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MORAL RE-ARMAMENT

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Division of International and Functional Intelligence
OFFICE OF INTELLIGENCE RESEARCH

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OIR 5109: MORAL RE-ARMAMENT

1. SUMMARY

Moral Re-Armament is a movement which professes to strive for the spiritual regeneration of mankind by the application of the evangelical teachings of Dr. Frank Buchman. Its origins date back to the early 1920's, when it was known as the "Oxford Movement," but it did not achieve any measure of public attention until the decade preceding the war. Public attention was then drawn to the movement, not because of the unique content of its spiritual message, but because Dr. Buchman and his followers launched a campaign to promote a policy of appeasement with Germany, permeated with overtones of approval for the Hitler regime. The pacifist mood which prevailed among large sections of British public opinion thus assured the Moral Re-Armament group of a receptive audience. When the war finally came, the movement, therefore, incurred the displeasure of both the British government and the people and might well have passed into oblivion if it had not opportunistically shifted its activities to meet the requirements of the war period by thoroughgoing support of the war effort. During the post-war period the Moral Re-Armament movement has been engaged in various undertakings but it has rested its principal claim for public support on its alleged success in fighting Communism.

Dr. Buchman and his followers attribute their success in this endeavor to their spiritual teachings. It is their claim to have formulated an ideology of "inspired democracy" based on the universal acceptance and practice of such indisputable Christian virtues as truth, love, unselfishness and purity. However, the spokesmen of MRA have never evolved a systematic body of doctrine which specifically defines their conception of what constitutes either "faith" or "good works." Within their own narrow circle they have practiced a prescribed ritual of

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mass confessionals and silent communion. The world at large, however, knows the movement largely through the pronouncements of Dr. Buchman and these, as already noted, have never been more specific than the invocation of traditionally accepted virtues of attitude and conduct to which no one can demur.

A notable feature of the Moral Re-Armament group today, as in the past, is the reticence shown by its spokesmen in discussing the details of their movement. This makes the task of ascertaining the character of the movement an extremely difficult one. The information supplied in their publications shows that the movement has but a skeletal formal organization; it is common knowledge that the movement, nevertheless, employed all the streamlined techniques of propaganda, including the holding of publicized mass meetings, the publication of large quantities of printed matter, the acquisition of comfortable and expensive quarters and the exploitation of well-known names to attract attention.

A careful sifting of the available material bearing on its history and current activities makes it obvious, however, that Moral Re-Armament's activities have always been characterized by three salient features:

(a) It is fairly certain that MRA is predominantly an upper-middle-class movement in the following it attracts and that the source of the lavish income it requires for the pursuit of its activities is supplied by affluent individuals. There is no evidence that it has any extensive following either among urban or agrarian workers.

(b) Its claims to great success in a variety of undertakings--the reconciliation of conflicting national and class interests, promotion of peace in industry and the work of winning members away from the Communist party in Western Germany--are not borne out by the available facts and are in many instances quite improbable when viewed against the total background of the events. The least convincing of these claims, given the character and social composition

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of the movement, is its alleged or prospective inroads made into the Communist movement. Indeed, to date their own publications mention the conversion of only two dozen Communists. With one possible exception, their importance in the ranks of the party is a minor one and the sincerity of their conversion is open to some doubt. The most, then, that MRA can hope to do is to serve as an alternative ideology for certain disaffected members of the Middle Classes who might otherwise drift into Communist ranks.

(c) The history of the movement indicates that its principal rule of conduct for winning adherents has been opportunism, and that the lack of substance in its doctrine has not encumbered it with any handicaps in this respect. Moral Re-Armament favored appeasement when appeasement was popular among large sections of the public and the government in Britain. When the war made its pacifist position untenable, it altered its course and went "all out" for the war effort. Likewise, it has synchronized its anti-Communist activities in the past three years with the growing awareness in the West of the main drift of Russian foreign policy, although indications of any major anti-Communist animus in its past activities are conspicuously absent.

All this suggests that Moral Re-Armament is essentially a loosely organized sectarian group with a restricted middle class appeal. Its own pretensions notwithstanding, MRA's effectiveness as an anti-Communist force is negligible, and its potentials for the future are limited. There is little likelihood in view of the character of its appeal and the type of its limited following that it can launch a mass movement in the near future which can seriously affect the fortunes of world Communism.

