leaders, community workers and concerned citizens from Britain's inner cities. This year he and Ranju travelled with a 22-strong delegation from the North East to meet with their counterparts from cities all over the world at an international conference in Switzerland.

As a British citizen, Shukla feels he has a duty to give whatever public service he can. In addition to his CRC work, he is a magistrate, serves on panels connected with the social services and a local prison, and is on the executive of his local Temple. He reaches his office half an hour ahead of his staff and his children say it is exceptional when he is at home in the evening.

Betty Gray says the support Shukla receives from his family 'cannot be overrated'. Ranju Shukla is on the CRC speakers' panel and has worked since 1981 in an old peoples' home where she tries, she says, to treat each one as she would her own parents. The two Shuklas begin the day with a time of prayer in the corner of their bedroom which Ranju calls her 'little temple'. From their faith, both affirm, they derive strength in times of crisis and a sense of direction for every day.

Alongside the family portraits in the Shuklas' living room hang two citations. One, from Queen Elizabeth II, appoints Hari Shukla MBE for 'services to the community'. The other, from the North East England Gujarati Association, commends his 'relentless efforts and splendid enthusiasm' in helping Tyne and Wear CRC to fulfil its task of 'promoting racial harmony and creating equal opportunities for minority groups' in the area.

Of his ability to get people to work together, Shukla himself says simply, 'The response I get from people is extraordinary.' His achievement stems not only from what he does himself but also from what he has been able to encourage others to do. ■

by John Bond

Koreans, Japanese in bid to heal the past

The Seoul Olympics has put the cherry on Korea's national cake. The cake itself is bursting out of its cake tin.

The country's Gross National Product grew from US\$3 billion in 1961 to \$97 billion in 1987. In the last two years industrial workers have won wage increases which have averaged 20 per cent per year. US Steel, America's largest steel producer, has enlisted Korean management and technology in an effort to become more competitive. The country's constitution has been rewritten, a President has been elected and a parliament in which, for the first time, the President's party does not have a majority. A country devastated by war in 1950-53, with the loss of 3 million lives, has bounced back dramatically.

At least on the surface. Deeper down lie the hurts of Japanese colonial rule (1910-45), of war and dictatorship, and of the almost impenetrable wall that has divided millions of families for 38 years. A third of the people of South Korea have relatives in the north. South Koreans have turned to education (99 per cent of its people are literate and there is a high proportion of university graduates); then to creating wealth; and now their energies are transforming the political arena.

It is a restless energy seeking an outlet. It would be tragic were it dissipated in feuding and power struggles — with a deeply divided opposition, this is a threat. Or in the aimless sensation-seeking that plagues prosperous societies.

'I felt sick'

'We are living in a society corrupted by wealth,' warned the Speaker of South Korea's Parliament recently. He went on to point to a goal close to the heart of South Koreans — the



Prof Masahiro Kawaguchi of Japan (right) talks to the Rev Min Boo-Ki of Korea

reunification of the country. He was speaking to participants in a Moral Re-Armament conference called by South Koreans with the theme 'Creating a world ruled by conscience'.

The conference brought to Seoul's Academy of Korean Studies nearly 200 Koreans of many ages and occupations, and 70 from other countries. The warmth with which the Koreans greeted every foreign attempt, however halting, to speak their language, demonstrated a sensitive pride in their culture. No efforts were more warmly greeted than those of some of the 26 from Japan who were present.

Masahiro Kawaguchi, a Japanese professor of engineering, spoke of the Japan-Korea relationship. He had come to Korea to do research which would benefit Korea and had received a warm welcome. But he had been there only two weeks when a Korean told him forcibly how his uncle had died at the hands of the Japanese. 'I felt sick,' Professor Kawaguchi recalled. 'I could not look at people in the street for fear they were thinking the same thing. Should I return to Japan? But what Japan had done was not my fault, I argued. Then I realized that in my study of history I had read the words, but I had never felt the pain of the Korean people. I decided to accept the truth and open my heart to it. Since then I have never felt fear in walking the streets of Korea.'

The Japanese party included people who have devoted years to healing these hurts. Yasutane Sohma, from an aristocratic Japanese family, and his wife Yukika, are among those who, together with Mrs Shidzue Kato, former member of the House of Councillors, battled in the 1950s to change

government policies offensive to Koreans, and ever since have worked at bridging the mistrust and ignorance between the countries. In 1979 Mrs Sohma founded the Japanese-Korean Women's Friendship Association, through which hundreds of Japanese women have visited Korea — prompting Korean women to reciprocate through a similar organization. In 1984 Mrs Sohma was decorated by the South Korean Government for this work.

