



Cummock

Amy Dawkins, a founder of the Black People's Action Group, Croydon, talks to members of the 'Clashpoint' cast

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CLASHPOINT SETS OUT

THE STAGE IS SET. Scenes of confrontation are enacted—between father and son, white and black, class and class, culture and culture. Is there an answer?

The performance, a schools matinee in South Norwood, London, was the first of *Clashpoint's* six-week tour of Britain. The audience, unused to live theatre and therefore uninhibited by it, participated spontaneously throughout. Blackout was followed by a rhythmic pounding of feet against wooden floor boards, cheers and an eruption of applause.

Afterwards, talking to the cast, the students said how they had identified with the play—a Moslem girl with its portrayal of the discrimination against Asians; a white boy with the communication gap between son and father; many with the speech of the unemployed youth, who describes himself as one of the 'dustbin generation'. And they responded to the hope that entrenched attitudes on all sides can change.

Two performances in South Norwood on October 5 were followed by performances in Brixton. The first night there was attended by the Deputy Mayor of Lambeth, Brian Udell; a local MP and the Chairman of the Lambeth Liaison Committee. The tour will continue throughout October and November in Newbury, Newcastle upon Tyne, Sheffield, Nottingham, Manchester, Hull, Liverpool and Bristol.

An exhibition of watercolours by Ronald Mann in aid of the *Clashpoint* tour was held at the Westminster Theatre, London, during the first weeks of the tour. It was opened by Clifton Robinson, Deputy Chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality. 'Clashpoint provides avenues by which I could see people resolve conflicts,' he said. 'The arts touch emotions where legislation cannot.' ■



CONTENTS	PAGE
Healing the wounds of the past	2-6
Working for dialogue	3
Dalai Lama	4
Can't write off	6
The word and the sword	7
From Pune to Clashpoint	8

A scene from Betty Gray and Nancy Ruthven's play, 'Clashpoint' . . . the Jennings family (played, left to right, by Bill Cameron-Johnson, Chris Channer, John Locke and Judy Newell).



The nuclear threat, world poverty, unemployment, acid rain—problems which have no respect for frontiers, and are often exported from one country to another, point the need for global co-operation. The question is how to achieve it.

Some of the greatest obstacles to co-operation between nations and individuals are the unhealed wounds of past conflicts and injustices. In these pages we look at where this healing can begin:

THE QUESTION WHICH SHOOK THE CITY CLUB

WORLD WAR II's HORRORS were evoked and memories in part healed at a dramatic occasion in Oregon last month.

Peter Petersen, a senior member of the Federal German Parliament and the highest ranking member of his country's Armed Services Committee, was speaking at Portland's leading forum, the City Club.

The audience of more than 200 had responded warmly to his forthright defence of his government's policies and his affirmation of faith in the United States when an elderly Jewish man rose to ask a question.

There was consternation as he demanded that the speaker say whether he had been a Nazi or not. 'Tension rippled through the group,' a TV reporter said on the news later.

'I was an enthusiastic Hitler Youth boy,' replied Petersen, adding that he would have become a Party member if he had not been too young. 'And in 1945 I thought the fact that the Americans and Russians had won the war only proved that they had more guns and bombs. It did not affect my conviction that Hitler was right and everybody else wrong.'

A few months later, after escaping from a British prison camp, he had met a Jew who had survived eight years in a concentration camp. 'Until that time,' said Mr Petersen, 'I thought all these concentration camp stories were British propaganda.'

Revelation

He could not sleep and wanted to emigrate to Australia so that he could forget that he was a German. He was persuaded by his father to remain. 'You stay right here,' his father had said. 'It was easy for you to follow the flag but now your country needs you more.'

Then he had fallen into the trap into which millions of his generation had fallen, said Mr Petersen, of working to prove that he was better than all the Germans who were in the SS or running the concentration camps.

In 1947 he had met Christian friends who helped him rethink his life. Suddenly he remembered something which had happened to him two years before in Silesia. He had been watching a group of people in terrible shape, heavily guarded by the SS, being herded from one cattle truck to

another. He had asked his lieutenant who they were. The lieutenant replied, 'Oh, don't worry, they are just Poles and Jews.'

'The terrible thing,' said Mr Petersen, 'was that I did not worry because that reason was good enough for me. I realised the moral insensitivity which made Hitler possible was as much a part of me as it was of those SS people. Only by the grace of God was I not in the SS.'

Mr Petersen said that after he had told this experience in a more detailed way to his Christian friends he had realised what forgiveness meant 'not just for me personally but also for me as a German'.

Those who were present at this reliving of a frightening period in world history, said Chuck Dymond on KOIN TV (CBS affiliate), 'are not likely to forget about it any time soon'.

