



Michel Orphelin as St Francis of Assisi

## SUN FOR A MONTH IN PARIS

ON OCTOBER 4th, the beginning of the Catholic Church's celebrations for the 800th anniversary of Francis of Assisi, *Un Soleil en Pleine Nuit*, a one-man show about the saint, opened for a month's run at the Ranelagh Theatre, Paris. The musical by Hugh Steadman Williams and Kathleen Johnson features the French mime-artist and singer Michel Orphelin, who presents the saint's life and message in a modern setting.

On the morning of the opening, Michel Orphelin was interviewed on French national television as part of a special programme and Mass on St Francis. The Catholic weekly *La Vie* carried a three-page article

on the play. It quoted Mr. Orphelin as saying, 'I act in order to transmit something. The message of St Francis goes very far. It teaches us how to live our daily lives in such a way that God can act.'

Requests are coming in for performances in other cities after the Paris run. One family travelled 300 kilometres from Dijon to see the play after picking up a leaflet by chance and now want it to be presented in their city. 'This play is a prayer,' commented another member of the audience.

The Capuchin Order has arranged for *Un Soleil en Pleine Nuit* to tour 12 French-speaking towns in Switzerland next year.

## Microcosm for a prejudice-free world

HARI SHUKLA, Senior Community Relations Officer for Tyne and Wear, appealed in London recently for greater consultation of the ethnic communities over decisions that affect them. For lack of such consultation, many decisions had gone wrong, he told a multiracial gathering of 500 at the Westminster Theatre. 'This is true whether you are talking about the needs of young people, the immigration act or the housing needs of the ethnic minorities.'

Consultation and discussion were succeeding in Tyne and Wear, particularly in relations between the black community and the police, Mr Shukla went on. He said that Britain must make a success of her multiracial society 'for the sake of the world'.

'Britain's many races—a microcosm of the world' was the theme of the public meeting, the first in a series of four arranged by MRA. It was chaired by James Hore-Ruthven from London, who said that Britain did not need to create a multiracial society—that already existed—but to create a prejudice-free society. 'This is a task worthy of the big-heartedness of our country and also of all the qualities of hard work, humour and the richness of culture and religion of those who

have come in recent years.'

He felt that white British needed to face their own responsibility for today's troubles.

Firstly, the British had taken Asians to Africa and used them for indentured labour. 'At the end of the colonial era, when it was clear that the Africans might take revenge on the Asians for what they regarded as exploitation, it was only just that they should be given the protection of British citizenship. The fact that they are here does not absolve us from the fact that we moved them from their homes in the first place,' he said.

Secondly, the British had transported the West Indians as slaves from Africa. Often the white slave-masters had purposely broken up the slaves' family-life. Many West Indians had been invited to Britain in the 1950s when there was a shortage of native British labour. 'You only have to talk to a few black British to realise how deep the feelings about the past run and how they are being stirred up in the present situation,' he said.

'I am not one who now decries everything that was done in Britain's name in the Empire,' Mr Hore-Ruthven continued. Nor did he pretend that the Asians and West Indians all had perfect motives in coming to

# NEW WORLD NEWS

Vol29 No46 17 Oct 1981 10p

Britain. 'But now they are here, how can we "native British" correct the past? How should our supposedly Christian country behave towards minorities of different colours and faiths?' He saw answers coming through a radical application of Christ's teaching of love and brotherhood.

'If we do not give the racial minorities a full and fair place in our society now, we will reap Toxteth, Brixton and much worse as a vengeance for the wrongs of the past,' Mr Hore-Ruthven concluded.

Rex Gray, Chairman of the Tyneside Committee for Racial Harmony, said that white British should 'readily accept' people of other races taking a full role in management and Parliament.

'An honest look at ourselves will bring more change than any amount of riots and demonstrations,' said Miguel Richards who works in his family's building firm in Southwark, London. 'We West Indians have a less-clearly defined culture than other groups. This may give us the capacity to live true integration.'