Railways

From the Korean side, Kim Woo Jong, Chairman of the *Kang-Won Daily News*, said that relationships between the countries would be far worse were it not for such initiatives. He had been part of the struggle for liberation, and his two-and-a-half years in prison had left him with an abiding hatred for Japan, a hatred which had been healed through meeting a Japanese who had taken on the same task as the Sohmas.

Clearly there is a welcome in Korea to those who are prepared to understand the hurts the nation has endured. In a recent speech Dr Mamoru Takiyama described a visit he made to Korea some years ago when he was Vice President of Japan National Railways. He had met a senior Korean official to whom he apologized for the wrongs done by the Japanese in Korea. 'In an instant his face changed,' he said. When Dr Takiyama asked the official if there was any way in which he could help, the official told him they were planning an underground railway system, but had encountered serious problems with soft ground. 'I sent experts to help with this problem, and as a result we worked with them in building the underground in Seoul and later in Pusan.' ■

Farmers' links

The oaks being cut now at Pat Evans' farm at Whitbourne in Herefordshire, England, were planted by his grandfather. The seedlings that replace them will not be ready to harvest for another hundred years, illustrating the old adage, 'live as though you'd die tomorrow, farm as though you'd live forever'.

Since he started farming Evans reckons to have had more than 100 foreign students working on his farm. In 1978 he and his wife Kristin travelled around the world to make contact with farmers in other countries. More recently, with 12 other farmers in his area, he has founded an organization with the grand-sounding name 'British Farmers for International Development' (BFID).

The idea was inspired by hearing about the French organization *Agriculteurs Francais et Développement International* (AFDI) which was formed in 1975 with the vision of creating solidarity among farmers world-wide — an idea close to Evans' heart.

Two-way aid

Although small as yet, Evans hopes that BFID will one day grow into a national group like its French ancestor. He has discovered a number of similar small farmers' links already existing around the country. Neighbouring Worcestershire, for example, has a 'Farmers' Overseas Action Group' which links with Uganda.

BFID has four stated aims: 'to make known to British farmers the realities of life for farmers in the Third World; to make farmer-to-farmer links with a particular area or village; to recognize that human relations are as important as economics if we are to see that the world gets fed; and to



Pat Evans on his farm in Whitbourne

M Lowe

encourage farmers everywhere to a fresh recognition of the significance of their calling'.

For Evans this last point is very important. There are many, he says, who pause and wonder at God's creation. But, he believes, 'the key to the future may lie with the Creator himself and following his prompting in our hearts'.

The group has formed a link with a farmers' committee in the Sangli district of India, the Verala Development Society (VDS). Evans met the main organizer of the VDS, **Arun Chavan**, while in India for a conference on development. He was impressed with the project, which operates from the grass-roots level and aims to break down demarcation between donors and recipients through self-help schemes.

Chavan, like Evans, believes that aid should be a two-way process from which all parties benefit. He himself is a former university professor of English who resigned his job to work in the villages.

So far, five of the British group have been to visit the project. Chavan, in turn, visited Evans' farm in April after attending the World Food Conference in Brussels. The group has committed itself to raising an annual sum which will cover some of the running expenses for the VDS. Seeds for drought-resistant trees from the Henry Doubleday Research Station at Coventry have also been sent by the group. But, according to Evans, what means most is 'the care and friendship that has built up between us. It is the beginning of what must surely become a lifetime commitment to build-

ing a new society and shaping a world food policy.'

Over the years, says Evans, his philosophy has changed from feeling that farmers must produce as much as possible to feed a starving world, to recognizing that sustainable development means that farmers everywhere have to develop together. For European farmers this may mean producing less so that subsidized exports do not depress the world market. But it also means accepting a broader responsibility for world agriculture.

Teamwork in Lyon

French Member of Parliament **Marie-Josèphe Sublet** is also Mayor of Feyzin, a suburb of Lyon, France (not Lyon itself as stated in our photo-caption last month). Feyzin is dominated by high-rise flats and contains a high percentage of immigrants.

1986, she says, was the start of action to reduce crime and improve the quality of life in the area after she, with a few others, studied the local police statistics for crime — along with their explanation.

What followed was a list of priorities to be tackled.

'These included the problem of noise, the strategic importance of entrances to large blocks of flats, the lack of activities for young people and the need to explain to the community why a special squad of riot police was stationed in the area,' says Mme Sublet. 'We presented our findings to a full meeting of the city council.'

