



M.R.A. backers: Mrs. and Mr. Sävström, Swedish Parliament; Gen. S. W. Kirby, deputy Chief of Staff, Germany; Bishop of Rangoon; Brian Boobbyer, famous athlete.

M.R.A. and Communism

By Lady Savory

THERE was held this summer on the prettily wooded island of Mackinac on Lake Michigan a Conference to which there thronged some thirteen hundred delegates from all over the world.

"This is," reported a journalist from the *Detroit Free Press*, "perhaps one of the most varied groups of people who ever assembled voluntarily. Not without reason is this Conference called 'a little United Nations without the Communists.' Nearly every shade of political thinking, economic belief, religious faith and cultural level is represented here."

This was quite literally true, and the comparison between the M.R.A. Conference and the United Nations, as with the defunct League of Nations, is not inapposite, for the aim is basically the same as theirs: "To save the world."

Can M.R.A. Succeed?

Statesmen have failed. Can M.R.A. succeed where these proved impotent? I think it can, because here enterprises are lifted above the human plane, and every morning guidance sought from Him Who made this world, and Who alone can plan how best to use in life's vast conflict each dedicated soul.

At Mackinac the Spirit of Christ, of radiant friendliness, so prevailed that there was never one discordant note throughout that conference of some 1,300 souls.

All became swiftly convinced of the urgency of decision, because one converted Communist after another stood up and impressed on us the same considered opinion: that if Christianity failed to win very speedily the hearts and minds of men and women everywhere, Christian civilisation would, in the near future, be ruthlessly swept away by the inrushing tide of fanatical, relentless, purposeful and crafty Communist ideology.

To waste time debating whether one favoured this form or that of Christian worship seemed

deeply wrong when what threatened mankind was a reversion to total paganism.

Into the vacuum of the minds of men reduced to struggle like beasts for existence, despairing, ignorant, hungry, devil-inspired beliefs and ideas were pouring, overflowing towards the frustrated, the disappointed, the wronged of every land.

Almost incredulous, we learned of inroads made on the minds and loyalties of many fellow-countrymen. Into every section of the British way of life, as of every land, this corrosive acid was eating, undermining the character, mocking and murdering the conscience, making a total claim on men's lives, blinding them to the vileness of betrayal. From over forty countries came the same deep note of warning.

Nothing Else Will Do

What could be done about it? For the cold war was due—we were informed by those likely to know—to pass into a more active stage. How could our world resist? To our amazement every representative from every country stated that nothing could save the nations from total Communist domination except an immediate putting into practice of those principles of the Sermon on the Mount, which are admirably summarised for the plain man, in M.R.A.'s one dogma, "The Four Standards" by which every act and thought of the individual ought to be measured: Absolute honesty, Absolute purity, Absolute unselfishness, and Absolute love."

Nothing less, they said, would serve. No "watering down" would be of the slightest use to stem the dark, disruptive force of Communism. The thing must be lived out in order to carry conviction.

But here, a high, clear note of ringing hope was struck: for wherever, in the great industrial centres of the world, dedicated M.R.A. workers were busy, contending for the souls of men, Communism was

being checked: a new ferment was at work, resolving tribal difficulties, bridging the gap of deadly racial animosities, reconciling age-long foes; the muddy, bitter brew of class-hatred, suspicion and prejudice was being clarified by Christlike love and brotherly understanding.

"Why did white men never talk to us like this before?" natives of Africa and both rich and poor of India and Pakistan, and intellectuals in Burma and Siam, have been asking; while some have added: "We would never have wished the British to go, if they had only given us their hearts like this."

"By their fruits ye shall know them": the words kept recurring to our minds throughout our stay at Mackinac. Others may decry, or be "offended" by this or that in M.R.A., but with our own eyes we there saw constantly "Christ lifted up," and men and women of every sort and condition drawn unto Him by the compelling force of the love and sincerity and joy emanating from the dedicated lives of those who have set out under the banner of M.R.A., to carry Christ's message of Christian charity throughout the world.

