

# NEW WORLD NEWS

FOR MORAL RE-ARMAMENT



Students sat and talked long after the show.



## 'Crack unit in the service of peace'

THE PART OF SWITZERLAND called 'The Jura' has never really been at peace with itself since 1815, when, at the Congress of Vienna, it was attached to the canton of Berne. Thus a French-speaking minority was created in the German-speaking canton, to the discontent of both sides.

After the Second World War an autonomist movement within this minority set out to obtain an independent canton for the Jura in the Swiss Confederation, and so free themselves from Bernese domination. A long struggle started, and has led these last years to a series of referendums. The autonomists attained their aim of a new canton, which is now being set up. But it comprises only a part of the area they claim.

The North of the Jura is largely Catholic and autonomist, the South Protestant and there a majority has voted to stay with Berne. The tensions are not easing, however, and many people cannot understand why.

They feel that now that these democratic consultations have taken place, the question should be considered as solved once and for all.

One of the areas where the decision has been most hotly discussed is along the demarcation line in the town of Moutier, which last September was shaken by a night of rioting. And it is Moutier where *Song of Asia* has just spent a week.

### A truer picture

Courageous men and women of all parties in the divided Jura took the initiative to invite the cast to give their show in Moutier, and to stay a week there. In their letter of invitation to the Asians they expressed the hope that 'the show can, through the message of truth which lies behind it, lead us to a truer picture of all our problems'.

Families, which no longer met because of

the political tensions, met again in this undertaking; others started to appreciate each other across the divisions for their human qualities, no longer simply judging people in the political context. A housewife spoke of a shop in which she had refused to set foot for the last two years. 'When I went back,' she said, 'I met the owner and his wife who were very moved to see me in their place. We have to take this step and then everything can change.'

At the end of the stay of *Song of Asia* one of the hosts spoke: 'You have lit a flame. Who will tend it? One thing is sure: with us things can never be as they were before.'

*Le Democrate* reviewed the show on its Moutier page, under a four-column headline 'A marvellous show and a message of peace'. It said, 'It does happen that a tiny spark can set off a great fire. *Song of Asia* is certainly a small spark compared with this vast continent on the move. Let us hope that this spark will set Asia aflame, not to involve it in a new catastrophe, but on the contrary, to light her way, to shine forth on this fascinating world and by contagion spread across the whole earth the blinding light of peace! Of course one can only hope ... but this wish comes from the heart, from this small inner voice which makes all possible when you take the trouble to listen to it and obey.'

### They know its force

The writer spoke of the young Asians in the cast: 'They have suffered, have lost parents and friends in wars and rebellions. And that's why they have decided to listen to this small inner voice which speaks to us all of forgiveness, peace, harmony. All too small a voice, alas, so often drowned by the noise of exploding bombs, or warlike speeches. The time spent in Moutier by this crack unit in the service of peace will not have been in vain, if even only a few of us decide to listen, we too, to this small inner voice sung about in such a touching way by people who know its force. Without comparing our problems in the Jura to those of



The Asians discuss with a group of trainee teachers at a college

Photos: P Shah

CRACK UNIT contd on p2



## CRACK UNIT contd from p1

the countries of Asia in turmoil, let us recognise that this counsel of prudence, given in so friendly a fashion, is worth following.

*Le Pays* welcomed the cast to the town 'that some have called "Belfast" under the headline 'Smile of Asia over a Jura in ferment'. The article continued, 'In the cold dead of winter (seasonally and politically) this cast of 50 young people from Asia gives the feeling of a ray of spring.'

'They opened a shutter on a vision of peace and the final scene clearly shows what happens to a man when he follows the small inner voice, or the voice of conscience, which, for the believer, is the voice of God. Will we really see one day on the square before the town hall in Moutier the whole populace reconciled side by side, as brothers, as in the finale of the show? This show may

have contributed to make such a thing possible.'