This resulted in a spate of



Mme Joséphe Sublet

C Spreng

interesting initiatives. 'We decided to give special training and support to the caretakers of schools and other public buildings or large blocks. Soon they were providing information to the police about drug dealers and other criminals. We distributed a booklet all about our community and started a weekly municipal newsletter. We built a bicycle track for the young people and new play areas and sports fields. These were created using voluntary labour from the schools. We offered free tickets for the swimming pool to youngsters who agreed to clean up particular areas around the large buildings.'

Above all, says Mme Sublet, they tried to create a spirit of teamwork between the different municipal departments, social agencies, schools and the police. She talks of 'the dynamic that is released when we succeed in breaking down the barriers between the different groups'. It's all part of her vision for 'a society where nobody feels excluded and every man and woman finds a place'.

Money and morals

An interest in the deeper issues of professional life marked a conference on the theme 'Men, Money and Morality' at the Swiss centre for Moral Re-Armament in Caux last summer.

As a Finnish management consultant, **Paul Gundersen**, emphasized, business life is normally full of trials and discouragements but 'vision, hope and the foundations of moral standards that are central here are like a rock we can build on'.

Monsignor Jorge Meija, Argentine bishop and vice-president of the Vatican 'Justice and Peace' Commission, stirred the pot by asking if the scriptures didn't raise a paradox regarding wealth. 'It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God,' he quoted. He stressed



C Spreng

Dr Gerrit Wagner, former chairman of Royal Dutch Shell, who chaired a meeting on 'Men, Money and Morality'

that the Bible did not condemn rich men, but rather challenged them to apply standards of humanity. Mgr Meija was one of those who came to take part in a smaller group discussing international debt attended by representatives of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, bankers, businessmen and economists from Colombia, Brazil and Chad.

Imagination

For **Dr Rita Ricardo-Campbell** of the Hoover Institution, Palo Alto, USA, business ethics implied the best use of all available resources, both material and human. Ethical and profitable management could be one and the same thing, she said. **Isamu Sakamoto**, former President and now Senior Advisor of Sumitomo Electrical Company, Osaka, illustrated the point as he told of how the quality of Japanese products had started to improve when management began to see in their employees people capable of creativity and imagination instead of mere extensions of machines.

Darius Forbes, Managing Director of the Indian Industrial enterprise J.N. Marshall in Pune, and **Arnold Smith**, former Commonwealth General Secretary, were among those who tried to tease out what true human development meant. Material advancement was part of the story, and Forbes' company was already providing food, medical assistance and education for the slums around his factory. But human happiness, they stressed, required more than this. 'It is by learning, by our inquisitive thoughts and by exchange of ideas that development takes place,' Forbes concluded. ■

by Philippe Lasserre

French PM's Pacific move

In the early 1980s people in the South Pacific Territory of New Caledonia were saying that they faced 'a choice between Algerian and Rhodesian solutions' — the expulsion of the white colonial population, or white power UDI-style. But within the last five months the new French Prime Minister, Michel Rocard, has made unprecedented progress in dealing with the tension, violence and almost total lack of communication between the French in the islands and the Kanaks who originally inhabited them.

The 54,000 French control most of the economic power, and especially the nickel mines, which contain half the known reserves in the free world. The 60,000 Kanaks are Melanesians who live mainly in villages and off-shore islands, and have been deprived of many opportunities since France took over in 1853. Another 30,000 are non-Kanaks from the South Pacific and other migrants, who tend to side politically with the European population.

In the last five years there have been several attempts to reach a settlement and provide more development for the Kanaks, but until recently they seemed fated to end in costly explosions of violence. Some Kanaks were getting training if not weapons from Libya, and most white settlers were well-armed and ready for the worst. In April and May this year alone, 30 people were killed. Shortly before the recent French Presidential election, four gendarmes were slain and others taken as hostages in an attack against a police station on the offshore island of Ouvéa. In a French commando assault to release the hostages 21 Kanaks were killed.

On TV screens round the world, pictures of French riot police bashing Melanesian demonstrators and of burnt-out French farms in the bush roused the ire of world opinion. The South Pacific Forum, the UN Decolonization Committee and various governments in the area condemned France for its handling of the situation.

Rocard has taken as the motto of his prime ministership the words *parler vrai* (speak the truth). In his first speech to Parliament he put New Caledonia at the top of his list of priorities, and took two bold initiatives.

'That was the time for forgiveness, now is the time for sharing.'

He immediately sent to the Territory a 'mission of dialogue', comprising representatives of the new Socialist majority and the Opposition and also leaders of the Catholic and Protestant churches. They were warmly received by both camps, and advocated wide consultation by the Government. This opened a path to a new way of doing things.