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II. Historical Introduction

The Moral Re-Armament movement has inspired some observers with the sanguine hope that it presents a genuinely effective ideological alternative to Communism, capable of enlisting the active support of the masses in the cause of democracy. It is the purpose of this paper to analyze the movement with a view to determining the sources of its purported strength, the nature of its appeal and the part it can play, if any, in immunizing popular thinking against the Communist contagion.

A. Origins of the Movement 1921-1929

The present Moral Re-Armament movement had its inception in the evangelical teachings of Dr. Frank N. Buchman during the early 1920's. Born in Pennsylvania in 1878, Dr. Buchman's early career was marked by the traditional activities of an ordained Lutheran minister. His name first acquired some renown in 1921 when he visited Oxford, England, and organized the "First Century Christian Fellowship," later re-named the Oxford Group. The principal doctrinal elements of Dr. Buchman's teachings were formulated during this period and they are still at the heart of his purely spiritual teachings today. In very large measure they are a simplified version of the theosophy and the teachings of the Austrian mystic Dr. Rudolf Steiner.¹ The practical conclusions which were drawn, however, were apparently Dr. Buchman's own contribution. Buchmanism insisted that ours was a degenerate age, given to the evils of war, armaments and materialism which

1 For an exposition of these religious ideas of the Oxford Group, see the pamphlet The Practices of the Oxford Group with Improvements, God-Guidance Press, Denver, 1937. Dr. Steiner is not mentioned expressly, but his influence on the Oxford Group's teachings are apparent throughout the pamphlet. Cf. J. P. Thornton-Duesbery, The Oxford Group, London 1947.

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neither the established Protestant or Catholic churches succeeded in overcoming.¹ A constant theme which recurs throughout the indictment is the stress on the white race as the culminating point in human evolution, coupled with a call to its "elite" to retrieve the world from its evil ways. To accomplish this, the doctrine calls for a return to a personalized form of religion in which the individual strives for direct communion with God. The Oxford Group, therefore, inaugurated a practice which has become a regular feature of the movement - namely, the holding of public mass confessionals, followed by periods of silent "listening to God" for "God-guidance" in the conduct of the individual.

The first ten years of its existence were not very auspicious for the future of the movement. It attracted very few followers among the students at Oxford, and in 1924 Dr. Buchman shifted most of its work to the United States with much of its activity centered in Princeton. Again it met with indifferent results and finally encountered the hostility of Princeton authorities because of its surcharged revivalist preoccupation with "sin." Its final expulsion from the University grounds caused Dr. Buchman to return to England where he began to devote an increasing proportion of his activities to work among leading circles in industry, politics, labor and recreation, and to attract followers without regard to their sectarian affiliation.

B. Period of Growth 1929-1939

The onset of the economic crisis in 1929-1930 and the decade of international crisis and increasing danger of war which followed coincided with a marked expansion in the range of the Oxford Group's activities, especially in England. It attracted a larger following among ecclesiastical leaders in English universities and scored its greatest propaganda triumph when it enlisted the enthusiastic sponsorship of W. H. ("Bunny") Austin, the tennis champion, and a

1 The Practices of the Oxford Group with Improvements, op. cit., p. 65

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number of other public figures like Lord Baldwin, Lord Stamp, the Marquis of Salisbury, Lord Desborough, et al. Though it continued to adhere to its earlier doctrine and semi-revivalist practices, the Oxford Group came of age in the 30's with its appeal greatly broadened beyond the confines of the religious sphere and its activities now being pursued in an entirely new social milieu. It is well to note that Dr. Buchman's group owed much of its success during this period to the deep strain of pacifist thought which won a wide following among student groups and the Landsbury wing of the Labor Party. When Dr. Buchman launched his campaign for a settlement with Germany in 1936-1939, he was therefore assured of wide support not only among the people associated with the "Clivedon Set," but also among large sections of the general population.

