

Industrial Relations and Social Security

Human Relations in Industry

By F. ALEXANDER MAGOUN

DIFFICULTIES arising out of human relations in industry go all the way back to Cain and Abel. Furthermore, despite obvious superficial differences, all these difficulties seem to stem from about the same fundamental causes.

Cain was a tiller of the soil who consequently brought the fruits of the ground as his offering. Abel was a keeper of sheep. He offered the firstlings of his flock. Here, to begin with, were two different points of view with the opportunity for misunderstanding which always lurks behind different points of view. Both men were workmen. Both wanted recognition. Though brothers, they were also competitors, and competition is always cruel. Naturally the man who thought he was most appreciated did the best job; naturally the other became jealous and vengeful.

Some thousands of years later a group of professors set out to make a scientifically controlled study of what makes the workman want to work. Their experiments were carried out in the Hawthorne plant of the Western Electric Company which at the time had shown unmistakable signs of industrial unrest.

Among other things the investigators made a study of the influence of lighting on work output. Everybody assumed that the better the lighting the greater the output would be. To check this scientifically two groups of employees were chosen. The "control group" worked under the same old conditions without any change in illumination, but their output was continuously recorded. The "experimental group" worked under varying conditions of lighting and their corresponding production carefully measured.

At first the experimental group were given improved illumination. Their out-

put went up as expected. But to everybody's astonishment the output of the control group went up too. There wasn't any explanation for that! The experimental group got still more candle power. Production went up again. Then they went back to the original illumination. Still production went up. After that the lighting was made worse than at the beginning. Once more the output increased. So had that of the control group. Such results seemed illogical and absurd.

But the scientist does not throw away data just because he happens to think it is cock-eyed. He sets about examining it by comparison with some new experiment. So the original results were checked in other ways, such as the introduction of rest periods which were first lengthened and finally removed altogether. Still production kept going up. Why? It wasn't any change in machinery or tools. It wasn't any change in materials. It didn't seem to be any change in method.

Years went by before the professors found the answer—which they should have known before the experiments even started had they studied human relations as carefully as they had studied work simplification or cost accounting or machine operation.

Let's go back to the fundamentals. Every human being is born with certain physical desires which must be satisfied or he will die. The desire for air, the desire for liquid, the desire for food, the desire for sleep. No one of them can be denied for long. Deprived of one, a man will soon fight and fight savagely to satisfy his need.

There are also psychological desires, equally important and equally undeniable; the desire for self-expression, the desire for security, the desire for recognition. Unfulfilled they will not bring physical death, but slow, psychological death. Consider security, for example. This does not mean assured food, shelter, and clothing. If that is your idea of

EDITOR'S NOTE: F. A. Magoun is Associate Professor of Human Relations at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston, and is author of *Problems of Human Engineering* and other books.

security, it is most easily to be found in prison. The only real security you will ever know is your own belief in yourself, in your ability to meet adequately and satisfactorily the vicissitudes of life. Without such security one gradually becomes at least neurotic if not insane.

We have to have adequate air, food, liquid, and sleep to remain physically well. We must have adequate security, suitable self-expression, satisfactory recognition to keep mentally balanced. Deprived of physical nourishment a hungry man will, at long last, attempt to eat the leather in his shoes. Denied reasonable self-expression — as for example, being held in the wrong job—proper recognition, or adequate security, a man will do equally desperate psychological things.

What had happened to the test employees at the Hawthorne Works? By being selected out of the thousands employed there, these particular people had been given recognition. They felt important because the investigators had asked *them* for help and cooperation. Those in the control group were important too, because they had been chosen to act as a standard. They were set apart from the rest of the factory. Management treated the others more or less impersonally. But these two groups—they were something special!

Of course they worked faster. Life had new meaning because now they were important. They were individuals, not just super machines built of protoplasm instead of iron. Emotions not only counted more than lighting or hours of labor in making the worker want to work; emotions counted more than wages. It was so with Cain and Abel. It is so with us.

You will recall that in the Bible story Cain killed Abel. One of the modern substitutes for such violence is joining the union, which an employee often does more as a means of expressing resentment against the impersonal way the boss treats him, than as anything else.