Martha Smith, now living in London, had left South Africa 21 years ago. There, she said, 'the whites discriminate against the Coloured and the black people, and we so-called Coloureds discriminate against the blacks'. She changed her attitude when a guest, whom she had agreed to accommodate, turned out to be black. She insisted on doing all his washing to show that she intended to be different. 'I apologise on behalf of my late husband and myself to all black people present for my former attitude,' she said.

Patrick O'Kane, a former building workers' shop steward from Coventry, said that as unemployment rose, 'the sharp end of this fight for a just multiracial society will be at the grass roots where there is competition for houses and jobs'. Trade unions had a key part in spreading tolerance and fair play, but 'they must regain their moral authority'.

The recent events in Brixton and other parts of London had made Deepa Nagi, a Sikh student from South London, insecure and disillusioned, she said. She had started to doubt whether she had a future in Britain. However, she and others in her area had formed a group called the Bridgebuilders with the motto: 'The world our country, mankind our race, God our ruler'.



Dr Harris (Robin Meredith) talks to Jonas (Robert Kenley) in the final scene of *Jonas*, Daniel Pearce's play, which is having a three-week run at the Westminster Theatre. The play shows what happens when a 13-year-old boy discovers that his parents are planning to divorce.

The play raises questions about the real meaning of 'love'. Jonas's father (Bill Cripps) puts his love for his secretary before the interests of the son whom he says he loves. His mother (Tamara Hinchco) lies to Jonas and breaks his confidences yet tells him, 'You're all I've got.' 'Grow up,' advises his great aunt (Chris Channer), a bitter woman who shows him the truth about his parents so that he can avoid being the hawser in a tug of war. The family doctor wants Jonas to forgive his parents and show them the love that knows the worst about people and loves them anyway.

*Jonas*, directed by Alby James, runs till 26 October as part of the theatre's programme for schools with performances at 2 pm, Monday to Friday. The show is open to the public.

## Find of the century

THREE LOS ANGELES NEWSPAPERS, including *The Los Angeles Times*, recently paid tribute to an energetic citizen, Simone Bouvet, who was celebrating her 100th birthday.

Born in France, Mme Bouvet has lived in the United States since the First World War. As the founder of the Hollywood Mission Circle of the White Fathers of Africa and a popular public speaker, she has received awards from the California Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs and from the Mayor of Los Angeles City.

'I don't take for granted all the compliments I receive,' Mme Bouvet told guests at a birthday celebration in Beverly Hills. 'I am no more than I was at the beginning...but I found a new way of life and I am grateful.' Eager to share this discovery with others, she showed a new film about the MRA centre in Caux, Switzerland, at the occasion. 'Sometimes we think there is no hope,' she explained. 'I want you to know that there is some hope and it depends on all of us.' In 1934 she had gone to a meeting of the Oxford Group (later Moral Re-Armament) in New York. 'One of the speakers said, "The world is dying from inertia and corruption—do you want to be part of the disease, or part of the cure?" I didn't hesitate—I wanted to be part of the cure!'

Mme Bouvet was born into the French aristocracy. Her father, who died before she was born, was the inventor of the first motorised balloon, which was used in the siege of Paris in 1870. In 1904 she married a wealthy French industrialist. Shortly after he enlisted in 1914, she was forced to evacuate

their 1600 acre estate. Sending her mother and daughters to relatives, she left for America, where she found work as a millinery designer and later as a buyer for a Chicago store.

'I was more successful in my career than in cleansing my heart of its hatred for the Germans,' she says. 'Not only had I suffered separation from my family, but how my pride had suffered! Because of my rearing, I had the queer notion that by working in a trade I had lost our social position. When the children and my mother joined me in New York City, they were enrolled in a socially prominent boarding school. And I decided to get out of the millinery and dress business.'

She became an impresario and later wrote synopses of French novels for the American motion picture industry. Producer Samuel Goldwyn was her best customer. Meanwhile her husband had asked for a divorce. A series of financial disasters left her 'not only broke but despondent'.

Through her contacts with the Oxford Group she found a new understanding of how she could be freed from guilt and live by love instead of festering resentment. 'I believe God has a plan for each of us, and that according to that plan we learn a lesson,' she says now. 'Mine was twofold; forgiveness and humility.'