What Is Its Secret?

The achievements of this force of some 1,500 quite unsalaried workers has been remarkable: President Truman, when Senator, said of some of the people we met at Mackinac: "There is not a single bottleneck I can think of in industry which could not be broken in a matter of weeks, if this crowd were given the green light to steam straight ahead."

In country after country strikes have been averted, industrial disputes settled out of court, food enabled to reach the consumer, planes, railways and ships enabled to function once more, broken marriages mended, jarring relationships put right. It is an imposing record which would fill volumes, and of which the details were underlined for us this summer by many visitors to Mackinac. Gifts from almost every land were visible symbols of the provision of God for M.R.A. in the struggle against communism. It recalled to our minds the utter trust in God, the steadfast courage, and go-aheadness of the founders of the early Church. Personally, these observations sent me hurrying to my Bible to search the Acts of the Apostles for parallels which we realised we should find nowhere else. We found them there at once, and the Acts came alive for me as I confess had never before been the case.

St. Paul at the Court of Nero faced no more determined adversaries of Christianity than the Communists of to-day, whose record proves them resolved, whatever they may say, to stamp out all religion. I asked recently a clergyman, a voluntary

worker for M.R.A., and leader of the team in Belfast, whether he could explain the grip that Communism is getting in our own Christian land. I was amazed when he replied that its attraction for many a man lay in the demands for total sacrifice that it made upon him.

Communism uses precisely what is most Godlike in a man to destroy his soul. To combat this poison the M.R.A. worker is obliged to study Marxism, since he must learn how to refute it. Then he has to convince the Communist that he really cares what happens to him: that God cares, and that happiness can never be found unless man be reconciled to his Heavenly Father.

But to make this plain to the uneducated, or the recalcitrant, the ordinary language of religion has often to be discarded for terms more easily understood by those who have no religious background. Something that far transcended Communism had to be offered him, something that demanded his very best, and that would revolutionise his relationship with his fellow men. "The absolute moral standards, as opposed to a sliding scale of morals, invariably create a happier home" added this clergyman.

Where Change Should Begin

The ex-Communist was trained to find in "team" work the answer to class warfare, was taught to live "so as to make the other fellow great, the other party great, the other church great." He would then begin to perceive that a change had to begin in himself, not by overthrowing society. And his very helplessness to do this alone would lead to a dependence on God and a recognition of His authority as the great Leader and Umpire, guiding and loving His erring sons.

In that loyalty, in that vision, the cult of the regime of the armed fist under dictatorships simply could not exist, and many an ex-Communist—as we saw for ourselves—had responded to the Divine challenge, once it was put to him, by an eager: "Here am I. Send me."

Eternal truth assumes many forms. Men often at first condemn what they later acknowledge.

Frank Buchman, for the last thirty to forty years, has been doing in another sphere a work as wide-

continued on next page

"Spotlight on M.R.A." in our August issue evoked a varied correspondence.

"I am often baffled," writes a clergyman, "and perplexed about the present position of M.R.A."

B.S.B. is in quest of the answers raised by its readers. They will appear in the next issue.

—Ed.

"M.R.A. and Communism"—continued from page 7

spread, as essential, and as successful as that of William Booth; perhaps even as John Wesley—who saved England from revolution—as Dr. Buchman's disciples have a chance of doing to-day. If they fail the fault will be not theirs but our own lack of constructive thinking and of personal dedication.

Let those who criticise demonstrate to the world with a force as convincing, as compelling, as the joyous, peaceful faces, and the gay humour, of these dedicated workers of M.R.A. Nothing less can save this world, hurtling towards its destruction.

"Pray God to match us with this hour," as He has matched these followers of a Movement, which a well-known figure of our times—I believe, the Bishop of Rangoon—has called: "The greatest force opposing Communism in the world to-day."