Then in June Rocard called a conference in Paris of all parties involved and personally

lowers, who took a lot of convincing.

In the proposed agreement New Caledonia is given ten years to prepare for its next stage. In 1998 a referendum will take place in the islands, offering the population a choice between independence and remaining within the French Republic. The electoral rolls will be closed now to new migrants from Metropolitan France. This will probably allow the Melanesians to be a majority by 1998.

A vast development programme is being prepared. In 1989 alone, France is planning to contribute an extra 300 million francs to the Territory's budget. This will go mainly to

rural development, training and education, the teaching of vernacular languages and promotion of Melanesian culture. The return of land to the Kanaks will also play an important part. There will be a wide amnesty for all 'terrorist' crimes except 'blood crimes', and this will release a number of Melanesians from French prisons.

These agreements are being submitted to the entire French electorate in a referendum on November 6. Opinion polls and the stand of French political parties indicate that the result will be positive.

Why does this agreement look like succeeding when others haven't? Rocard's political will was stronger than that of his predecessors,

and it was contagious. Secondly all parties concerned, except a few radical minority groups, took part. In previous attempts, even when consultation took place, plans and reforms were then worked out by technicians in French Ministries and not in the open. The true Melanesian tradition is for everyone to be included till the last full-stop is agreed.

People were fed up with violence. Physically as well as in battered hopes, they had suffered so much that they were ready to try again on a new basis. Hence the unbelievable press conference in Paris last June with Tjibaou and Lafleur side by side, listening to each other and smiling. Hence also their success in having the agreement accepted by their respective followers back on the island.

On both sides people seem ready to try and work things out together — the whites, to accept the idea that amends need to be made to



French Premier Rocard is welcomed by traditional dancers as he arrives in New Caledonia.

participated in it, despite being in ill health at the time. To everyone's surprise, this was attended by all the leaders of both communities, including Jacques Lafleur, a French settler MP who represents the hardcore white colonialists, and Jean-Marie Tjibaou, President of the Kanak Liberation Front. Tjibaou is a former priest and a remarkable negotiator, who tries for consensus with a typically calm Melanesian approach but is also determined to win independence. Some in his Front are unashamed advocates of violence.

Only a few weeks beforehand each of these men would have bluntly refused to meet the other. Yet the conference led to the 'Matignon agreement' of June 26, and this was followed by another agreement which was signed in August after the two leaders had returned to New Caledonia to consult their fol-

AP wire-photo



A cycle of violence in New Caledonia that appears to have ended

Ussel / Rex Features

the Kanaks, and the Kanaks that the whites have a place in the country's future.

On August 26 Rocard arrived in New Caledonia on a three-day visit. In the town hall of the capital, Nouméa, the heart of white ambitions, he was met and applauded by Kanaks and French together. 'We are facing an unprecedented challenge,' he said,

'to achieve successful decolonization in the framework of French institutions.' And, recalling the June meeting in Paris, he added, 'That was the time for forgiveness, now is the time for sharing.'

If Rocard insists on 'sharing' it is because this is one of the keys to peace and to the harmonious development of the islands. The

aim is to fill the economic, educational and cultural gap between the Melanesian and white populations. Many dangers threaten this real but fragile agreement, and the most important challenge will be for all New Caledonians — Kanaks, whites and others — to learn to live together. For that, as Michel Rocard says, ten years is not too much. ■

FIRST PERSON

Learning to love my father

The writer has asked to remain anonymous

At last society is facing up to the horrors of child abuse and the lives it has destroyed. I know from my own experience what scars even something apparently harmless can leave.

When I was three I taunted my father to do something which I knew instinctively was wrong and which had overtones I had no idea about. He gave in to me, without thinking, I'm sure. He never did anything like it again. But at that moment all my respect for him died. I began to get nightmares about him eating me and to recoil at his touch.

As my brothers and I grew up, Mother was the one who wielded authority. Dad used to refer us to her because he didn't want us to play one parent off against the other. But it made me feel he was weak and indecisive.

As a teenager I was hypercritical of my father. Every time he opened his mouth I would contradict him. If he arrived home late from a meeting I would go straight to bed so I didn't have to talk to him.

When I was 24 I was teaching, but still living at home. We rented a cottage for a family holiday. On our second night there my mother said to me, 'You must heal the rift between you and Dad.'

That night there was a violent storm. As she went round the house to check that everything was all right, my mother fell

downstairs and was killed. We were shattered.

What made it even worse for me was that, when Dad woke me up to tell me what had happened, the awful thought flashed through my mind that I wished it had been him and not her. I felt I could have borne life with my mother without Dad, but could not face the years ahead with him without her as intermediary.