The Moral Re-Armament program was a direct outgrowth of that campaign, the slogan itself having been coined in a speech which Dr. Buchman made on May 28, 1938¹ and elaborated in a series of speeches and publications which called for a peaceful settlement with the Axis.² During its pre-war heyday, and in the years following, critics of MRA have cited evidence to show that leading figures of the Nazi regime and appeasement groups in England were members of MRA and have even ventured the opinion that MRA played a crucial role in the conclusion of the Munich agreement.³ The latter judgment is certainly a historical exaggeration, for we know today that the Munich agreement was in line with the great weight

1 Reprinted in Remaking the World, Buchman, F., New York: Robert M. McBride & Co., 1949, p. 85-87

2 Typical of these was the pamphlet MRA - Battle for Peace, ed., by H. W. Austin, 1938

3 It was charged, for example, that MRA had included such figures as Rudolf Hess, Vidkun Quisling, Heinrich Himmler, the Duke of Hamilton, et al.

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of public sentiment in Britain in 1938. It is nonetheless true that the leading spokesmen of MRA did endorse the Nazi regime.¹ The most notable of these expressions of approval was Dr. Buchman's statement in a press interview:

I thank heaven for a man like Adolf Hitler who built a front line of defense against the anti-Christ of Communism...My barber in London told me Hitler saved all Europe from Communism. That's how he felt. Of course I don't condone everything the Nazis do. Anti-Semitism? Bad, naturally. I suppose Hitler sees a Karl Marx in every Jew. But think what it would mean to the world if Hitler surrendered to the control of God! Or Mussolini? Or any dictator? Through such a man, God could control a nation overnight and solve every last bewildering problem.²

C. Moral Re-Armament During the War

As the war crisis gathered momentum and Britain abandoned its policy of appeasement after March 1939, criticism of the MRA movement became increasingly bitter and many of its adherents severed their ties with it. The war period itself marked the lowest ebb in the fortunes of the movement. In England, it applied for exemption from military duties for its officials or "evangelists" on the ground that they could make a greater contribution to the war effort by stimulating popular morale, promoting teamwork in industry, etc., than as members of the armed forces. The request came under heavy censure in and out of Parliament³ and in the United States similar efforts, though backed by high public figures, were rejected by the draft authorities.⁴ In fact, MRA suffered

1 See, for example, the statements of H. W. Austin and Daphne du Maurier in MRA - Battle for Peace, op. cit., pp. 14, 28, 38, 44

2 World Telegram, New York, August 26, 1936. MRA spokesmen have tried to allay suspicion of pro-Nazi sympathies by citing Nazi documents discovered at the end of the war in which MRA was branded as an ally of Anglo-American diplomacy and by calling attention to the imprisonment of MRA followers in concentration camps during the war. F. Buchman, Remaking the World, pp. 292-294 and Mr. R. Chamberlain article in MRA pamphlet Who Are These People?, printed by F. A. Clements (Chatham) Ltd., undated, pp. 9-10, which unwittingly confirms this view of Dr. Buchman's thinking. The evidence cited to refute the charge of pre-war compromises with the Nazi regime is quite beside the point, however, since it is drawn from events which occurred in a subsequent period.

3 New York Times, February 28, 1941

4 New York Times, January 5, 6, 8, 13, 15, 21, 1943, February 5, 6, 1943, and March 31, 1943.

a major setback in the country when Dr. Shoemaker of the Calvary Episcopal Church in New York and his congregation, heretofore MRA's main strength, seceded from the movement.¹

But the demise of MRA at the outset of the war was to be a temporary one. Dr. Buchman and his group displayed a marked talent for adapting the MRA program to the changing tides of public opinion and were thus able to weather the crisis successfully. With the entrance of the United States into the war in 1941, MRA abandoned its former pacifist leanings completely and launched a campaign to promote the war effort. Among its activities in this field were the publication of a number of morale-boosting pamphlets in this country (such as "You Can Defend America"), and in Britain ("Battle Together for Britain"), and the organization of "teams" for the purpose of bringing about amicable settlements in management-labor disputes. In the course of these activities, MRA managed to win back some of the trust it had lost by its pre-1939 activities, and to enlist the public support of top-ranking labor leaders (notably William Green and Philip Murray). Since 1945, it has, as will be indicated presently, continued and expanded these activities in all countries where it has gained any foothold.