## Spark of hope

J-C Rennwald, writing in the *Journal de Geneve* and the *Gazette de Lausanne*, said that 'these young people light a spark of hope in a continent that has already suffered too much from wars, famine and misery'.

He continues, 'Although the problems of the Jura can't be compared with those of the Asian countries, it was an excellent idea to put on this show in Moutier. This town, formed of two almost equal communities continually up against each other, needs to re-find its serenity. The different plebiscites have certainly created a gulf difficult to bridge. However, this cast's stay in Moutier will not have been in vain if some Jurassiens only decide to put into practice the message they received.'

*The message came across through different scenes without erring into moralising. The scenes were true to life, authentic; they proved that in the heart of man there are unsuspected resources of generosity, forgiveness, greatness — in a word, of love.*

*Le Pays*

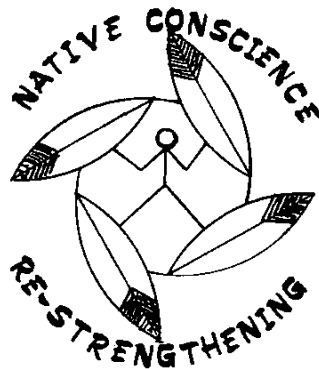
*The show was of a high quality. The choreography, the acting, set off by sparkling costumes, the chorus songs and the contributions of the soloists all spoke of the high artistic level of this cast. A series of rapid sketches opened up for us the customs, problems and hopes of a mosaic of peoples.*

*Journal de Geneve and Gazette de Lausanne*

*As for the cast, they really carried us away. And of course the Jurassiens are not particularly expressive. They want to see and then think a bit about what they see, before they get enthusiastic! Unless ... unless ... they feel immediately won — and they did. It does happen. 'Song of Asia' will be remembered in the whole region. We won't forget the smile of these young Asians, the elegance of their smallest gesture, the quality of the chorus songs .... All of Asia, or almost suddenly there, overarching, enchanting, a rainbow of peoples! A traditional Asia with its costumes and customs. But also, and above all, today's Asia with its problems, and tomorrow's Asia with a great hope.*

*Le Democrate*

## Invitation to Canada



We, the Chiefs and Representatives of Treaty Number 7, Canada, invite our sisters and brothers from Asia to come to the land to which we belong.

We would like you to bring your musical 'Song of Asia' and perform it for all races, to visit us in our homes, cities and villages.

Together we can restore respect for people and a love for nature so that the hungry are fed, the oppressed are set free and we are led not by greed for gain

but by the wisdom of the Great Spirit, the God of all people.

Fear will be expelled and trust will take root.

The bitterness will be driven out

that makes a winter of our hearts and minds and which prevents the coming spring that is the true heritage of all tribes and peoples under the sun.

Then we shall live in peace within our borders and between all nations.

Chief of the Sarcee

*Chief Gordon Brantford*

Chief of the Blackfoot

*Chief Betty Youngman*

Chief of the Stoney  
Wesley Band

*Chief John Snow*

Chief of the Stoney  
Bears paw Band

*Chief Bill McLean*

Councillor of the Piegan

*Nelson Small Legend*

Representative of the Bloods

*Bill Legend*

## Students' move

A GROUP of British university students reported back to a well-attended meeting in London on their recent visit to Egypt sponsored by the Egyptian Supreme Council for Youth and Sport (see NWN Vol 24 No 12).

The Minister Counsellor at the Egyptian Embassy, Abdel Hamid Badawi, said, 'If we can get a core of young people who early in life can work, and really believe in this, we can look forward to a better future.'

## Age sets the pace

AN OLD AGE PENSIONER, Corin Ransome Williams, has taken a year to visit the clergy in her vicinity with *The Black and White Book*. She has sold 120 copies to them and has, she reports, made many friends.

The Bishop wrote to thank her for doing so; a Methodist minister said it would be the basis for many sermons; and one vicar said it was just in time for his confirmation class.