There were some very difficult days to come. My sister was only 11 and both my brothers, although grown up, were at home. I gave up my job to look after the family. On top of all this my father was going through the throes of being made redundant. After two years my sister went to live with friends and we split up the family home. Later my father set up home again — and this became my base as I followed my career in teaching.

The second ear-ring

Over the years I began to see the cost of my hard and dominating attitude. I began to pray for love for my father. Everyone else seemed to hold him in great respect. He was the patriarch of the wider family, the favourite uncle to whom all the cousins deferred. As time went on we began to get much closer, but it took years. I stuck to it, I suppose, because of what my mother had said to me and also because I felt it was right to do so. I really grew to love him, although I can't say when it began.

One holidays, when he was well over 80, we decided to go to the theatre. We dressed up and I put on my ear-rings. It was hot and in the interval we strolled the streets. On the way home I realized one of my ear-rings was missing. Next day Dad insisted on going to look for it, although I protested. I couldn't take him, so he went by public transport.

When he got home, hours later, he was white with exhaustion. He'd even searched the gutters, but found no ear-ring. I felt so bad because he was utterly tired.

I went upstairs to do my hair and there in my drawer was an ear-ring, still wrapped up in its piece of paper. Then I found the one I had been wearing, and I realized to my horror that I'd never put the second one on. My first thought was that I'd never be able to tell him. But then I thought, 'How can I not tell him? I'll certainly never be able to wear two ear-rings again!'

So I went downstairs and I knelt by his chair and I told him what a fool I had been and how sorry I was. He lay back in his chair and chuckled and chuckled and chuckled. 'Oh my darling,' he said, 'I'm just so glad you've got both your ear-rings.' I felt so at one with him and so glad I'd been honest.

This finally healed something in our relationship. His love and steadfastness taught me something about the fatherhood of God. When he died a few years later it was as though a rock of strength had gone from my life. ■

Children of the Arbat
by Anatoli Rybakov
Century Hutchinson

Finally published after 20 years of suppression, *Children of the Arbat* has been hailed as one of the great Soviet novels of recent years and one of the most daring steps of *glasnost*. The author, Anatoli Rybakov, studied engineering in the 1930s, was arrested and exiled to Siberia, but later rehabilitated during the war. His novel, which comes out of that experience, centres around the lives of young people living in the famous Arbat region of Moscow at that time and links them with the decisions of the Party machinery under Stalin.

The action takes place in 1934 around the 17th Party Congress (the 'Congress of Victors', called to celebrate the completion of the collectivization of the peasantry) and culminates with news of the assassination of Kirov, the Leningrad Party Secretary. The death of Kirov, which many attribute to Stalin, is often seen to mark the beginning of the purges. The novel, which is thus set on the eve of the Great Terror, portrays this historic moment not only as the triumph of Stalin over his perceived opponent, but also as the destruction of true, benevolent Marxism. For Stalin, politics is about power and fear: 'Convictions change, but fear lasts forever'. For Kirov, Marxism is about the service of people: 'He was always aware of the individual behind the thousands and millions'. Thus, in the tradition of Trotskyite and modern neo-Marxist thought, it was Stalin who betrayed the revolution.

Official or independent?

At a popular level, the real hero of the novel is Sasha Pankratov, an honest student, sent into internal exile for defending a man who came under Party suspicion. Even in exile, he remains loyal to the Party spirit. Sasha's friends are at the heart of the novel and are eventually divided into those who follow the official line and those who remain independent and honest. The division is exemplified by two sisters, Nina and Varya. Nina justifies Sasha's arrest for the sake of convenience, Varya admires his honesty and falls in love with him.

In the tradition of socialist realism, *Children of the Arbat* is about a conflict between those who misuse the Party and those who are imbued with the true Party spirit. The difference is that, in this case, the true Party spirit is defeated. In a way, it is a conflict between cynicism and humanism, a novel of two carefully chosen ideological voices where Rybakov clearly stands on one side. In this sense, *Children of the Arbat*, although written 20 years ago, reflects the Gorbachev standpoint: Stalin is to blame; *perestroika* is about a return to true revolutionary principles.