If an employee hates his employer, it is because of disappointment. We hate

only where we fear but would have liked to love. The employee wants to do a good job, would like to deserve and to receive recognition for doing a good job, but is disappointed and psychologically starved by being ignored. So he hates where he would like to have loved and to have been loved. And the greater his disappointment, the more he hates. Nobody consciously intended that industry should become so impersonal, but it has happened to our sorrow.

Now to approach this same problem from an entirely different angle. After more than a decade of work on why we behave the way we behave, the Institute of Human Relations at Yale University has reached agreement on one point: frustration always leads to some form of aggression, and contrarywise, all aggression is the result of some previous frustration. That explains why Cain murdered his brother. It makes clear the changed attitude of the workers at the Hawthorne plant. It even throws considerable light on the behavior of the Germans in these years of terror. It most certainly explains the reason for many strikes.

At the Guesswhat Mill in Connecticut, Antonio was a loom fixer. He was a competent loom fixer with energy and the ambition to become a foreman. But he was a foreigner who spoke only broken English, and a conservative, New England management couldn't see Tony as one of their foremen no matter how competent or ambitious he was. They did the expedient thing—a sure-fire symptom of poor thinking and poor planning which is why it so often leads to trouble.

Tony was frustrated, which, according to the hypothesis just laid down, made some form of aggression inevitable. What happened after that depended on several things. How badly was Tony frustrated? What substitute satisfactions were available? What were the possible outlets for his aggression and the probably punishments which these would involve?

If he punched the Superintendent in the nose after telling him what he thought of him by tracing his ancestry, Tony would perhaps land in jail. In short,

many forms of direct aggression are suppressed because of the certainty of subsequent punishment. If he were something of a coward, Tony would probably have gone on at the mill sullenly repairing looms, and transferred his administrative ambitions to his home where the wife and children would have been made miserable by his dictatorial unreasonableness. It would have been only a substitute for what he really wanted, but when you can't have cake, bread is much better than nothing. Don't forget that these fundamental desires insist on some sort of satisfaction, and aggression is often directed at some innocent bystander when fear of punishment prevents it from being expressed directly against whoever is doing the frustrating.

What actually happened was that Tony started a union. If he couldn't lead the men during working hours as part of the management, after working hours he would organize them against the management. In the end he led a disastrous strike which nearly wrecked the town, caused bitterness to everyone, and cost Tony his job.

The strike was so unnecessary. It would never have happened if an understanding management Abel had realized what frustration would do to a loom-fixing Cain.

At a certain chemical company things were different. The personnel director observed that two men were continuously finding fault on the least provocation. Pete worked on one of the machines, but his machine was never adjusted to please him. He complained about working hours. He was dissatisfied with wages. He didn't have a good word to say for the company. But he talked with the salesmen whenever he could make an opportunity, asking them about customers, competitors, and new territories.

Pete was frustrated because his form of self-expression was wrong. He wasn't a machine operator, he was a salesman. In time the personnel director perceived this, started the boy on some night school courses, and later put him on the

road. Last year Pete sold more chemicals than any other salesman on the force.

Joe's trouble was like Tony's; he wanted to be a foreman. Most executives would have answered Joe with the old adage about not being fit to command until you learn to obey—but not this personnel director. He knew that the old adage was only a superficial truth. The more fundamental truth is that no one with frustrations to work off is fit to command, not so much because he doesn't want to obey, (which incidentally is true), but because he has the desire to shine and to reassure his own ego instead of the desire to serve. He wants to bolster up his self-esteem instead of to do a job well no matter who gets the credit. Obeying someone else is never an outlet for the aggressions which frustration produces. Bossing someone else can be an outlet for aggression, but it is always a kind of bossing which produces new frustration in the people taking the orders. The underlying truth is that no one who has much aggression to work off is fit to command.

The first task, then, was to remove Joe's frustrations. Then the aggression would go, and perhaps Joe would have the makings of a foreman.

So the personnel director took Joe off his machine, and as a beginning, set him to work gathering accident records. With a suggestion here and a correction there the director shaped and moulded outlets to encourage Joe's growth until pretty soon the man was a foreman and a good one at that.

How do you suppose Tony feels and talks now about the mill he used to work for? How do you suppose Pete and Joe feel and talk now about the company they still do work for? On the surface self-preservation and self-sacrifice have opposite meanings. After thinking about Tony and Pete and Joe, I am not so sure.