III. The Moral Re-Armament Movement Today

Moral Re-Armament today professes to be a movement of world-wide dimensions. Starting as a narrow circle of converts to a confessional and inspirational religious creed, it has today spread beyond its original Anglo-Saxon confines to embrace a following in Western and Central Europe, in India, China and Japan. Yet it is a paradoxical fact, on which almost all observers are agreed, that any attempt to define its doctrine estimate its strength or evaluate its future potentialities treads on uncertain ground. The usual standards of

¹ See statement of Calvary Church, New York Times, November 8, 1941

judgement and sources of information which serve as a basis in such matters simply do not exist in any definable form in the case of MRA, and, in this respect, the various statements and publications of the movement itself are uniformly barren of concrete data. The observer is in consequence compelled to draw tentative conclusions of an inferential nature on the basis of evidence which happens to be available. The estimate which follows should be regarded in the light of this caution.

A. Finances and Organization

Perhaps the major reason for the uncertainty which attaches to any analysis of MRA is that the movement is entirely lacking in any formal organization. On its own profession, MRA engages in a far-flung array of activities involving scores of countries in different parts of the world. These activities are obviously not the result of spontaneous contributions by individuals or groups; they are carefully planned and directed and involve the expenditure of enormous sums of money. Yet, the only information we have is that legally MRA exists as a non-profit corporation here and in England, directed by a small Board of Directors which advises Dr. Buchman.¹

In the course of its expansion after the war, MRA has acquired considerable properties, including a munificent hotel at Caux-sur-Montreux in Switzerland which serves as its world center, the Westminster Theater in Oxford and properties in London, New York, Los Angeles and Mackinac Island, Michigan, for the

1 MRA's existence as a juridical body does not, of course, exhaust the matter, but it serves to point up the uncertainty which surrounds the movement. It did not exist in incorporated form in 1939 when an English judge debarred a bequest of £500 to the movement on the grounds that it lacked all the attributes of an organized group entitled by law to receive such bequests. (New York Times, February 21, 1939, March 10, 1939) The deficiency was promptly remedied when MRA acquired a Board of Directors and thereby obtained a charter of incorporation from the British Board of Trade. (New York Times, June 14, 1939.)

conduct of its concl... How these properties are financed and managed is a closely guarded secret, as are also the financial expenditures involved in the multifarious activities in which MAR is engaged - radio programs, international conferences, publication of its magazine New World News, staging of plays, arrangement of free tours to its various centers, etc. MRA has steadfastly insisted that it is not an organized association to which one may "belong" and that it has no membership lists, no subscriptions, no dues, no badges, no cards, no rules, no officers or any other of the usual paraphanelia of formal organizations. Where, then, do the funds come from to finance MRA's enterprises? To this question, as to others, Dr. Buchman has consistently avoided giving any straight-forward answer.¹ A good deal of the work of MRA may indeed be done as MRA claims on a volunteer basis but this would only account for a small part of its expenses. The property charges alone would entail large sums of money² and MRA's recent activities in the schools of the United States involve considerable expenditures on printed material, etc.

In the absence of a formal dues-paying membership, then, no other conclusion is possible than that MRA is the recipient of large sums of money donated by voluntary contributions.³ The same absence of organization and diffuseness of following likewise make it difficult to measure the dispersion of these contributions over different income groups and countries. The prevailing

- 1 Dr. Buchman's evasiveness on this score has been noted by several observers. See for example C. Graves, "Morning Coats de Rigueur in the Oxford Group," The Sphere, May 29, 1937.
- 2 Thus, the hotel at Caux, for example, was purchased for £250,000.
- 3 Spokesmen for the movement have always insisted that it does not solicit contributions (See statement of Sir Lynden Macassey at MRA conference, London, June 28, 1946, contained in a report supplied by confidential State Department field representative.) Yet brochures have been circulated definitely soliciting such contributions, e.g., Where Does the Money Come From?, printed in U.S.A. by MRA, undated. What percentage of MRA's funds is derived from such solicited funds is another unknown in MRA's affairs.

opinion of those who have hazarded a guess on this score that a very large proportion of MRA's funds come from contributions made by very wealthy or well-to-do groups.¹ MRA spokesmen have frequently hinted at donations made by people of modest means at great sacrifice to their own well-being, but it is well to note that since per capita dues are not collected, and since post-war economic hardships preclude the widespread practice of such sacrifices, prima facie evidence would indicate that MRA's budget represents a heavy investment by affluent groups.