Rybakov does not consider what so many Russians of this century — from the Russian religious renaissance to the dissident movement — have said: that cynicism and intoler-



Anatoli Rybakov

ance are both results of the humanist abandonment of God. Nor does he present any real alternative. Whilst he seems aware of the need for something deeper, it never really develops. At the end of the novel Sasha talks of something 'above religion and ideas... a capacity to sacrifice oneself for others'. Either this is an attempt to give humanism a deeper 'spiritual' foundation — in which case it remains just the germ of an idea — or, more likely, it is an attempt to give humanism some grand spiritual colouring, yet leaving God out of it. The leaders of the Soviet Union have long tried to make their ideology spiritual — not least to deal with the disintegration of moral values in their country — but without success. Spirituality without God is a contradiction in terms.

Sasha appears to embark on a quest which could lead to some real spiritual truths. The sadness is that his belief in honesty and his developing concept of self-sacrifice are not based on any concrete values, such as the sanctity of human life, but more on feelings. As he says, 'Human feeling has not been killed in people and it never will be'. This in itself is a good thing, but feeling, even in its highest form, is not enough for a whole philosophy.

Symbol of glasnost

Nevertheless, Sasha's concept of feeling is the one source of real hope in the novel. It suggests that Truth is found within a person as well as without. It suggests the existence of an inner conscience. Sasha himself, by turning within, discovers the freedom of losing his fear. At the end of the novel, with Stalin's triumph, Sasha's term of exile will probably be extended. He is the victim of a despicable regime and his personal life is chaotic, yet his spirit remains free enough to accept his fate. That is his victory — the victory of principle over circumstance.

Children of the Arbat gives a vivid picture of the mediocrity of the Stalin years and how Stalin himself used the Party and NKVD (the KGB of the period) apparatus to destroy his opponents. There is a clever intertwining of Stalin's actions with the lives of ordinary students in the Arbat region. At the same time *Children of the Arbat* is very revealing as a

Century Hutchinson

symbol of *glasnost*. Rybakov cannot finally accept that social engineering itself — as an ideology — ends up by destroying the human spirit in the name of the whole. As Gorbachev is discovering, the human spirit cannot be revived solely by political reforms — they must be accompanied by a genuine spiritual renaissance. Sasha's quest must be liberated from the limitations of Kirov's humanist Marxism. That must be Rybakov's next book.

Philip Boobbyer

The Green Consumer Guide
by John Elkington
and Julia Hailes
Victor Gollancz

Amid the multifarious prophecies of ecological doom, the lay person can suffer from overkill. The statistics, horrifying though they are, wash over one's back, leaving one paddling furiously for the bank instead of learning how to swim better.

So it is refreshing to find a book which concentrates on what the ordinary consumer can do towards safeguarding life on earth. The problems addressed — which washing machine, for example, does least harm to the environment? — may seem deluxe to readers in less affluent countries. But without a radical alteration in the lifestyle of those of us in the affluent world, the prophets of disaster are likely to be proved right. It is precisely at these consumers that *The Green Consumer Guide* is aimed.

This is a practical book offering advice on which products to buy if you are concerned about the environment. Which aerosols are free of the deadly CFC's which destroy the ozone layer? What types of wood can replace tropical hardwoods, the felling of which — such as we have seen in Bangladesh — and thought to contribute so gravely to flooding — and to the 'greenhouse effect'? What are the products — both in general, and particular brands — which minimize energy usage, avoid noxious chemicals in their production, and do not damage the delicate balance of nature in our seas, rivers and fields?

It is not always clear why one brand — given equally benign properties — is recommended over another. And I felt there was a difference between refusing to buy products which contain whale ingredients — because of a desire to preserve an endangered species — and boycotting Icelandic fish to pressure that country into ceasing its whaling trade.

The authors ask us to simplify our lifestyles, not just to go on consuming in a more 'environment-friendly' way. They don't, however, labour this point, as they are concerned to reach the whole spectrum of consumers, including the big spenders whose purchasing power can have the greatest influence on the decisions of large companies.

While specifically written for the British consumer, the book has much general material which is relevant for a world-wide audience.

Edward Peters



Soul's anchor

The man riding his horse across the windswept moors had reason to be depressed. He and his followers were being physically and verbally attacked and while some were faithful, others had fallen back. Meanwhile his closest colleague — who happened to be his brother — kept sending him critical letters from the comfort of his home. It made it no easier that some of the criticism was fair. He must have felt that the work God had chosen him to do was falling apart and would have no lasting effect.

The man was John Wesley, the 250th anniversary of whose conversion millions of Methodists all over the world are celebrating this year. The spiritual revival he launched in the mid-eighteenth century transformed the lives of working people all over Britain and thus sparked off a social revolution which, historians believe, changed the face of the country. It inspired Britain's great advances of the nineteenth century — the abolition of the slave trade, the Acts freeing small children from mines and factories, and the first trade unions.