Mrs Ransome Williams said that at the time the Archbishop of Canterbury had made his Call to the Nation she had been feeling very depressed. 'I asked myself, "Is there anything I can do? I have a bad back and I have to rest. Surely there is something I can do." Then I had the thought: "Take *The Black and White Book* to the clergy of every denomination".'

She told *New World News*, 'This book spells out in specific terms how we can best respond to the Archbishop's Call to the Nation, and every effort should be made to sell thousands more copies.'

# 'Ride! Ride!' hits the road

— 'METHODIST RECORDER' HEADLINE

The new musical 'Ride! Ride!' opened in Nottingham this week. 63,800 seats have already been sold for its 11-city provincial tour and the London run.

Below we print the front-page story from last week's 'Methodist Recorder'.

A POWERFUL INSTRUMENT in the hands of the Church is how the Vice-President-Designate, Mr Cyril Bennett, sees the professional production of the John Wesley musical *Ride! Ride!* — which begins its tour of the provinces at the Theatre Royal, Nottingham, on Tuesday. 'I believe we may see some quite dramatic things happen in consequence,' said Mr Bennett.

As a member of the council of management of *Ride! Ride!* Mr Bennett is convinced that the production will be a great means of mission. 'I have a tremendous confidence in the ability of *Ride! Ride!* to communicate. It is an exercise in evangelism through drama. It will involve the person watching within the drama and make him one with it.'

People would come to see a West End musical who would be very reluctant to go inside a church, said Mr Bennett, but if Methodists in particular could invite neighbours or colleagues at work, thousands of non-churchgoing people could be reached. Equally, Mr Bennett would like to see the invitation go out to local and national leaders. If each one brought one, the production's run could continue indefinitely, he said.

'Of course, one evening at the theatre may not give the whole Christian answer to a person, but it has often been the means of first opening the heart and mind of someone.'

But *Ride! Ride!*, now in its revised form, could present the full dimension of the Christian answer: 'In the musical you see the conversion of people. You also see their growth in character. You also become aware of the social implications of the change, for instance the breaking-down of rigid class barriers. You also realise, perhaps indirectly, how this new life and conviction will begin to bear on the question of the slave trade, of corruption, and of the cruelty and violence of the eighteenth century.'

## Similarities

'Eighteenth century society had many similarities to our present situation. There was a lack of purpose, erosion of moral standards, violence and cruelty. John Wesley's life demonstrated that through bringing thousands of people to an experience of Christ, this situation was dramatically altered in the course of 40 or 50 years — and, as most historians will say, the social reforms and the new direction of both Church and state were direct results of this.'

Mr Bennett said that he was looking for another Wesley in present day society. 'I believe there is one somewhere within Methodism, if only we could find him — or he could find himself. I cannot believe that in such a situation as we find ourselves today, the outreach of the Holy Spirit isn't there within one man to compel action. But then, when I first came across *Ride! Ride!*, I began to wonder whether this revival could come about, not necessarily through a person but by a play.

'I am an old hand at evangelistic meetings

and the like, and I am not easily moved — you become case-hardened, as it were. But this thing arrested me. I started to examine the conduct of my affairs, my relationships with other people — in the light of the compulsion of this play. That is mission.

'I think that in all those areas where *Ride! Ride!* is going to be performed, there ought to be a committee within the churches that designs a programme or plan to take on those people who have been moved by the performance, and to do something with them.'

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## 'The world is my parish'

*'Yes, the whole wide world is my parish,  
To the whole wide world I belong.  
A whole range of life is my burden  
And the whole wide Gospel my song.  
It's the miners at the pit-head  
Who gather at the dawn,  
It's the wretches in the prisons,  
It's the outcasts and forlorn.'*

— Gordon Gostelow, who plays John Wesley, singing on BBC Radio 4.

MILLIONS OF PEOPLE throughout Britain have heard songs from *Ride! Ride!* on national and local radio.

Interviews with the author Alan Thornhill and composer Penelope Thwaites have been broadcast in many of the cities which the show is visiting.

