

Some of those who took part in the Easter conference on the theme, 'What can we add to a world in crisis?'—Helen Hecknan (top left), Michael Dodds (top right), Annemiek Windig (bottom left) and Ulrike Burkardt.

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DUTCH CONFERENCE WHAT TO ADD TO A WORLD IN CRISIS

Report and photos by Jackie Firth

The dreamy woodlands of the centre of the Netherlands would make an excellent setting for a fairy tale, but at Woudschoten near Zeist the mystery of the forest with its sun-speckled floor lent its charm to a four day conference. As the Easter sunshine dispelled the morning mist the crooning wood pigeons belied the fact that the world is in a crisis, yet a desire to take responsibility and do something constructive brought together 130, mainly young, people from all over Europe and further afield.

Many people spoke of things they wanted to be free from in order to play their part in this.

Ulrike Burkardt from Germany: 'I want the freedom to be what God wants me to be and not what others expect.'

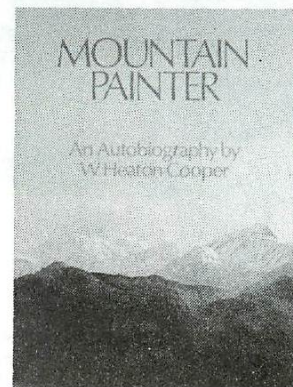
An African diplomat in France: 'I would like to have enough inner freedom to accept insults—for the sake of God. It is not easy and I often get angry and hit back. I want also to be free enough to accept when I am wrong.'

Others outlined particular fields and tasks which need dealing with:

Jens Wilhelmsen, Norway: 'The world is full of out of date political and social structures—in international communications, trade, agriculture and industry. Who is going to put in the hard work to change these structures—to acquire the expertise to create alternatives, or if that is not their role, to inspire and support people who can?'



Using the enemy's strength... see p 3



Mountain Painter... see p 7



Conference participants explore the woods of Woudschoten

'It is a symbol of man's limitations that our greatest technical achievement, the split atom, now threatens our existence. The best use of our lives is to put others in touch with a superior Source of wisdom and power.'

Michael Dodds, Britain: 'The question of race relations has been close to my heart for the last two years. It all started when I was in Australia travelling with people who were particularly thinking for and caring for the Aboriginal people. I found that my own attitude towards the Aborigines was a very superior one. I felt I should apologise, and did so to an Aboriginal friend. I realised that my attitude was part of all that I felt was terrible in Britain's treatment of other countries and other races over the years. I wanted to do something to help put that right, so I asked an Indian what I could do to help his country. He suggested that I could help to create better race relations in my own country. So the conviction grew in me that perhaps Britain, which has been responsible for exporting divisive racial attitudes to different parts of the world, could now export multiracialism.'

'When I got back to Britain I felt I should get involved in the Brixton community which is an area of London where many West Indians live. I felt I should simply get to know people and try and understand the situation. I started to work in a youth club there and one thing led to another. A year later I went to Jamaica with a group of 14 from the youth club. We went to take part in a village community project and to share ideas and experiences with people there. Brixton has given me a great deal and I am sure it has much to give to the rest of the world.'

Rob Corcoran from Britain, who had spent the last four years in the United States: 'One of the specific tasks my wife and I felt God had for us was to help America find her destiny in the world. In part, this has meant helping to

build links between people of our generation across the Atlantic. We are aware of the opinions and misconceptions that exist on both sides, but the future of the world depends on the relationship America and Europe build together. We need each other and the world needs what we can offer in an unselfish partnership.'

An example of this partnership came later:

Clara Severiens, USA: 'I love my country very much. I am a first generation American and both my parents are Dutch. The United States has a tremendously diverse population but in spite of this we do not have a very broad outlook. I want to ask you all here to help us to think more about other countries.'

Annemiek Windig, the Netherlands: 'I have to spend some time in an English speaking country as part of my studies and so I am leaving for America in three weeks' time. I want not only to use the time for my own studies but to learn about the country and get rid of my stereotyped ideas.'