Like MRA's sources of revenue, so its following. Judged by the available evidence - which is admittedly not as complete as could be desired - MRA appears to be a movement which derives its following predominantly from middle class groups. This becomes evident from the data which is available concerning the delegates who attended the MRA World Assembly at Mackinac Island, September-October 1945, and at California in June 1948.² A breakdown of the information indicates that, by and large, most of the delegates were drawn from urban middle class groups with representatives of business groups and the liberal professional predominating. The only departure from this general trend occurs in Germany, where there is also representation from the titled aristocracy. Crude as such an estimate may be and making allowance for the danger that these delegates may have been picked by some selective process, it is nevertheless confirmed by the type of people who predominate at the lower levels of the

1 D. 404, Berne, September 19, 1949, CONFIDENTIAL. Cf. statement of Dr. W.A. Brown of the Union Theological Seminary in November 1941, in report of confidential State Department field representative.

2 Report of confidential State Department field representative concerning some delegates to Mackinac Island conference, and the program for the conference in California, June 2-3, 1948.

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movement - the "house party" lectures, confessionals, etc. Socially, they are of a kind with the delegates whose names grace the various world conferences of MRA. Moral Re-Armament may, therefore, be characterized as predominantly an upper middle class movement.

B. Leadership

The leadership which assists Dr. Buchman in conducting the affairs of MRA is as difficult to identify as the large following which the movement claims for itself. The most that can be said is that most of its pronouncements have in the past decade come from K. Twitchell, McCook Roots and J. Maynard in the United States; W. H. Austin, A. Thornhill and Peter Howard in Britain; Leonard Allen and Bishop West in Southern Asia; and K. Horinouchi, ex-Japanese ambassador to the United States, in Japan, and that these men have regularly accompanied Dr. Buchman on his tours, conferences etc. Moral Re-Armament has nevertheless benefited considerably from the added prestige which was imparted to the movement by endorsements of various figures of world prominence. Men like President Truman, Robert Schuman, Konrad Adenauer, Paul Hoffman, Lucius Clay, Guiseppe Saragat, Leopold Figl, Ernst Reuter, William Green, Philip Murray and a host of others have at various times lauded the movement for its various activities and thus focused public attention on it. There is no evidence to suggest, however, that these tributes were indications of enduring association with the movement and in no instance can it be satisfactorily demonstrated that MRA has had any effect on practical governmental, business or trade union

- 1 The Sphere, May 29, 1937, "Morning Coats de Rigueur in the Oxford Group," by Charles Graves, and report by confidential State Department representative dated January 21, 1946.

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policy. It is also worth noting that high pressure techniques can be employed to elicit endorsements from prominent figures who have no genuine interest in or knowledge of the movement which profits from their tribute.¹ That MRA has not been backward in the latter respect is evident in the monotonous recurrence of these tributes in issue after issue of all the literature from its presses.

C. The Ideology of Moral Re-Armament

MRA is a movement without an "organization" or "members" or "leaders." It is also a movement without a formal program. If it can be said to have an ideology at all, it is the expression of an inspirational and hortatory invocation of Christian virtues as a solution to the world's ills. The dominant theme of MRA's literature is that the modern world is in an impasse because it has become addicted to materialistic interests which have thus submerged the more abiding and transcendent interests of man. Its prescription for the crisis of our times is, therefore, a return to "vital Christianity" in which the "guidance of God" would permeate the thinking and practices of all individuals and groups. The theme recurs again and again in Dr. Buchman's speeches:

The world's condition cannot but cause disquiet and anxiety. Hostility piles up between nation and nation, labor and capital, class and class. The cost of bitterness and fear mounts daily. Friction and frustration are undermining our homes.

Is there a remedy that will cure the individual and the nation and give the hope of a speedy and satisfactory recovery?

The remedy may lie in a return to those simple home truths that some of us learned at our mother's knee, and which many of us have forgotten and neglected - honesty, purity, unselfishness and love.

1 Thus, for example, Mr. Truman lent his name to the MRA movement while still in Congress (See Moral Re-Armament, National Meeting for Moral Re-Armament held in Constitution Hall, City of Washington, June 4, 1939, Government Printing Office, Washington, 1939, presented by Mr. Truman at 76th Congress.) but his secretary later disavowed any real interest or knowledge of the movement on his part.