The BBC programme *The World This Weekend* had an eight minute programme that included extracts from four songs and an interview with Mr Thornhill and director Peter Coe:

**Interviewer John Parry:** The first thing you are aware of when you talk to the playwright Alan Thornhill about John Wesley, is that he has a profound feeling of shame for the way his own Anglican churchmen treated Wesley in the eighteenth century. And this feeling of a need to make some sort of restitution to Methodism has dominated his approach to writing this musical.

**Thornhill:** I feel he is one of the great men of English history. Anglicans should *know* more about him and *do* more about him. We owe some restitution to the Methodists for the really disgraceful way that the Church of England treated John Wesley in his day. He was almost driven out of the Church into the open air to preach ....

The poor and the outcasts in Britain were a terribly neglected bunch — nobody really cared a darn for them. Wesley was determined to reach them. And because often he

wasn't allowed to preach in churches, he took this very revolutionary step in those days (it wouldn't seem so to us perhaps) to preach in the open air and to go outside the Church. Often out in the churchyard, he'd be preaching to 5,000 people while the rector in the church might be a bit annoyed with so few people droning away in the pew.

**Parry:** Although the musical is about John Wesley and his work, it's encapsulated in the story of a young girl, Martha, whom he converts and finally rescues from the madhouse. She's run away from home in Lancashire but she very quickly discovers that life in London isn't quite as glamorous as she hoped ....

The director, Peter Coe, feels that England today is right on the brink of a great spiritual revival. Just as it was when Wesley came along.

**Coe:** Wesley was one of the great innovators, who brought a great revival of spiritual interest in the eighteenth century, which was very much like our world in a way, in its standards of morality and behaviour, and sloth.

**Parry:** And those were the standards that so quickly disillusioned Martha when she arrived in the London streets with all her naiveté when she met the pimps and prostitutes, the thieves and ruffians of the time. Like so many others around her, Martha was ready and waiting for the message that John Wesley brought out into the streets.

**Thornhill:** The poor people had no identity, nobody cared for them as individuals: Wesley had a colossal care for the individual though he dealt with huge crowds. He brought to people the sense, which they didn't have, that they mattered, that what they did in the world really made a difference, that they had an identity. And I believe today although everybody is cared for by the Welfare State, people in highrise flats or garden suburbs still need this just as much as people in Gin Lane needed it then.



*The United Republic of Cameroon, in West Africa, has always been known as a fragmented region. Not only is it divided geographically by densely forested mountains, but after the First World War, it was divided and ruled by the French and British, while remaining a trust territory under the League of Nations and later the United Nations. How Cameroon became united is narrated by Rabel Ossono, a man who rose from simple origins in a village of a hundred people to become for 12 years the right-hand man of his country's Prime Minister. Mr Ossono, who heads the Patent Office in the Cameroon Ministry of Industries, reveals how his country acquired independence without bloodshed.*

*From a talk he gave recently at the MRA centre in London.*

ONE DAY in 1957 a girl student of 18 wrote to the political leaders of our country urging them to go to a conference for Moral Re-Armament at Mackinac Island in the USA.

Charles Assale, chief of the opposition party, said, 'I have often been invited to MRA assemblies and refused. But when I received the invitation, accompanied by a letter from a girl I did not even know, I said to myself, "It may be God who has inspired this girl to write to me, in which case I must not refuse."'

As the invitation coincided with a journey he had to make to the United Nations to present his party's plea for independence, he decided to stop over at the MRA conference before going on to the UN.

After Mr Assale arrived in Mackinac he explained to Dr Frank Buchman, the initiator of MRA, our country's fight for independence. The trustee nation (France) had already refused our demands. Dr Buchman's only answer was: 'Perhaps God has chosen you to bring a solution to your country's problems. Stick around.'