'Inner sources of hope' was the subject of one session.

Gérard Gigand from France: 'In preparing for this session we thought especially of people who are suffering—of friends in war-torn countries, people imprisoned for their beliefs, victims of racism, the desperation that leads to drug addiction and the misery of unemployment. For some, suffering has led them to deny God or to hate Him.'

'Yet all of us at some point have to face the question, "Why do I feel out of place on this earth?" And we cannot find new hope unless we feel legitimate—that we belong here and that we are loved by something more than other human beings.'

'Those of us who are Christians ought not to judge those who suffer—and revolt against God as a result. As a Christian I



The 30 Scandinavians, who spent four days travelling to and from the Netherlands, are working on a lively musical review which they staged one evening. Part of its aim was to face the reality of the problems in Scandinavia and the hopelessness that many feel. But

also as Lars Nahnfeldt, a theology student in Sweden, said, 'Many of us have experienced a deeper reality which comes from the heritage of our past. We believe this can be a source of hope for the future and we want to express it for our generation.'



Hugh Williams' play, 'Everywoman', was staged by students from the Delft teachers' training college. They did this as part of their drama course and had already given several public performances in the Netherlands.

have sometimes been arrogant in wanting to give easy answers to people who are suffering without understanding what they are going through. In fact it is those people who can teach me most about Christ's suffering.'

An African diplomat in France: 'I was going to talk about my family because I have a child who was born blind and deaf and so is unable to speak, but instead I want to say something about my situation as an African. Sound health, economic comfort, high social status—these are all privileges, wonderful gifts that none of us deserve on the grounds of personal performance.'

'Millions of our fellow human beings do not have one hundredth of what we consider adequate. And in Lebanon, Iran, Iraq or El Salvador many people of our age have never known a quiet night in their lives.'

'Coming from Africa, I feel I am very privileged. Compared with European nations my country is underdeveloped—for instance, most of our hospitals do not have running water. Yet the suffering in many other countries makes me feel modest. I am obliged to thank God for my situation.'

Towards the end of the four days people expressed what the conference had meant to them:

Helen Hecknan: 'My mind was completely blocked by cynicism. This conference is the first thing in years that has given me some hope.'

Justina Bukenya, an African living in France: 'I want to be free from my preoccupation with the insecurities in Africa. It hinders my friendship with people around me. My fear of being misunderstood has often prevented me from being open hearted. Just the existence of MRA has given me hope. This is the first MRA conference I have been to and I am encouraged to hear of this chain of friendship all over the world. If we continue to build such relationships we will become like a family.'

Franz Vock, Austria, 'I see it as a sign of hope that people from 18 countries can meet and talk together about the future. It has been a great thing for me to come out of my little world and think in bigger dimensions.'

Martha Marie de Voogt, the Netherlands: 'This conference has made me feel alive again. I have been thinking about what to study at university and I have decided that my criterion must be what God wants and not what will give me most money for the things I want.'

Using the enemy's strength



J Firth

JEAN-MARC DUCKERT from Switzerland spoke at the conference:

MY WIFE IS SWEDISH and we have lived there for the last two years. As I have got to know Sweden, I have become conscious of the deep crisis it went through only a hundred years back. At that time the economic hardships were so great that a large proportion of the population emigrated. The scars went so deep that millions resolved that they would never let Swedes go through such sorrows again. Now, in many ways, the whole of Swedish society is organised to do away with suffering. However, though much of the material suffering has been dealt with, the existential sufferings seem to have increased. It has become clear to me that suffering is part of our human condition. We must contain it, but it is a permanent feature of life on earth—as is temptation.

Though a Christian, I have often looked at pain and temptation as burdens that have to be carried through life. But in fact I have a choice. Either I can let them make me small and self-centred or I can choose to let them help me grow. They can lead either to bitterness or a growth of love.