The crisis is fundamentally a moral one. The nations must re-arm morally. Moral recovery is essentially the forerunner of economic recovery. Imagine a rising tide of absolute honesty and absolute unselfishness sweeping across every country! What would be the effect? What about taxes? Debts? Savings? A wave of absolute unselfishness throughout the nations would be the end of war.

Moral recovery creates not crisis but confidence and unity in every phase of life. How can we precipitate this moral recovery throughout the nations? We need a power strong enough to change human nature and build bridges between man and man, faction and faction. This starts when everyone admits his own faults instead of spot-lighting the other fellow's.

God alone can change human nature.

The secret lies in that great forgotten truth that when men listen, God speaks; when man obeys, God acts; when men change, nations change. That power active in a minority can be the solvent of a whole country's problems. Leaders changed, a nation's thinking changed, a world at peace with itself...

Only a new spirit in men can bring a new spirit in industry. Industry can be the pioneer of a new order, where national service replaces selfishness and where industrial planning is based upon the guidance of God. When Labor, Management and Capital become partners under God's guidance, then industry takes its true place in national life...

We can, we must, and we will generate a moral and spiritual force that is powerful enough to remake the world.¹

and again:

The Oxford Group is a Christian revolution for remaking the world. The root problems in the world today are dishonesty, selfishness and fear - in men and, consequently, in nations. These evils multiplied result in divorce, crime, unemployment, recurrent depression and war... Spiritual recovery must precede economic recovery. Political or social solutions that do not deal with these root problems are inadequate. Man-made laws are no substitute for individual character. Our instant need is a moral and spiritual awakening. Human wisdom alone has failed to bring this about. It is only possible when God had control of individuals.

Through this control men find true freedom in a world haunted by insecurity and fear. They discover creative purpose in an age of bewilderment. They find new moral power amid moral decay. They learn to work together, in a world of conflicting interests, through common obedience to God. They weave the threads of understanding that make possible a new diplomacy in which statesmen can achieve enduring results. They create a new confidence as nations work together in common action for the freedom of mankind...

We must not delay. The forces of evil threaten even the sanctity of marriage and the security of the home; and when the home collapses, the nation collapses with it. The responsibility is personal to you and to

¹ Buchman, Remaking the World, op. cit., p. 85-87, from a speech given London, May 29, 1938.

me. The challenge of the Oxford Group is a challenge to decision - a challenge to listen, to listen and to act. When man listens, God speaks. Everyone can listen to God. Everyone can begin just where he is.¹

Converts to MRA regard it as the "inspired ideology" of democracy, holding that democracy is essentially based on the acceptance of universal and absolute moral standards.

Democracy is (not) tied to any one form of economic organization. I don't even believe that democracy is tied to any one form of political organization. I do believe that democracy is tied to absolute moral standards.

Formulated in these terms, MRA doctrine is sufficiently elastic and general to elicit assent and even some support from all groups which are not irrevocably committed to Communism and it has actually been successful in winning some adherents among all groups in the non-Communist world. Yet there is another aspect of MRA doctrine which deserves mention because of the powerful psychological pull it exercises on its adherents. It is hinted at by indirection rather than stated explicitly, but it is nonetheless a probable factor in attracting sections of the middle classes into the ranks of MRA. Many spokesmen of MRA have conceived of the movement as the awakening of an elite group of "God-guided" men and women whose business it is to refashion the world and guard it against the assaults of Communism.³ A careful reading of the accounts of various MRA activities, "house parties," world congresses, conversion teams, etc., leaves little doubt that this psychological stimulus pervades the movement.

1 Ibid., pp. 64-65

2 New World News, Vol. 4, No. 4, April 1948, "Wanted - An Ideology for Democracy," by A. R. Mackenzie. Cf. the more pointed stress on the need for overcoming self-interest in the statement by Dr. Wilhelm Hogner in the same issue of New World News. See also the MRA pamphlet Everything's Got to Change, 1947, written by German leaders attending the World Assembly for Moral Re-Armament, at Caux-sur-Montreux, Switzerland.

