

The work that stemmed from horror

HER father was buried alive on Mount Kenya as a human sacrifice by the Mau Mau. Lesser women would have allowed this act—almost beyond the mind's conception—to twist them into a life of bitterness.

But Mrs. Agnes Hofmeyr—after the shock and the heart-searching—stood up before a crowd of 7,000 Africans a year later and apologised for the "superiority and patronage and the little things we white people do" that create bitterness and hatred in the African people and allowed such a thing to be done.

"Immediately there was a surge forward of sympathy and understanding—they said they wanted to work with me to see that it never happened again," Mrs. Hofmeyr (formerly Miss Leakey) told me.

She and her husband, Mr. Bremer Hofmeyr, are staying with Mr. Justice Greenfield in his hilltop, Weir Avenue home to organise the visit of the morale-boosting Springbok Stampede (a young people's show which has grown out of the Moral Rearmament Organisation and is described as "a part of the world-wide explosion of youth with the themes of patriotism, discipline and faith"). The show will run at the Bula-wayo Theatre from July 2-5.

UNDERSTANDING

"When we heard the news of my father we couldn't believe it," Mrs. Hofmeyr said in her soft voice. "My husband and I asked ourselves: 'What can we do? . . . What can we do?' Then we knew; we must work even harder for understanding between the races."

Mrs. Hofmeyr—a cousin of Dr. Lewis Leakey, the East African anthropologist—spent her childhood roaming all over Kenya with her pioneering farming family.

CELEBRATION

Her husband was one of three brothers who were Rhodes scholars, and his interest in Moral Rearmament sprang from those days.

"I saw that people who were purposeless could find a purpose and gave my life to Moral Rearmament."

He met his wife in America,

where they were both engaged in Moral Rearmament work. They were married in London in 1947 and their wedding was part of a triple celebration for the Leakey family.

Mrs. Hofmeyr's father, Mr. Gray Leakey, had come from Kenya to receive the Victoria Cross awarded posthumously to her brother Nigel, killed in World War II, from King George VI. Her other brother, Rea—recently retired from the British Army as a general—was also there to receive the DSO.

Now based in Johannesburg, Mr. Hofmeyr has worked in 29 countries for the Moral Rearmament cause and has seen "the rough and the smooth side of Africa".

'NEW IMAGE'

"We love this continent and want to do everything in our power to create the right spirit because we don't want chaos or Communism or any of the things that would make it uninhabitable to us," he said. "Southern Africa has a tremendous reservoir of skills to contribute to the rest of Africa."

The Stampede is a follow-on of an organisation started in America by young people who wanted to give a "new image to young people of their generation".

It spread like wildfire and some South Africans who were in the United States three years ago decided to do something like it in their own country.

"They feel all this ferment among students must be generated into something for the good of the country and society."

FOUR TEACHERS

The members of the Stampede are constantly on tour and are aged between 16 and 25. Four teachers are travelling with them as 14 of the younger ones are studying for their Matriculation.

It is a joy to the Hofmeyrs that their son, Gray, a lively 19-year-old just out of army training, has taken a year off to carry the programme through Southern Africa (he plays the guitar).

For the other youngsters, too, it means sacrificing at least a year of their careers.

But if their activities make other students—and maybe politicians too—think more deeply about their contributions to world harmony, their sacrifices—and that of Gray's grandfather—will not have been in vain.



Mr. and Mrs. Bremer Hofmeyr find a sheltered spot by the pool at their host's home in Hillside.