Rather than trying to avoid suffering or temptation, the point is to find victory over them. A victorious life is a whole-hearted one: 'This one thing I do'. Anything that distracts from that oneness of spirit is the enemy. Temptations are distractions of that type, of course, and I have often cursed them. But more recently I have started to learn rather to befriend them. They are like the red light on the dashboard of my car warning me of a loss of power. I am learning to say, 'Thank you, God, for this warning. Obviously my contact with You is in need of repair. Here I am, cleanse me, use me.'

It seemed natural to take the same attitude with suffering. My wife had been ill for a long time. Through this long period of struggle and rebellion we slowly became able to thank God for all the pain. It was not the suffering we were grateful for, but the deep thirst for God that it brought.

Life becomes victorious when you discover how to take the things that assault you and turn them into sources of strength—just as in judo you use the strength of the aggressor to make him fall. The power of suffering or the strength of temptation can be transformed in the same way into instruments of praise and victory.

GERMANS DELIVERED FROM THE PAST

by Kenneth Noble and William Stallybrass

SHE IS AN ACTRESS. He is an artist. Both write plays. Their conversation is animated, their observations acute, their English excellent. Heinz Krieg and his sister Hannelore, who visited Britain recently, have been using their gifts to try and express what it means to be German, and to pass on their belief that their country has a great part to play despite the mistakes she has made. This was, in fact, the theme of the play *Deutschland zum Beispiel* (Germany for instance), which Heinz and his wife Gisela wrote five years ago.

The idea came when Heinz and Gisela Krieg were at an international conference in Switzerland. A young German complained to them that he was fed up with being asked about the Nazi era. 'What happened is not my fault; you must blame my parents or grandparents. I don't want to be German any more,' he said.

This attitude, by no means uncommon amongst young Germans, set them thinking. 'We felt that you can't deny that you belong to a nation because it has made so many mistakes and harmed other people so much. You cannot cut yourself off from your history,' says Krieg.

I saw no point in living. My only idea was to die on the barricades of Prague.

The play depicted all the popular negative images of Germany—the wealthy tourist with his cameras, the militarist, the *bureaucrat*—and then balanced each one with an example from history of where a man or woman had followed his conscience in difficult circumstances. It was performed in France and Switzerland as well as in Freudenstadt and Berlin, Heinz and Gisela's home city.

These performances led to healing of some of the deep-rooted mistrust between the generations in Germany. Heinz explains, 'One of the reasons that young Germans cannot come to terms with their country's past is because many of their parents fail to face up to it themselves.' Before performing *Deutschland zum Beispiel* in Orléans the Kriegs told the 40 young people in the cast about their own experiences during the Hitler period when Heinz had been a convinced National Socialist. 'We talked openly. They were very moved,' he remembers.

Der Zug (The Train) was the Kriegs' second play. Hannelore Krieg also had a part in its writing, as well as directing it. The action takes place on the Trans-Europe Express. In the most moving scene the German guard gets talking with a Russian passenger, Dr Urbanov. The guard recalls an incident near Bryansk in 1942, 'We were fighting partisans. I went into a house and asked for potatoes. Before the peasant woman handed them over she held up a shirt. It had clear bullet-holes and a blood stain. On either side stood her kids. She said only one word, "Papa". At that moment I had had my bellyful of the whole war. I would have liked to



Heinz Krieg

B. Cummock

chuck it up and push off... but then I took the potatoes and left.' A few days later, the guard says, one of his best comrades was shot by partisans. 'That very day we rounded up some suspicious-looking villagers and shot them on the spot. I am ashamed to have been there,' he tells Dr Urbanov. 'I am terribly sorry.'

'That was my own experience,' says Heinz Krieg. 'I longed for years to make it known to other people. To put it on paper was painful—I had to walk out of rehearsals one day, it became so real—but it was deliverance.' He believes that many people carry a similar burden of guilt about past actions—either in the family, such as an abortion, or another man or woman, or in the life of the nation. 'The burden remains until these things are brought into the light of Jesus so that we can have forgiveness and start anew.'

