

EDUCATION AND INDUSTRY TODAY

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DURING the last half-century, industry has increasingly recognised that it is actively and directly concerned with the education and training of all who look to it for a career. Many in industry today have jobs with little intrinsic value in them, done often solely for the wages alone. These men and women neither like what they do nor do what they like. Now a few are realising that no political or economic rearrangement will remove that attitude to work: we shall have to rediscover, with Eric Gill, that 'the artist is not a special kind of man but every man is a special kind of artist'. Perhaps then we may restore to work a sense of worthwhileness and find the desire once again to make well whatever needs to be made, and the humility and confidence to do the seemingly little things superlatively well.

During the last five years, firms, industries, associations, universities, colleges and government departments have individually, or in varying forms of collaboration, made large plans for the education of those associated with industry. Thousands of education and training officers have appeared and innumerable courses and handbooks of every description prepared. Money and energy have been freely spent on training, that part of education devoted to acquiring the skills by which we hope to earn our livings. Works schools have been followed by the financing of special departments and courses at universities and colleges to help to develop the constructive leadership and first-class research needed both for efficiency and for good work, while more and more companies are releasing employees for part-time studies and contributing to the expenses thus incurred.

Industry is thus, consciously or unconsciously, seeing that education is a life-long matter to help us live to the full, with the right ends and means, so that we become whole human beings in heart, soul, mind and body. Industry is also beginning to realise from practical experience that education

begins in the home, which remains the foundation and the chief factor in real education.

Any truly comprehensive scheme of education and training for industry has to embrace not only the recruitment and selection of entrants at every level and their introduction to work (that move from the schoolroom to the workroom, office or laboratory), but the actual training-on-the-job for all recruits, and the selection and training for promotion of potential leaders, refresher courses and similar help for all executives, together with plans for maintaining up-to-date management. Furthermore, such education schemes must also deal with the technical classes which underpin the practical training for crafts and which prepare students for the examinations of the professional institutes associated with industry, and with the county (or junior) colleges for under-eighteens, legislated for in the Education Act, 1944, and with the interests in further education of men and women not seeking promotion, who are often forgotten.

Whether we are growing, mining, making or moving things, whatever our work, the general underlying principles of education in industry will remain the same: but the individual plan will vary, depending on whether it is for a large or small company, on the nature of the work and on a dozen other matters. In some areas local education committees provide excellent supporting facilities for firms: in others nothing is done.

The field of education in industry is too vast, far too wide even to sketch in one article. I propose therefore to pick out and discuss briefly two important sections of these educational efforts: the introduction to work and training of young recruits, and training for management.

The average boy entering industry changes from his school's working week of about twenty-seven and a half hours and a world built around him and his needs, to a year of fifty weeks of about forty-four to forty-eight hours in a sphere where he has to take a back seat. Firms today try to introduce the newcomer to industry by a special introduction course, when in a well-planned programme of talks, visits, competitions, quizzes, tours and demonstrations, they show him the importance and the scope of the work of the

organisation, point out the chances of further promotion, make him feel there is a 'family' spirit in the firm and try to get his parents, still morally and legally responsible for him, interested in the efforts the firm would like to make *with them* to help their son become a full man as well as a skilled one. Emphasis is placed on the fact that every job, however humdrum, needs to be well done and to be properly taught and can always be the stepping-stone to more important work, depending on a boy's qualities, his training and his will to work. Disliking the modern tendency of cultivating a general plateau of mediocrity, the experienced men of industry set out deliberately to encourage everyone to train to the full capacity of their different aptitudes. Everything that will appeal to any of the senses and to the intellect to reinforce actual training on the job—films, models, books—has been used by companies or provided by associations interested in good training.

The introduction to work is followed by planned training-on-the-job with men and women trained and keen to instruct. Periodic confidential reports are sent by some companies to parents and to headmasters; prizes are awarded annually for success at the job and at examinations. Such a training can easily become a routine of formalities unless enough responsible people hold that every human being counts because he is made in the image of God. It can only be built up slowly as co-operation is won. Most vital is it that youngsters should be helped during training to find a worthwhile view of life and its meaning, to realise that good responsible workmanship is one of the duties that lead to happiness. But firms, like schools, are working against that widespread surrender of parental responsibility and the consequent break-up of family life, that reflex of the policy characteristic of the modern state as a whole, where responsibility is boldly lifted from the individual to the corporate body and the whole organisation of life becomes more and more impersonal. How can a firm build a superstructure of education when the foundations have not been laid in the family? Here is the cause of the apparent failure of much attempted by industry in education.

Apprenticeships are much rarer in Great Britain than

public opinion realises. In the United States they are just being tried out now. The bulk of jobs today can be learnt in a short time. Once the learner has reached the top scale of earning, neither he nor his parents want him to learn anything new in case his wages should drop. Other occupations depend for success on years of practice to get the necessary experience, with a concentration that modern young men dislike. So they, too, are avoided too often.

During these formative years the approach of directors, managers, foremen, senior employees and parents to others and to work itself, together with the whole atmosphere and the policy of the firm, impress the recruits and create, or not, a good spirit of work. The social atmosphere of a firm, just as the social atmosphere of schools, can make or mar the young learner not only as a craftsman but as a person. Wrong ideas of liberty abound in firms, especially in board-rooms! For directors and shareholders as well as for the fifteen-year-old or eighteen-year-old, liberty should not mean the possibility of doing what one wills, no matter what, but the capacity to adhere to real Being and Truth.