Be that as it may, one fundamental of all human relations is clear; every one of us wants suitable self-expression, adequate security, satisfactory recognition. Denied them we are frustrated and frustration leads to some form of aggres-

sion, not always overt (though this is the most satisfying), but inevitably expressed. A sufficiently frustrated person, like Cain, will throw caution to the winds and attack the frustrating agent with violence in spite of severe punishment to follow, for the strength of the impulse to aggression varies directly with the amount of frustration experienced.

An intelligent management will spend as much earnest effort to understand this as to grasp the mechanical principles of a new machine or the consequences of the latest tax bill. Having understood it, an intelligent management will try to keep frustrations at a minimum. Only thus are the human friction losses to be kept down. For in human relations nothing is really any good until it has gotten down to the level of individual understanding and individual feeling.

Groups do not think; they only share common strong desires. When these desires are aggressive because of some common frustration, the individual desires tend to stimulate each other to the point where intelligent individual thought ceases. Then people merely repeat slogans, adopt common symbols, and strive to vindicate their desires. All reasoning and reasonableness is gone. In such a group it is easy for a common frustration to trigger off into a common aggression which seeks an outlet, often illogical, sometimes illegal, perhaps immoral, regardless of reason or ultimate consequences.

Strikes are often of this nature. But don't forget that the cause goes all the way back to the individual understanding and to the individual feeling in the group.

Human relations in industry—as everywhere else — take place between individuals. When this is forgotten, a result earnestly desired by both sides often cannot be realized because of mutual misunderstanding arising from the suspicion, distrust, and jealousy which are so easy between groups, the individuals of which are comparative strangers.

It is only possible to hate or to ridicule someone you do not understand. Learning to run the human relations part

of a business is largely a matter of learning to understand, first ourselves, and our own frustrations; then those who are different, or who differ from ourselves, and their frustrations. Keep these frustrations at a minimum and men will gladly acknowledge your leadership.

Job Instructor Training for War Industries

An interesting new experiment designed to increase the efficiency of workers in war industries has been inaugurated a short time ago by the Department of Labour in Ottawa. Special courses will provide war industries with instructors equipped to train more rapidly the workers at the bench and the machine on the job they are doing. The plan which is gradually to cover the whole country will expand somewhat the principle of the chain letter. A group of twelve key men chosen from the principal war production areas by officials of the Training Branch were trained as institute conductors in the inaugural course which began in Montreal. They were instructed by Clifton H. Cox, loaned to the Department of Labour by the Training Within Industry Division of the United States War Production Board.

After a week of intensive training the twelve men returned to their home cities—Vancouver, Winnipeg, Hamilton, Toronto, Kingston and Montreal and opened 12 training institutes to which the war plants in those areas sent selected men. These institutes, lasting a week, were also conducted for groups of 12.

The men trained in the institutes are given certificates as War Production Trainers. They will in turn open courses in their respective plants in job instructor training for men and women who are engaged in a supervisory capacity.

Each job instructor trainer will handle four groups of twelve at a time. By staggering the classes over two weeks so as not to keep supervisors away from the plant for too long periods at a time, it will be possible for each trainer in a plant to produce 48 instructors every two

weeks. They will receive certificates as War Production Job Instructors.

In this way, and with industry co-operating, it is considered a simple matter to reach the objective of 15,000 instructors within three months.

The training program has been endorsed by all the directors general of production of the Department of Munitions and Supply. It will take in all plants in the gun, automotive, tank, aircraft, naval shipbuilding, small arms, machine tools, merchant shipbuilding, chemical and explosives industries that care to take part. Other firms directly associated with war production are also urged to make use of the institutes. The courses will be given to both men and women supervisors, with women receiving the same training as the men.

Joint Production Committees in War Industries

The great achievements of certain British war plants in increasing their output is, in the opinion of experts, to no small extent attributable to the activities of Joint Production Committees operating in the plants. These committees, consisting of an equal number of representatives of management and labour, have not only improved industrial relations but have also led to better production by making available to management the experience of the workers.