## Dissatisfied — but we stay

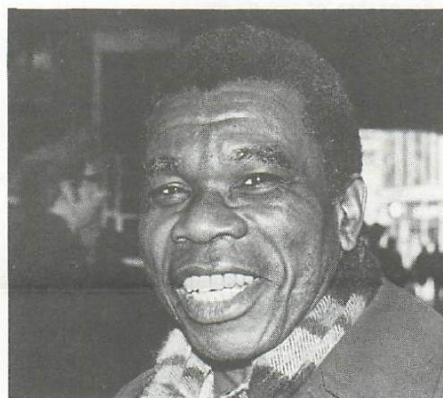
We left his room in a most dissatisfied mood. In view of the important personalities taking part in that conference, we thought Frank Buchman would have got them to vote a strong resolution asking the UN to grant us independence. Nonetheless, we did stay on. We experimented with the idea of listening to the inner voice every morning. Writing down our thoughts, we checked them against the absolute moral standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love.

This was not all. We attended meetings to hear the experiences of those who, having applied these principles, had brought about great changes in their nations. There was a time of quiet during most of these meetings when some people expressed the thoughts that had occurred to them. This did not mean much to us, but after some time people asked us for our thoughts in our moments of solitude.

One of the thoughts I had was that as a journalist I was quick to comment on the mistakes of others, but I had never printed my own mistakes. I saw at the conference where I had to begin.

# Freedom without suffering

by Rabel Ossono



I had to put things right with my father. When I was at college I used to send him letters asking for money which I used to impress my richer comrades.

Yet my father was not a rich man and already had problems educating me. My first thought during my time of listening to God, was to be honest, to ask his forgiveness. I wrote him a long letter that quite bowled him over! He wrote back — 'I can't understand all the things you have been telling me. I hope you are not going mad.' (When I got home and we talked further, he understood why I had written the letter.)

Before Mr Assale left the MRA conference for New York we met together. We had the thought: 'Do not go to New York with fixed ideas. Seek guidance in New York at every turn. God will show you step by step.'

Now, Mr Assale knew that the chief of each delegation had a huge file filled with accusations against the opposing delegations. For many years the delegation from Cameroon had attacked the French but to

no avail. This year, too, he carried a file full of vilifications prepared by his party. It was to be presented before the Trusteeship Council of the UN.

In that time of quiet he had the thought not to use that file at all. But it was difficult to convince his own delegation of this idea. They, however, were struck at the change in him and, convinced by the story of his experiences, finally agreed that this time the file would not be presented at the conference.

So when he mounted the UN rostrum to speak, he had nothing in his hand. Instead of accusing the French he thanked them for all their country had done for the Cameroon. 'We feel we should consider our country as an orphan child whose education was entrusted to France,' he said. 'This child is now of age and would like to marry a wife and take up his full adult responsibilities. That is why we would like to ask the United Nations officially to recognise that we have come of age and to grant us independence.'

It was the first time that anyone had heard an African country ask for independence in such a conciliatory tone. The French delegate, taken aback, also hurriedly modified a speech that was to be a sharp counter attack to any accusations against his country.

Miraculously, it was at this session that the principle of independence was accepted for 1960, whereas for the last seven years this plea had fallen on deaf ears.

## Proved an example

Back in Cameroon Mr Assale sought reconciliation with his political opponents, in particular with Mr Ahidjo who was then Prime Minister. They spoke together as friends for the first time and it was his apology that made political unity possible in Cameroon.

After that reconciliation Mr Ahidjo appointed Mr Assale Minister of Finance, and in 1960, when Mr Ahidjo was elected first President of the Republic, he appointed Mr Assale Prime Minister.

These two then set to work together to build up national unity. The essential first step towards this was to unite all the political parties into one big party. There again Mr Assale gave the lead by dissolving his own party. This example was followed later by the other party leaders. So it was that our country today has only one big National United Party (UNC) which works for the development of our country.

The United Nations now calls us the most democratic state in Africa, whereas before we were the most fragmented by our various political parties. We have had stability since our accession to independence in 1960 and in this have proved an example for all Central African countries. We want to go ahead in that direction and help all those who need our help to move in this direction too.