Some of the best efforts at education and training in industry are in small firms, notably in one with a well-known Catholic at the head. As yet neither public nor parents in general, nor Catholics in particular, have taken much interest in what is being done in industry and commerce to restore the belief that work can give satisfaction and be an outlet for our creative and God-endowed skills, as well as removing the all-too-common opinion that we cannot enjoy life till we get away from work. In this tremendous task, one thing is essential: directors, managers, shareholders, customers, senior fellow-employees must be genuinely interested in both education and in industry and ready to take a personal interest in the schemes. Too many are still giving lip-service and uplift talks when hard and continuing personal co-operation is wanted.

Turning now to training for management, we find that during the last five years especially, hundreds of courses have been sanctioned by firms for training foremen, supervisors and managers, and thousands of executives have been sent to conferences, week-end residential courses and to

observation tours of other firms in the United States and on the continent; industry has founded at Henley a staff college for senior management and, with the Government, has created the British Institute of Management, which is not only trying to establish a respected examination in management studies but is also trying to bring home to leaders, whether in industry, trade unions or the services, the importance of discovering and formulating good management techniques supported by the right philosophy. Colleges have provided a wealth of courses of all lengths and standards for management, foremanship, trade union leaders and, at one college North of the Border, for directors at their special request, courses dealing not only with management principles and practice but with the special aides of today; costing and costs control, planning production, statistical quality control, work study, and so on.

In management training, conference and discussion group methods are largely used, supplemented by planned instruction in technical subjects, with some very definite teaching in economic and social problems in the field of industrial relations. (Eighty per cent of science men who go into industry gravitate from their laboratories into management; they often assume that men and women can be treated as test-tubes of chemicals!) Planned reading, and the case-study of actual problems and situations supplied by companies interested, accompany all theory work.

The practical training for management is the old familiar learning-by-doing, taking assignments, understudying successful leaders, specialised experience in important sections of the work, visits to other firms, frequent discussions with senior executives, attendance at conferences and joint consultation efforts, with personal guidance from a director or the chief personnel officer, if necessary. At the moment, the fad in management training is 'communications', which seems nothing more than learning to think clearly and to put those thoughts into appealing words, in order to get the order or instruction known and accepted before it is actually given.

In the last few years, many have grasped the truth that the foreman is the first line of management. Just as I believe

that unless we restore the human family to its primary place in society we are doomed as a civilisation, so I know that if we restore the first-row leader to his rightful position and help him to carry his authority and responsibilities in the best way, we shall inevitably get men of goodwill in industry, to whom, and not to the intelligent or to the born organisers, was peace once promised. If we really treated the foreman, the office and laboratory supervisor and the sales team leader as the first line of management, industry would be very different from what it is. An American foreman put it vividly: 'We foremen now are nothing but carrier pigeons, carrying messages from workers to offices and from managers and staff departments to workers. We are never allowed to make one darned decision today.'

Catholics ought to be, but are not, the leaders in this great upsurge of interest in education in industry. By the grace of God, they possess the fullest knowledge of the way human life must be lived if men are to fulfil God's purpose. They have a fully worked out and coherent philosophy of life, applicable to every phase and department of living and of work, a philosophy capable of opposing materialistic philosophy with its false teaching about truth, and capable, too, of showing up its ultimate emptiness.

If we fail to think out these principles clearly and their bearing in every department of our lives, we shall be abetting the devil in his struggle for the soul of the world. Now education in industry opens up for us a tremendous field of work, with great opportunities because so many of our countrymen in industry, whose instincts are on the side of the angels, are looking to us for leadership in the titanic fight now being waged by thorough-going materialists, to whom religion of any kind, and especially the Jewish and Christian beliefs, are the enemy of everything they see as progress.

The fundamental principle of all education and management is the absolute necessity for knowing the nature and purpose of human life. Our whole educational system at every level is suffering from this lack, this error about, or complete indifference to, the right answers to the questions: 'What is man?' and 'What is man for?' The former Minister

of Education, Mr Tomlinson, said that in his twenty-eight years in the House of Commons, with all their discussions on education, he had never yet heard any member ask or say what education really was!

Another essential work is to deal with the widespread deterioration in the idea of truth, and so establish once again that truth and reality are something outside of us, something to which we must conform our minds and our actions. Without our realising it, materialist assumptions have influenced even the thinking of Christians, yet many professed materialists are still influenced by the Christian thinking implicit in the civilisation we love.

So it is that management studies and management training should recognise that the key question for all management is, 'What is man?', that we must have a consistent philosophy of life if we are to lead our fellows rightly, and that the nature and source of authority needs to be fully discussed and studied. The fifty and more lectures that I heard last year in the U.S.A. given to managers on 'The American Way of Life' ignored completely the nature of authority and could have conditioned the minds of those managers equally well for a Communist state! Mr Whitaker Chamber's recently-published *Witness* has had a lively critical reception throughout the United States because he insists that belief in God and in an unchanging moral order is the only road to political salvation, or economic survival for that matter.

A year ago I was asked by an organiser of courses for managers whether I would outline 'A Philosophy for Management' with a group of twenty senior managers. A few weeks later I was invited to take the same subject with forty foremen sent on a three-weeks course by their firms. Once again I briefly defined philosophy, as a common-sensical man or woman would see it, listed the principal philosophies we meet in the world today, and then touched briefly on the Christian principles and thinking that operate in four questions of importance to those in industry: selection and training, dealing with grievances, financing industry, and work study. They listened in silence and then flooded me with questions. The senior executive present, in

thanking me, remarked: 'We were sent here three weeks ago to study our jobs, I suppose, and we have all been wondering why our firm's money and our time have been wasted . . . till this afternoon—just before we leave—when I, at least, have seen for the first time my place and my duties in this world . . . and I can really see what management means'.

After the family and the home, no sphere is more important today than that of industry and commerce, and no task more urgent than the proper education of all associated with them.

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