3 On a popular level, the idea is to be found in certain sections of the pamphlet Everything's Got to Change, op. cit.. For a more sophisticated statement, see New World News, Vol. 5, No. 8, August 1949, "Ideology for Today," by R. Mowat. See also lecture of Count de Castiglione delivered in Rome, January 8, 1946 rejecting idea of equality from a report by confidential State Department field representative.

In a more immediate sense, MRA thinking in the last four years has increasingly concerned itself with the struggle against the principal embodiment of materialistic philosophy - Communism. The 1949 summer training program at Mackinac Island, for example, not only dealt with stimulation of teamwork in industry, increasing production, the revitalization of Japan and Germany, but also with the problem of reconverting Communist leadership in the West to the ideals of democracy. Just how MRA proposes to achieve these objectives is not quite clear. Like many other aspects of the movement, its Mackinac program of 1949 was like a blank check on which one can feel free to inscribe his own sum. Certainly no one can determine from MRA literature the precise nature of the appeal or method which MRA professes to employ in winning over Communists to its ideals.

D. MRA's Practical Work

In the practical realm, MRA's spokesmen have insisted that their program has already scored notable successes where the purely "materialistic" approach has failed. The following is a summary of successes for which MRA claims credit:¹

(a) According to MRA literature, the Norwegian underground during the war operated with greater zeal and efficiency as a result of MRA's influence among the people of Norway.

(b) MRA spokesmen claim that they were able to effect a reconciliation between the British and Indian delegation to the U.N.O. conference at San Francisco in 1945 after the two delegations had fallen out over the trusteeship issue merely by giving a performance of the MRA play, "The Forgotten Factor."

(c) MRA spokesmen contend that a number of key figures in the Kuomintang displayed a new interest and enthusiasm for democracy as a result of their contact with MRA.

(d) Leading German figures who attended MRA gatherings at Caux, are said to have acquired a realization of the responsibility of the German people for the tragedy of Hitlerism.² MRA also claims particular success in post-war Germany through the organization of conversion teams, tour of plays, moderation of labor-management disputes, etc.³

1 These claims can be found in almost all publications of MRA, especially in various issues of its periodical New World News.

2 New York Times, September 8, 1947

3 New World News, Vol. 5, No. 7, July 1949; New York Times, June 19, 1949

(e) In the industrial field, MRA activities have, its proponents claim, achieved remarkable results in creating a new spirit of teamwork between labor and management, both during the war and in the post-war period. A tour of the play "The Forgotten Factor" in the Ruhr region of Germany and in Wales is said to have persuaded management and labor alike to subordinate their respective claims to the common welfare with the consequence that new incentives in production were provided, absenteeism was reduced to a marked degree and output reached new heights.¹

(f) Using similar methods, MRA claims to have moderated racial and communal strife in countries like India.²

(g) Perhaps the most striking feature of MRA's work which has given the movement a claim to some importance in the current East-West conflict has been its campaign to wean members away from the ranks of the Communist parties. MRA claims some success for its efforts, especially in Germany where its "teams" have apparently persuaded two dozen local Communist leaders in the Ruhr Valley to break completely with the Communist party³ and to accept MRA as a spiritual substitute. Likewise, it has also succeeded in winning over Fred Copeman, a British communist of long-standing with a record of activity in the Spanish Civil War and in the British delegation to the Comintern.⁴ These conversions are claimed to be the work of a network of conversion teams which MRA has organized in Germany and elsewhere and which are apparently considered to be the spearhead of MRA's offensive against Communism.⁵

IV. Estimate of MRA's Effectiveness

The social upheavals which follow in the wake of major wars have generally been among the most fertile breeding grounds of evangelical mass movements. The mere occurrence of such wars tends to undermine faith in established secular institutions and symbols, and their aftermath, if sufficiently prolonged and chaotic, serves to accentuate the sense of alienation and helplessness which the individual experiences in the face of impersonal mass movements.⁶ The present period is no exception to the

1. New World News, Vol. 2, No. 12, December 1946.
2. New York Times, July 29, 1947.
3. Two of them, namely Max Bladdek and P. Kurowski, have actually appeared publicly at a conference at Caux (New York Times, September 10, 1949), but their position in the hierarchy of the German Communist Party is not known.
4. New York Times, September 14, 1949.
5. These teams are said by MRA spokesmen to be active in Eastern Europe, too.
6. Arnold J. Toynbee's Study of History offers an abundance of historical examples to substantiate this phenomenon.