The play affects people deeply. A German MP, moved to tears, talked with Heinz about the generation gap caused by the Nazi period. Another man talked for the first time about an incident where he believed he might have killed someone. A former officer, who had been with the British army of occupation in Germany after the war, recalled when a young German typist had come to work late. 'I shouted at her in a way that I thought only the Nazis behaved,' he told a meeting attended by many Germans. 'I would like to apologise to all the Germans present for our British arrogance.'

How did Heinz move from National Socialism to Christianity? 'I was brought up in the Hitler Youth from the age of 12,' he recalls. 'I always felt I was fighting for the right thing.' In 1942 he was badly wounded in Stalingrad—as his damaged arm shows to this day. The end of the war found him in a military hospital in Prague. 'I was in total despair. I thought that the Treaty of Versailles which had brought the First World War to an end would be quite innocuous compared with what would happen after this second war. I saw no point in living. My only idea was to die on the barricades of Prague.'

However, friends told him he couldn't do that. He had to be responsible for his parents. So he went home 'very bitter'.

Krieg says he was much feared by the British military government in his small town. 'They were encouraging the rebirth of the democratic parties,' he explains. 'I used to go to the party meetings and attack every new idea with the greatest scepticism.'

He had studied at the academy of fine art while in military



Hannelore Krieg

B. Cummock

hospital in Prague and he now began to do children's portraits to earn a living. One client, also a former officer, told him, 'I would be as bitter as you if I did not have this,' and held up a small New Testament. Krieg recalls, 'He did not try to make a Christian out of me but that was enough.' He borrowed a Bible and started to read it for the first time. Later he attended an MRA conference near Hanover—a shattering experience because I came across people who, while almost everything was in rubble and ashes, had the freedom to be happy and to talk about their experiences'.

Krieg tried 'to get their secret' and found this involved measuring his life against absolute moral standards and making restitution where possible. Doing this gave him new hope for his country. A friend challenged him, 'You Germans put so much energy into fighting against the whole world, why not put that energy into rebuilding Europe.' That has been his goal ever since.

At that conference, Heinz also started the practice of listening in silence for God's leading each day. His first thought was about his sister. Hannelore had nursed him in Prague but he had treated her as a domestic servant—ironing trousers, cleaning shoes—until one day she rebelled.



The German guard in 'Der Zug', the play by Heinz, Gisela and Hannelore Krieg

When Heinz apologised, Hannelore was ill in bed. She said, 'I willingly accept your apology. But you must prove that you have changed.' So Heinz looked after her for two weeks. She admits, 'I was better after one week, but I was enjoying being looked after.'

Hannelore was also to prove her acting ability professionally—an ambition she had cherished ever since, at the age of four, she would stand in front of the mirror repeating, 'Hannelore, you are beautiful; Hannelore, you are beautiful!'

Had she been caught up in National Socialism, too? 'Oh yes, we all had to be.' In her home town just north of Berlin she was a leader in the *Junge Mädchen*, which trained girls in National Socialism.

She recalls how her family would take visitors for a walk around the nearby concentration camp of Sachsenhausen on Sunday afternoons. 'You couldn't see much. It was star shaped and there were watch-towers with machine guns at each point. Sometimes at night you heard "tac-a-tac-a-tac" and you knew that someone had tried to escape.' Her family did not know what happened in the camp. But one day, when she was 13, she saw many Jewish men walking from the camp towards the station. 'They were a picture of suffering—their heads were shaven; their clothes were dirty and wrinkled; many had bandages around their feet and hands. I don't know whether they had been tortured or whether they had got frostbite, working through the winter.'

She recalls, 'Something in my heart said, "This is wrong. You can't do this to other people." Then I remembered all that I had heard about the Jews—they were the enemies of the people; they had taken all the money. I said to myself,

Sometimes at night you heard 'tac-a-tac-a-tac' and you knew someone had tried to escape.