In Canada the first committees of this type have been appointed in the aircraft industry. Their establishment has been encouraged by Ralph Bell, Director-General of Aircraft Production in the Department of Munitions and Supply. The principle was also endorsed by the Canadian Manufacturers' Association at its 1942 convention in Toronto. After hearing an address by Mr. Elliott M. Little, Director of National Selective Service, the Convention adopted the following resolution:

In order that the constructive benefits being experienced through employer-employee cooperation in many plants may be extended, it is recommended that full cooperation between employers and employees be developed

in the manner best suited to individual concerns so as to achieve maximum production and an all-out effort to win the war.

To more clearly define and promote a program for better employer-employee relations, a section is in process of organization in National Selective Service. The purpose of the section is to indicate the benefits of better relations, not only in terms of increased production for war purposes, but in the solution of future problems involving both labour and industry. Progress is already being made on the formation of management-labour production committees in several plants as one of the immediate problems of war production.

Equal Pay For Equal Work

A law passed in 1931 in the State of Michigan forbids employers to discriminate between the sexes in the matter of wages. Twenty-nine women who claimed that their employer, the General Motors Corporation, had not complied with this act were granted by a Michigan court a total of \$55,690, representing the difference between the hourly rate of 76 cents paid to women and the rate of 97 cents received by men for the same work. The validity of the law was upheld by the Michigan Supreme Court in passing upon a preliminary decision in the present case and the United States Supreme Court refusing review.

Day Nurseries for Children of War Workers

The more we approach the stage of full employment the more important becomes the role which married women have to play in war industries. Most of them occupied by their households and the education of children have in peace-time not sought gainful employment. If the government wants to use their services in war industries, it has not only to train or retrain them but has also to make provisions for the care of the children while their mothers are away from home. For that purpose

Great Britain has early in the war set up throughout the whole country a system of day nurseries which guard children of pre-school age during the whole day and older children outside school hours. The United States have, since their defence program got underway, taken similar steps. Now Canada is moving in the same direction. With the assistance of the Dominion and the provinces day nurseries will be set up in industrial centres. The scheme has, at least for the time being, been confined to Ontario and Quebec. In view of the recent growth of war industries in the Maritimes and the scarcity of manpower in the area it may be hoped that the scheme will soon be extended to industrial centres such as Sydney, Halifax, Amherst, Saint John and Moncton. The costs are borne in equal parts by the Dominion and provincial governments.

At a meeting convened by the Women's Division of National Selective Service, a number of important decisions concerning the organisation of the work were taken. It was agreed that the task of child care which is to be performed by the day nurseries is mainly professional and will necessitate the employment of

skilled assistants, whether voluntary or professional.

It was further agreed that standards for central administration agencies should be set up after experience has given local committees, provincial advisory committees, and the federal government, a basis to appraise requirements.

In provision for health care, there will be physical examinations of children before their admittance to units, emergency first aid, and provision for isolation before a child's ill condition is medically checked.

A nutritional program will be adopted by the centres, the children to receive two or three good meals a day, as required. The committee agreed that the minimum size for a plant should be three playrooms, the size of these depending on the number of children, with adequate washroom, kitchen, and cloak-room facilities, a staff room and fenced outdoor playgrounds.

Each nursery will have whatever play equipment is necessary for a suitable program of play and study, as well as cots so that children may rest at certain intervals during the day.

SECTIONAL REPRESENTATION IN MARITIME PROVINCIAL CABINET SINCE 1867

(Continued from page 24)

century it has usually had a Minister, always without portfolio except from 1917 to 1919, when there was a French-speaking Premier and Attorney-General. The Irish Roman Catholics had a portfolio from 1876 to 1879, and the Premiership with a portfolio from 1879 to 1889. From 1911 to 1919 they had a Minister without portfolio, and since 1926 they have usually had a Minister, sometimes with portfolio, sometimes without. It is noteworthy that since 1935 they have held the portfolio of Education.

The evidence provided by lists of Cabinet Ministers does not afford conclusive

proof that Maritime Premiers when forming Cabinets feel obliged to give representation to various sections of the community, but it seems fairly clear that they have in fact given it. If any particular region or group fails to elect a Government supporter or supporters, it must of course ordinarily take the consequences, and resign itself for the time being to doing without a Minister. But apart from this case, it seems probable that no Premier could long neglect to give Cabinet representation to any considerable section without jeopardizing his Government.