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rule for its is peculiarly marked by what appears to be a total failure of organized institutional effort to moderate inter-class and international conflict or to check the drift toward war. A program which is designed to undercut the conflict of class and national interests by making its appeal to transcendent human interests in the name of a super-mundane guidance is therefore assured of considerable response among groups with divergent ways of life. Moral Re-Armament has all the earmarks of such a program and this, in part, serves to explain its international following today.

Nonetheless, the actual range of its influence, the extent of its following and effectiveness of its practical work remains to be considered. Impressive as the foregoing catalogue of MRA achievements may at first appear to be, they do not constitute proof that the MRA program has in any of these instances played the role which its adherents claim for it. In some cases, as for example, the alleged successes of MRA in India, the bald facts of the situation do not testify to any significant diminution of inter-racial or inter-communal animosity. In other instances, the facts cited do not warrant the conclusion that MRA influence was responsible for the change which actually occurred. Thus, it may safely be assumed that the normal pressure of nationalistic loyalties would have impelled the Norwegians to organize an underground movement against the Germans whatever role MRA would have chosen to play in the situation. Likewise, the increased output of coal in Wales, the Ruhr, etc., cannot be imputed to MRA's intervention since (a) the drive to raise productivity, check absenteeism, etc., has been directed from many sources other than MRA and has been accelerated by the installation of new equipment supplied by post-war United States aid and (b) the increase in output has characterized the total

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industrial picture in Europe since 1946 while MRA's picture has cited the same instances again and again - all occurring in coal mining! In general, then, MRA claims are either based on insufficient evidence or else seek to convince the audience that MRA was responsible for changes which would have occurred in any case simply as a result of the pressure of other factors in the situation. The effect of these statements is then heightened by monotonous reiteration of the same claims, coupled with endorsements by famous personages on behalf of the general moral excellence of MRA's objectives.

If such is the case in all other instances, any scruples it suggests in evaluating the putative effectiveness of MRA apply a fortiori to its position in the struggle against the world Communist movement. For it should be borne in mind that in this aspect of its work, MRA is not dealing with an amorphous mass of individuals whose loyalties and beliefs are without fixed anchorage. It is, on the contrary, attempting an assault on a powerful and well-organized international movement whose appeal has been to those very interests which MRA professes to spurn. This is not to say that MRA cannot make a few successful sorties into Communist ranks. It is only to suggest that MRA's claims to individual successes are subject to two crucial alternative qualifications: (a) MRA's success in this field, if historical experience is a reliable guide, depends on prior disillusionment with the international Communist movement on the part of Communists, or (b) judged against the background of Communist technique, these alleged conversions to MRA may in reality be pseudo-conversions designed to enable Communists to infiltrate the ranks of MRA. The maximum role that can reasonably be assigned to Moral Re-Armament is the possibility that it may act as an alternative attraction to certain wavering and disaffected individuals among middle class groups in

Central Europe. In the East, a good part of the local leadership and intellectual facade of the Communist Party in Germany was drawn from these groups.

Conceivably, then, MRA might deny the Communist movement the possibility of influencing some members of these groups. At any rate, it requires a considerable strain on the imagination to believe that a program so nebulous and generalized as MRA's, however well fortified by the acts of showmanship, can effect a mass exodus from the Communist movement. Moreover, it is a fairly determinate fact that MRA is predominantly an urban middle class movement¹ and has shown no evidence to date that it can compete with the Communist movement for those broad sections of the population at which Communists have concentrated the main force of their efforts - the urban workers and poorer peasants. Under the circumstances, its present day role as an anti-Communist force is quite negligible.

1 Whatever following MRA may continue to enjoy among middle class groups is also subject to the attitude which the institutional churches will take toward the movement. Thus far they have not committed themselves officially, while individual churchmen have expressed varying attitudes. Some members of the Anglican movement have taken a favorable attitude toward MRA while others like W. Brown of the Union Theological Seminary have regarded it with distaste and hostility. (Statements of Dr. W. Brown, contained in a report from confidential State Department field representative.)