"Well, we've got to deal with them. But when we have done it, we shall never do such things again." ' Hannelore Krieg believes that many people went through a similar thought process.

Later, she was so ashamed that she had given herself to something so evil, which even perverted values such as honour, courage, fidelity, that she decided to live only for herself and never get involved in anything.

What happened when Heinz became a Christian? 'I reacted against him,' she says. 'Whenever he did anything wrong I told him that he had not changed at all.'

However, try as she might to absorb herself fully in her acting, things kept going wrong. 'Even when I tried to do good, I found that my ego—the big "I"—got in the way.' Eventually, she decided to rely on God's strength and not her own. 'I don't need anything else,' she now says.

'Many of us Germans were not active Nazis,' she says. 'So we don't think personal apology can accomplish anything. But I find that you can say, "I am sorry for what my country has done." Then you not only heal something in the other person; you get healing yourself, and you dare to take responsibility for your country's past.'

Meeting Heinz and Hannelore Krieg is refreshing. It convinces you that no one need be shackled by their own or their country's past—and that guilt, once faced and forgiven, is a powerful beacon to lead others to healing. ■

Swedish priest takes to the road

Swedish clergyman Bror Jonzon, and his wife Gerd, were interviewed on two half-hour programmes on Swedish Radio Channel 1 earlier this year. The programmes, entitled 'A priest in a suitcase', focused on the Jonzons' work with Moral Re-Armament. The following is based on extracts from the programmes:

Announcer: A priest in a suitcase with the whole world as his parish. Here is Bror Jonzon, son of the former Bishop of Lulea, Bengt Jonzon, who tells of his eventful life.

Bror Jonzon: Just after the Second World War I was studying theology in Uppsala. A few months before I was ordained I attended an MRA conference in Caux, Switzerland. What made a tremendous impression on me, a Swede isolated by the war, was to meet people from all over the world there, especially the Germans, many of them resistance fighters. After what Germany and Hitler had done, and the terrible things others had suffered, this was revolutionary, and it made a great impression on me.

My experiences at Caux faced me with a difficult choice—either I must serve as a priest in Sweden, perhaps in conjunction with an academic career, or I must become what you have called 'a priest in a suitcase', with no salary, no career in the ordinary sense, no home of my own, often on the move, mainly in an MRA context.

Everything came to a head one day when I was going to a theological meeting in Stockholm. I sat in the train from Uppsala, knowing I must choose within a few days. I tried to apply what I had learned in Caux—to meditate, to be silent—but not a thought came.

Interviewer: This was on the train?

Bror Jonzon: Yes, indeed. Then I looked along the carriage and saw an old professor I recognised but scarcely knew, K B Westman, and I felt that I should tell him of the choice I faced and ask for his prayers. But for a young student to accost a professor like that...!

Then I saw to my relief that he was asleep. Surely, I thought, God Almighty does not want me to wake him.

But just before Stockholm he did wake up, and I obeyed the thought I had had. He looked very surprised and a little embarrassed and said, 'H'm, h'm. Yes, yes. I will think about it.'

At my conference there was a long, intense, and important discussion of internal church affairs.

That evening I travelled home. On the platform at Uppsala another passenger eagerly accosted me. It was Professor Westman. He said, 'I have thought about you all day. I think you must travel.' Now I was the one who said, 'H'm, h'm. Thank you very much.' But I realised I had met a man of fire and conviction, and the encounter helped me to decide to launch out into the world.

Interviewer: Where did you land up?