My family have been followers of Wesley for generations. His journal gives a continuing account over 40 years of the wonderful changes he helped to bring about in people's lives. Yet he suffered vicious persecution and daunting setbacks. He must have had times of doubt and despair. I wanted to know what his sources of strength were.

First of all, I concluded, he was sustained by the experience of God's power from which his work sprang — the moment when, at a meeting in Aldersgate Street, London, he felt his

heart 'strangely warmed'. He was already a clergyman, strict-living but unsuccessful in helping others. Now, he wrote, 'I felt I did trust in Christ... and he had taken away my sins.'

This experience and the calling which stemmed from it drove him forward — in the next 50 years he was to ride some 250,000 miles taking his message to villages and cities all over Britain. 'I dared not do otherwise than I do,' he wrote once. 'I am so swept along I know not how, but I can't stand still.'

Breaking old moulds

Throughout his life he believed that the Holy Spirit would lead him — and that he must obey. It led him constantly to break old moulds. His work aroused strong opposition from within the established, and elitist, Anglican Church. His preachers were banned from church pulpits. At this point he felt a strong compulsion — against all his training — that as he could not speak to people indoors, he must do so out of doors. He broke with convention only after a considerable struggle. 'I have all my life been so tenacious to every point relating to decency and order,' he wrote. 'I thought the saving of souls was almost a sin if not done in church. At four in the afternoon I submitted to be more vile and proclaimed in the highways to about 3,000 people the glad tidings of salvation.'

By this move he reached hundreds of thousands who had never been touched by the Church — and they looked to him for help in developing and applying their faith. He kept in constant touch with literally thousands of them. In a sense they were his

children — and this, it seems to me, must have been another thing that kept him going.

No matter what happened, he stuck to the disciplines he had adopted as a young man. He spent an average of five hours a day in reading and prayer, often as he rode along. He read not only the Bible but a wide variety of books, ranging from the classics to contemporary writings. In these times, I imagine, he found the determination and courage to continue.

'Sunday was a useful day for myself,' he wrote on one occasion. 'I found more than once trouble and heaviness, but I called upon the name of the Lord and he gave me a clear full approbation of his way and a calm thankful acquiescence in his will. I cannot but stand amazed at the goodness of God.'

Methodism was born in song. Charles, the brother who caused Wesley such pain by his criticism, wrote thousands of hymns. They have been a source of strength to countless people over the last two centuries, as they must have been to John himself.

John also wrote some hymns and translated others from German. One expresses the source of his steadfastness:

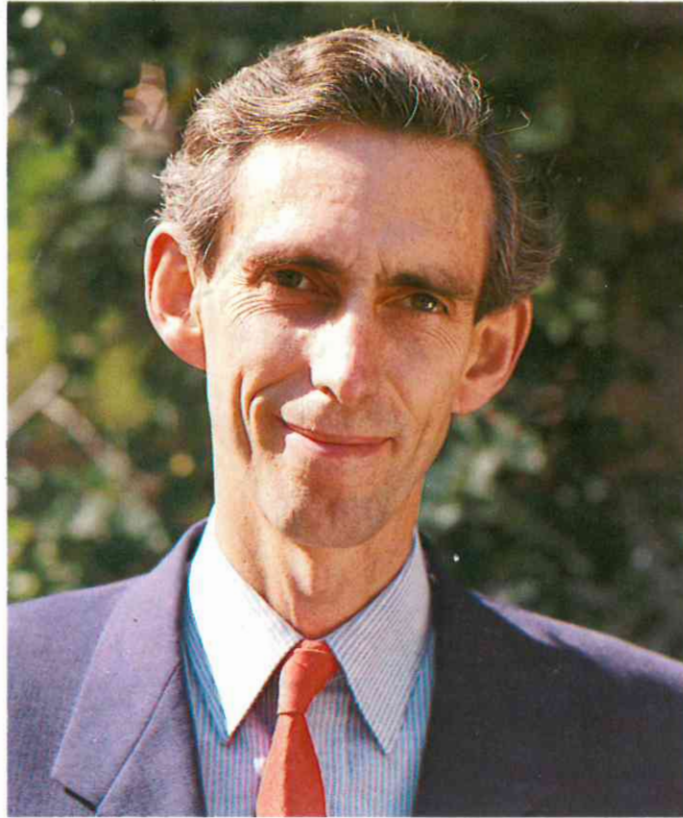
*Now I have found the ground,
Where my soul's anchor may remain.*

*Fixed on this ground will I remain,
Though my heart fail and flesh decay.*

*This anchor shall my soul sustain
When earth's foundations melt away.*

*Mercy's full power I then shall prove
Loved with an everlasting love. ■*

by Simon Scott Plummer



R. Bath

If you wish for evidence that all is not well with the world, you need look no further than the history of Cambodia over the past 15 years. Dragged into the struggle between North Vietnam and the United States, it was at the same time convulsed by a civil war of its own. This led to the victory of the Communist Khmers Rouges and three and a half years of violent, senseless misrule during which between one and two million Cambodians are thought to have died — starved, wracked by disease, murdered. Although operating on a much smaller scale than Hitler or Stalin, Pol Pot, the shadowy orchestrator of this massacre, ranks with them among the vilest dictators of our century.