Mme Bouvet is now working on her autobiography. During the past year, she has felt her eyesight failing. 'It makes me hesitate. I am awkward. That I do not like.' She discovered that there was no residence for active old people who were losing their sight. With her usual talent for turning obstacles into opportunities, she has launched a project for a retirement hotel for the blind.

Margaret Smith

## Peacepath of the rainbow Warriors

*Return of the Indian Spirit*, a new book for children edited by Phyllis Johnson and illustrated by her husband, William Cameron Johnson, has just been published by Grosvenor Books.

It begins with a short story by Vinson Brown, which describes a North American Indian boy's search for an answer to his burning question: 'Why did our Grandfather in the sky allow the white man to take our land?' His great-grandmother, Eyes of the Fire, trains him through the ancient tests of manhood until he is mature enough in mind and muscle to understand her answer.

In Indian custom, each child is valued as a potential leader and a hope for his people. Eyes of the Fire tells the boy, 'Go to the mountain top. Grow in the skills of manhood, learn to be a Warrior of the Rainbow, one whose strong obedient spirit will overcome, with love, the fear and hate in this world so that war and destruction shall end.'

The second part of the book contains a selection of Indian teachings and Laws of the Lodge, and a prose poem inspired by a famous speech of Chief Seattle in 1855. Warm sepia illustrations enhance each page.

Phyllis and William Cameron Johnson talked to GEORGINA WARRINGTON and MARY LEAN about the book:

THE PHOTOS AND HANDWORK in the Cameron Johnsons' living-room in London are evidence of their friendship with North American Indians. Phyllis Cameron Johnson points to a decorated bone knife. 'When I visited the mother of the boy who made this, it was the only personal possession I could see in her tiny cabin, and yet she instantly gave it to me. Giving is a fundamental part of Indian culture—they have a special ceremony to reinforce it.'

Phyllis Cameron Johnson is American. Every year an Indian family group used to spend a week at her primary school, sharing their way of life with the children. Years later when she taught children of Indian origin in Northern Michigan, she was concerned that they knew so little of their culture and dismayed at the misrepresentation of it in many textbooks. Wondering what she could do about this, she had the inspiration, 'You are meant to help these children identify themselves with the greatness of their race. Do it through history, geography—every subject!' It meant studying and listening, to her pupils and to all the Indians she met.

The book's dedications—to North American Indian children and to a Swedish boy, Kalle—reveal something of why she compiled it. Of the former she writes, 'Their heritage of enduring values has often given me the courage I needed to tackle the difficult decisions in my life with confidence.' Asked why a white American should write a book which reasserts traditional Indian values, her immediate reply is simple: 'Their culture has inspired me to live outside myself—and a people who live outside themselves have something very precious in today's disintegrating society.'

But it was the Swedish boy who stimulated her to embark on the book. 'When I was in Sweden three years ago, his mother told me how she had taken him to a museum and how startled he had been to discover that the aim of a chief was to look after the elderly and the helpless—he had thought it was all bows and arrows. She asked me if this was true and if I could recommend any book she could read to him. I couldn't think of a single one of the splendid books I read as a child which was still in print.'

The book offers the wisdom of the North American Indians to young people of all races—and to their parents. 'The values Indians once practised are relevant for a successful democratic society anywhere, urban or rural,' Phyllis Cameron Johnson believes. 'The Indian economy, based on the principle of sharing, survived centuries of natural catastrophe. Survival depended on the practice of unselfishness—"If you give when you have it, you will be looked after in your time of need".'

She sees a message too for her country of adoption, Britain: 'Could the tensions and mistrust between the various cultures in our multiracial society be eased if we learned from the Indian way?' She quotes one of the Laws of the Lodge reproduced in the book: 'Every man must treat with respect all such things as are sacred to other people, whether he comprehends them or not.'

And in a society where many young people feel unneeded and disillusioned, she goes on, the traditional Indian approach to education may have something to contribute. 'Its overriding aim was to equip each person to contribute to the needs of the tribe. Success was judged by how much service



Bill and Phyllis Cameron Johnson

one had rendered to the people.' At the age of 12 Indian youth, like the boy in *Return of the Indian Spirit*, went off alone to fast and pray, seeking their vision for life. 'They believed that in silence the inspiration for action and decision could be found.'