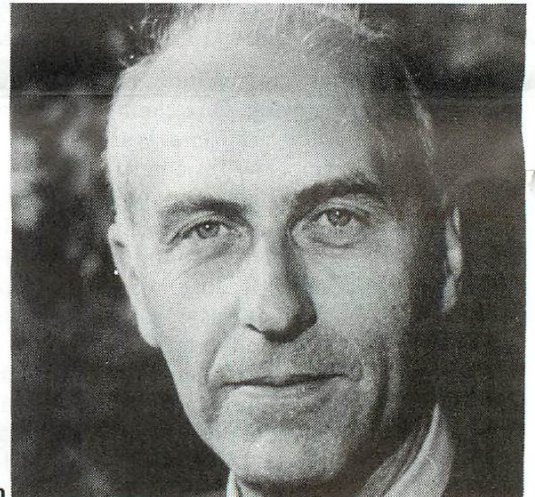
Bror Jonzon: Not long afterwards I went to the Ruhr, the industrial heart of Germany, as one of an international force invited by Karl Arnold, Minister-President of the area, who had been to Caux. For the first few weeks I was mainly an observer. I also translated.

I lived for weeks with a mineworker, Paul Kurowski. As a Communist he was responsible for ideological training in a district of the Ruhr. He was unbelievably quick-witted and

logical. He made short work of me when I tried to say that the Church had at least done something.

I went for advice to a Norwegian friend who knew Kurowski better than I, and had done a lot for him. 'Instead of trying to prove you are right,' he said, 'couldn't you tell him where you have fallen short of your Christian ideals, and where you need to change?'

So I told Kurowski how I had cheated in an exam. He was extremely surprised, not at a theological student cheating, but at his being honest about it. In my oral I had said I had read the book of Amos in Hebrew, which was only partly true. I managed to get a fairly good mark, but when later I asked myself if I had lived up to my Christian ideals, I thought, 'What I did was quite wrong.' I began to work at my Hebrew again, and told the professor what I had done in the exam. It was costly but logical. I also told Kurowski about other ways in which I had fallen short.



Bror Jonzon

His reaction surprised me greatly. He began to talk about himself. His father was a seaman, and was lost at sea, leaving his mother with small children. She went from town to town looking for a job, and so Paul missed out on much of his schooling. But his scripture teacher demanded that he should know the psalms by heart. Whenever he stumbled in reciting them he was whipped. With a bitter voice he said, 'That was why I denied God. That was why I became an atheist.'

Then he went on, 'You and your friends are the first Christians I have met who are not always right. You dare to say you are wrong, and I am interested to know why.' We began to have long discussions.

Months later he said, 'My daughter is getting married. She wants you to marry them in church.' 'Do you really mean it?' I asked. 'Yes,' he said.

I consulted the local priest, who was horrified. 'Kurowski? He's an atheist, a Communist. But if you think a church wedding will do any good, I won't stand in the way.' A year later I baptised their child, Udo.

The 'uneclesiastical' faith that Paul found, and the moral standards he tried to apply in his life, became a natural part of his efforts to build a classless society, where nobody exploits anyone else. I learnt a lot from Paul and I am still learning because he's still alive, 83 years old.

He met opposition from narrow-minded clerics, from his own party colleagues, and from certain businessmen. But he played his part in helping to rebuild Germany from the ruins, to unite the trade union movement, and to find reconciliation with the arch-enemy, France. It is difficult

now, when France and Germany work together in the European Community, to appreciate the greatness of the actions of many French and Germans like Paul at that time.

To be a priest in a suitcase means being available, and not just from nine to five. I have learned this especially in my contacts with the Lapps. When you visit them, with something important to discuss, you cannot just say, 'Let's get down to business.' You sit down, sit quietly for a bit, accept a cup of coffee, make small talk. Then at the right time you or your host mentions the important matter. The Lapps, and many others, do not live by the clock like I do. They live for the right time, the right atmosphere for things of importance.