The Cambodians were saved from his clutches by the Vietnamese, who invaded in 1978 and have occupied the country ever since. Driven by a fanaticism and fear common to tyrants, Pol Pot had turned first on his enemies within Cambodia, then on Khmers Rouges whom he suspected of disloyalty, and finally on the Vietnamese. Having recently overrun South Vietnam, the government in Hanoi was thus provided with a pretext for extending its sway over Indochina.

The Vietnamese occupation has brought neither peace nor prosperity to Cambodia. From the Thai border a coalition led by former head of state Prince Sihanouk, former Prime Minister Son Sann, and Khieu Samphan of the Khmers Rouges has carried on guerrilla warfare against the government installed in Phnom Penh by Hanoi. Because it is not recognized by the Western world, that government has been starved of aid to re-

'The prizes are high. To win them requires not just political skill but a change of heart.'

build an economy devastated under Pol Pot. Relief agencies reported earlier this year that only one per cent of the population has access to clean drinking water and that one in seven babies dies before reaching the age of one.

Fifteen years on, there are signs that Cambodia's anguish may be coming to an end. Vietnam has begun withdrawing its troops; the Phnom Penh government and the guerrilla coalition have met in Indonesia; China and the Soviet Union have discussed the future of the country in Peking. Nevertheless they have a formidable tangle to unravel.

Prince Sihanouk and Son Sann fear that the Khmers Rouges are unreformed and will seize power once the Vietnamese have gone. Heng Samrin and Hun Sen in Phnom Penh are reluctant to sacrifice their power as part of a peace settlement. Vietnam would like to withdraw; maintaining a huge army has bankrupted the country and left it heavily dependent on the Soviet Union. On the other hand, it does not want to find itself once again with a hostile neighbour in Cambodia.

For the Russians, a Vietnam which is overstretched militarily has become a bottomless pit for aid. They see also that a Vietnamese withdrawal from Cambodia is a key to better Soviet relations with China. In a speech in Vladivostok in 1986 Mr Gorbachev spoke of the Soviet Union as a Pacific power destined to play a leading role in Asia. Moscow's continuing support for the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia has blunted that initiative. But do not expect the Russians to aban-

don Hanoi; their Vietnamese base at Cam Ranh Bay, in the heart of South East Asia, is too valuable for that.

What the Soviet Union is for Vietnam, China and Thailand are for the Khmers Rouges, the first as a supplier of weapons, the second as a conduit for them. China wants to limit Vietnam's power but its hostility towards its southern neighbour, which began in the early 1970s, has forced Hanoi into Russia's arms. In the long run the Chinese need peace on their borders in order to achieve the gigantic task of modernizing their country. Thailand sees Cambodia as a

buffer state between itself and its long-time rival, Vietnam, and is as keen as Hanoi on having a friendly government in Phnom Penh.

There is, then, reason enough for the different parties to seek agreement. But for this to be lasting they have to overcome a legacy of mistrust, fear and the desire to dominate. The four Cambodian groups, in particular the Khmers Rouges, need to learn to work together. The Vietnamese must cease regarding Cambodia and Laos as their fief, a tendency which dates from the founding of the Indochinese Communist Party in 1930. China's attitude to Vietnam, that of the Middle Kingdom towards a vassal state, is obsolete and counter-productive.

The prizes are high: the rebuilding of Indochina, with both Eastern and Western help, after decades of war; cooperation rather than confrontation within South East Asia; the normalization of relations between China and the Soviet Union. To win them requires not just political skill but a change of heart. True peace will come only when those involved have the humility to acknowledge where they have gone wrong and treat each other as sovereign states in the future. ■

Simon Scott Plummer is diplomatic correspondent and Asia specialist on 'The Daily Telegraph', London.



Next Month...

Lead story: 'For A Change' goes to Scandinavia to talk to artists who offer a unique perspective on our times.

Profile: John Perkins, American civil rights veteran and community worker.