The production of the book has been a partnership between Phyllis and her British husband, Bill. His illustrations, on almost every page of the book, convey the beauty and variety of Indian culture in both traditional and contemporary settings. They are the fruit of eight years spent in North America, and hours of research and observation. He chose the sepia colour, he says, 'because sepia is much warmer than black and white. It is an earth colour, in keeping with the Indians' closeness to nature.'

In the story which begins the book, the old woman sees in her great-grandson the hope that the Indians will once more come into tune with the Spirit of Life and, in turning towards the best of their heritage, spread love between all races and religions. Do the Cameron Johnsons see signs that this is happening?

'There is a widespread movement amongst many Indians to return to their own values,'

Mrs Cameron Johnson replies. 'They feel that they have tried an alien lifestyle and have lost their way. A Blackfoot leader told me how they are teaching their children their own language again, because, for instance, it emphasises the word "you" more than the word "I".' She describes a young Blackfoot who said, 'I had an identity crisis when young. I was into drugs, drink, selling dope. When I went back to the Indian way, to the Elders and the Pipe (a traditional way of prayer), it was the beginning of a change for me and of purpose for my life. It has led me to a commitment to my people.'

*Return of the Indian Spirit* is intended as the first of a series. Phyllis Cameron Johnson admits with a laugh that she is somewhat daunted at embarking on another such major undertaking. 'The time has come when the best of every culture is needed to sustain every other culture. I just started with the indigenous culture I knew best.'

'*Return of the Indian Spirit*' edited by Phyllis Johnson, Grosvenor Books, 54 Lyford Road, London SW18 3JJ, paperback £1.75, with postage £2.00, hardback £3.75, with postage £4.20.



W. Cameron Johnson



# What stopped the coup?

IN HIS BOOK, *Stitches in Time*, published to coincide with the meeting of Commonwealth Heads of Government in Melbourne this month, the former Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, Arnold Smith, refers to 'unofficial, but by no means unimportant' influences at work in Zimbabwe in the run-up to independence.

He describes the 'last-minute lowering of tension' which averted a coup after the pre-independence elections in Zimbabwe. His informants, he writes, attributed this largely to two meetings on the eve of the election announcement—between Prime Minister

Robert Mugabe and the Rhodesian Army Commander, General Walls, and between Mr Mugabe and Ian Smith.

'Among various individuals of good will and initiative who were working for reconciliation were members of three religious groups—Roman Catholic, Quaker and Moral Re-Armament,' he continues. 'Between them all, they helped to persuade Ian Smith to visit Mugabe for a talk between polling and the announcement of results. One of Smith's former Ministers described to me, when I was in Salisbury for Zimbabwe's independence celebrations, how Smith told his cau-

cus of MPs later that, to his surprise, he had ended the talk convinced that Mugabe could be trusted by the whites, that he was sincere in wanting most whites to stay and in his desire for a mixed economy and reconciliation between races and tribes. He and Smith's son, Alec, and Stan O'Donnell, for many years the permanent head of his Foreign Ministry, both confirmed to me the reality of the cautious but genuine reconciliation. Allan Griffith, the Australian Government's election observer, ascribed these events to "divine intervention".'

*'Stitches in Time—The Commonwealth in World Politics', by Arnold Smith with Clyde Sanger, Andre Deutsch, £9.95.*

## INTERNATIONAL THOUGHTLINE

### Where Poland's heartbeat can be heard

**ROY PAIGE writes about his impressions of Poland following a recent visit:**

I HALF-EXPECTED to find Poland fear-ridden and generally drab, but I left that image behind at the border. True, the Poles face daunting hardships and frustrations—long queues for meat, bread and soap; five-year waits for cars; wages a third of the British average; buildings standing half-finished for lack of finance. The black market is flourishing and there is much cynicism about the West as well as Russia. Yet, in spite of everything, the Poles are resilient, even cheerful. Everywhere, you see flowers. In the countryside, people paint their house-railings in all the colours of the rainbow.