Sometimes you talk for a long time with a visitor, you say goodbye, you stand at the door in the draught, and that is the moment he chooses to say something important, something perhaps that you were expecting all the time. You are tired, you are hungry, it is hard to be patient. But to be available, to listen, at that moment can be more important than anything in this world.

translated by Alwyn McKay

MOUNTAIN PAINTER

RONALD MANN recently attended the launching of 'Mountain Painter', the autobiography of the Lake District artist, Heaton Cooper:

'MOUNTAIN PAINTER' IS THE STORY of the development of Heaton Cooper as both artist and man. His growth as an artist can be followed through the 120 reproductions of his paintings, including 95 in colour.

Chris Bonnington, the climber and author, was guest of honour at the launching, a splendid Cumbrian tea at the Lakes National Park centre at Brockholm. Mr Bonnington described Heaton Cooper's life as 'a search for wholeness'. Heaton Cooper was a man who cared in detail; a man who loved the countryside and fought for its right use; a painter; a writer; and above all a man whose continuing search for moral and spiritual understanding gave a wholeness to all he did, said Mr Bonnington.

This last point was echoed by Hella Pick in her review of Mountain Painter in *The Guardian*. She writes of Heaton Cooper's 'voyage of discovery of his beloved mountains and lakes, and of the spirit that created this beauty'.

Heaton Cooper was interviewed on the BBC *Look North* programme and on Border Television after the launching.

What of the book itself?

For me the highlights are the paintings with their clarity and simplicity and the word picture of his search for meaning in life. He describes how, at the age of 15, 'I read in the daily paper that Mars would approach close to Earth and that there might be violent storms on our planet, especially on December 17. Early on the 17th he woke up to find that a violent storm was almost shaking the house. He was convinced that it signalled the end of the world. He goes on, 'I decided to have a front seat view of this unique occasion, so I cycled seven miles up Langdale, climbed, with considerable buffetings, to the top of the Langdale Pikes and crouched behind a rock, as the wind was too strong to let me stand up, waiting for the climax. Suddenly the wind

and rain stopped, the sun burst out between the storm clouds, flooding the valley with light and sparkling on all the thousands of new rivulets. For me this experience was just as though I and everyone else had died and been miraculously brought to life again. I went down on my knees and thanked God for His world and His deliverance.'

There are vivid descriptions of times on the Fells when he was filled with 'inexpressible wonder and delight and with a sense that there was a mind responsible for the design and creation of the universe including myself'.

A turning point in his life came in 1934 when 'Gordon and June Osmaston came and told me that they had both made the experiment of giving the whole of their lives for ever to God, and that they had found a new life together'. He felt the need to do the same. 'I'd often trusted my life to these two during the many enjoyable rock climbs we had shared, and so I trusted them now.' But he made one condition: 'I could not possibly give up painting even if God wanted me to, and of course, He wouldn't do that, otherwise what would we all live on?...



Heaton Cooper (right) at the launching of his autobiography with Chris Bonnington, the author and climber.

'After hours of wrestling with all this I knelt down and said, "Alright God, I am ready to stop painting for ever if that's what you want." Immediately it was as if a great weight had been lifted off me. I was intensely aware at that moment of the rain streaming down the mountains and blessing the valleys. I was aware of the presence and power and love of Christ... For some five or six weeks I was fully occupied in the putting right of wrong relationships... One morning, I had a clear thought to go and paint in a certain place at a certain time, which I gladly obeyed. This kind of thought kept recurring, and I realised that God had given me back my gift of painting to be used in His service.'

The book tells of journeys to South America, Switzerland and Norway and of visits to the MRA conference centres in Caux, Switzerland, Tirley Garth, Cheshire, and to the Westminster Theatre in London.

Like Heaton Cooper's paintings, *Mountain Painter* has highlights and shadows. Those who like to share in another man's search for meaning and those who love mountains, especially the Lake District, should not miss this superbly produced book.

'*Mountain Painter*' by W Heaton Cooper is published by Frank Peters of Kendal. It can be obtained from The Heaton Cooper Studio, Grasmere, Cumbria LA22 9SX or from Grosvenor Books, 54 Lyford Road, London SW18 3JJ, price £18.95, with postage £20.95. ■

CLASHPOINT FOR SCHOOLS

by Ruth Warrington and Joy Weeks

BRITAIN HAS A RICH HERITAGE BUT her communities face numerous undercurrents, changes, tensions and unresolved problems. Many children reflect the instability in adult attitudes and behaviour. This is the background against which teachers have to work. Everyone in the community is faced with the challenging task of working to redress the situation.

The Westminster Theatre's programme for schools, *A Day of London Theatre*, is an attempt to support the teacher in his or her job; give new perspectives on community issues; and present a resounding belief in the future and in the role of ordinary people in working things out.

For four weeks in March, the *Day of London Theatre* featured *Clashpoint*, the play by Betty Gray and Nancy Ruthven which points a way forward from race and class confrontation. Nearly 4,100 pupils and teachers from 128 schools took part. Most schools were multiracial though some, usually from country areas, were all white.

Each day included demonstrations of the 'nuts and bolts of professional production'; an illustrated talk on the history of theatre; the play itself; and a period of discussion with the cast.

Skinheads

Throughout the world of education people are searching for ways of giving purpose to the young and developing their inner resources. This is especially needed by those who will later face unemployment with all its problems. In the discussions after the play, the pupils showed their eagerness to participate responsibly in society. The confidence of each group increased through the day as their views were taken seriously and their questions answered honestly. The willingness of the cast to talk about their own life experience brought reality to the discussions and made them worthwhile.

On several occasions students asked whether any of the cast had experienced racial prejudice. Ian Roberts, who played the West Indian pupil in *Clashpoint*, often described how, at the age of 12, he and a white friend had gone into a local restaurant after playing together in a football match. As they entered, a large number of skinheads were leaving. The skinheads waited outside. So Ian and his friend decided to walk out looking straight ahead. Ian was walking 'rather fast'. His friend said, 'Ian, there is no need to walk so fast. Nothing is going to...' Ian looked round and saw that his friend had been knocked to the ground, and that the skinheads were armed with bottles and knives. He ran and, fortunately, managed to escape. He eventually reached a mini-cab office where it was a white woman who gave him the fare to take a cab home.



E. Howard

Schoolchildren learn about theatre at 'A Day of London Theatre'

This story was always greatly appreciated. It led to many useful discussions about the hatred which prejudice causes and the possibility of overcoming such feelings.

One afternoon, a white girl in the midst of a multiracial audience, suggested that if all black people went back to their countries of birth, racial conflict would be solved. The atmosphere became electric and there was pandemonium as the audience expressed their feelings. Finally a black member of the cast was able to say that if he went back to his place of birth he would have to go to Hillingdon (in west London). This drew much sympathetic applause. Another of the cast managed to calm the pupils down by saying that everyone had a right to express his or her view whether or not others agreed. He congratulated the girl for her courage in making her point and everyone clapped. Afterwards, when asked privately whether she really believed her suggestion, she said, 'It's what my Dad says.'

One teacher later said, 'Many of our girls admitted that the problems voiced in the play were not ones they had thought deeply about, and some said they felt they had accepted their parents' attitudes and prejudices. All felt they had been made to think... Some had previously felt they had no colour prejudice, others felt that the problem of class divisiveness had affected them almost more deeply. Others, who admitted prejudice, said they were thinking deeply, and there could be a change as a result.'

Another teacher wrote, '*Clashpoint* goes straight to the heart and the experience of the young. Our own pupils have no experience of racial conflict—one seldom sees other races in Sevenoaks—but they were quick to identify with the personal conflict in the school and within the families, and to recognise the reasons for it. They spoke with enthusiasm of the session after the play.'

A pupil wrote, 'I enjoyed the play very much. I think it put over that everyone has their own hopes and ambitions and that, until something disastrous happens to prove otherwise, each person believes they are the one with the right beliefs and aims and everyone else is on the wrong track. Blacks have just the same needs as us and if everyone was treated the same, things could be different.'

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