In the historic town of Cracow, the bugler still gives his hourly call from the tower of the Mariacki Church—a reminder of a timely warning of a Tartar invasion. The iron dragon under Cracow's Wawel Hill still emits a blast of flame every few minutes.

There is complete freedom of speech and people are ready to talk. Many seemed sure that recent democratic gains will last.

What gives the Poles such confidence? I found, as I went round the country, that patriotism and religious feeling burn strongly in most people. I saw many monuments to national heroes—the freedom fighter Kosciuszko; King Sobieski, who defeated the Turks at Vienna; Queen Jadwiga, who united Poland with Lithuania, and brought Christianity to that country; the military hero, Marshal Pilsudski; Chopin and Copernicus. After Warsaw was destroyed by Hitler's army, the citizens voluntarily gave one per cent of their wages for 15 years to restore the Old City exactly as it had been.

95 per cent of Poles are Catholic. This goes back to Poland's infancy, 1000 years ago, when she embraced the Christian faith and allied herself to the Vatican. Four-hundred feet down a salt mine we saw fine rock-salt carvings of the Last Supper and other religious subjects, done by the miners. The miners hold Mass each workday in one of several underground chapels.

I went to church in the holiday town of Zakopane in the Tatra mountains. It was a

Sunday and every square foot was occupied. Such numbers were normal, I was told. Everywhere, I saw tributes to the Pope. The photographic exhibition of his visit to Poland, in a large chapel in Warsaw, provides a popular weekend excursion for families. A shrine adorns the side of the house where he was born in Wadowice.

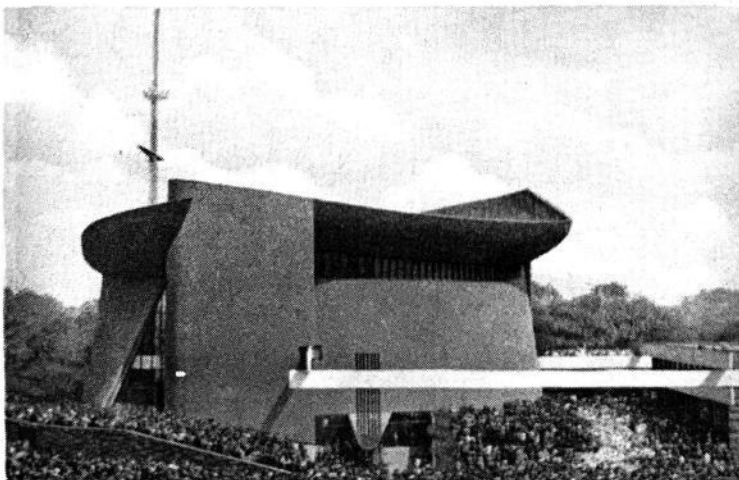
The steel town of Nowa Huta was built without a church, in keeping with its designers' concept of a model socialist city. However, the people started worshipping under a huge cross in the open air and after a long struggle, in which three died, a church was built. I was moved to visit this vast structure with its ark-shaped roof surmounted by a mast.

The monastery at Czestochowa, home of the famous Black Madonna, was crowded with visitors. A professor I met told me, 'Here is the heartbeat of the nation.' Last year, 55,000 people from Warsaw alone walked the 125 miles to Jasna Gora (Bright Hill), the site of the monastery.

A young teacher told us, 'Without the Church, Solidarity would have been impossible. The Pope's visit was decisive. People of faith suddenly saw that they were in the majority. The floodgates opened. Now Poland is united—workers, intellectuals, Church and students. Fear has gone.'

The future is still full of uncertainty. A university professor gave her assessment, 'It is a battle of the spirit. If Solidarity and the Church can continue their present level of partnership and if they can maintain the discipline which has prevented violence through all the protests and strikes, then even more can be achieved.'

All Poland's friends hope that her safety and freedom will last. Britain and other nations can help by sending food this winter. Another and perhaps greater contribution would be for us in the West to end our violence, corruption and division. For the Poles are bound to face similar challenges as they work for greater democracy in their country.



The Ark-church at Nowa Huta