Concluding his account of the occasion, Dymond said, 'The meeting room where Peter Petersen offered his chilling revelation is now empty, but the echoes continue, of his admonition, his plea that it not happen again, of the standing ovation that followed. But even more there is an echo from perhaps his most constructive confession: "I realised the moral insensitivity which made Hitler possible was as much part of me as it was of those SS people. Only by the grace of God was I not in the SS."'

Michael Henderson

CLARA SCHIMMELPENNINCK, from the Netherlands, said after seeing a performance of the German play, 'Der Zug' (The Train), by Heinz, Gisela and Hannelore Krieg, in Caux, Switzerland, this summer:

OPEN FOR HEALING

DURING THE LAST years a wave of memories of the war has swept over my country and many others, through books, films and the press. I was very concerned about it because it reactivated the feelings of hatred and bitterness in many who had gone through the war and opened so many wounds. I felt helpless against it. My own war experience seemed so long ago, and so small compared with the horrors shown in the media.

I lived in Indonesia for 15 years, married there and had my children. When the war came we were put in Japanese concentration camps, where we stayed for two and a half years. My youngest son died there.

I used to think, 'War is war. What else can you expect during a war, and of the Japanese?' We despised and hated them for the way they treated us, which caused the death of so many children.

After the war I met some Japanese in Holland, who apologised for all this. I thankfully accepted their apology and was able to talk honestly with them about what had happened to us and what I had felt. I apologised for my hatred and this freed me.

Wounds can only be healed when you bring them into the open, however small or long ago they may seem. Then you can start to see people as persons. ■

THEY WORK FOR DIALOGUE

SANO OOI COMES from one of the earth's least numerous peoples, her husband Charles from the most numerous. There are 100,000 Angamis in Nagaland in North-East India; while nearly a quarter of the world's population is Chinese. On a recent trip to London, they talked about what identifying with their peoples means to them.

The Nagas, a Tibeto-Burmese tribal group, are divided between India and Burma, thanks to a boundary drawn by the British in the 18th Century. In the 1940s, as Indian independence approached, the Nagas began to agitate for *the right to decide* for themselves where they belonged. Sano was five in 1956, when the Indian army moved into Nagaland to quell a secessionist uprising. The people of her village fled to the jungle in fear of their lives.

After a year her mother took the five children out of the jungle into a refugee camp, but her father remained in hiding. Later he spent 20 months in prison, was released and is now at home. In spite of India's creation of the semi-autonomous State of Nagaland in 1960, some Nagas still hope for independence.

'My father had never told me to hate the Indians,' Sano told us. 'But I knew that we were not free. Some of my relations had been killed. I had seen how as a small minority we had to fight to preserve our identity. Without anybody saying anything, you know this is not right. I felt justified in being bitter.' Yet at the same time she reacted against her Christian community's prejudices against Hindus.

Intrigued

In 1973 a relative asked Sano to accompany her on a trip to Assam to see her daughter who was appearing in a Moral Re-Armament musical. Sano was so intrigued by the ideas expressed that she wanted to find out more. By the end of the year she was at the Moral Re-Armament training centre near Panchgani in West India.

'After I had been some time at Panchgani someone asked me, "How can you do anything for your people if you have this bitterness in your heart?" I realised that in my own way I could be as brutal and blind as the other side. If the Indian army killed one person, I wanted to kill five of them. Being a girl I was not allowed to fight. But I had such a passion that given a chance I would have turned to violence. I could not judge anyone else.'

She compared her life against absolute standards of honesty, purity, love and unselfishness. 'I wrote to my family about the things I had discovered about myself, apologising about the way I had been. This released me.' At the same time, through the way the Indians at the centre cared for her, she found her hatred leaving her.

Later she was invited to travel with the musical she had seen in Assam, *Song of Asia*. Its cast came from all over Asia and the Pacific. Charles was one of them, a Malaysian Chinese who had been studying and working in New Zealand before he joined the show.

Charles also grew up as part of a minority. 'I felt the Chinese got a raw deal in my country,' he said. 'When I met the people from *Song of Asia* I discovered that as a Chinese I had only been interested in how much I could get from



Tyndale-Biscoe

Sano and Charles Ooi

Malaysia. When I talked about corruption I did not recognise that I was corrupt myself. I decided to be honest with my professor about cheating in an examination. Through working with Vietnamese and Laotians in the show I realised that we might one day go through the same suffering in Malaysia unless we found an answer to the division between our races, which had already led to riots.'

Charles and Sano were married in November 1982. At a conference at Asia Plateau in January Charles heard a Tibetan describe how his family had suffered because of the Chinese occupation of Tibet. 'I am proud to be Malaysian, but I am also of the Chinese race,' he said. 'Many overseas Chinese have little knowledge of the things China has done to countries like Tibet. We like to identify with the successes of our race, but we don't like to think about anything uncomfortable. I was so ashamed hearing those things on Indian soil.' At first he found it hard to identify with what he had heard. 'I blamed the Communists. But then I felt the need to accept that this was a sin of my race.'

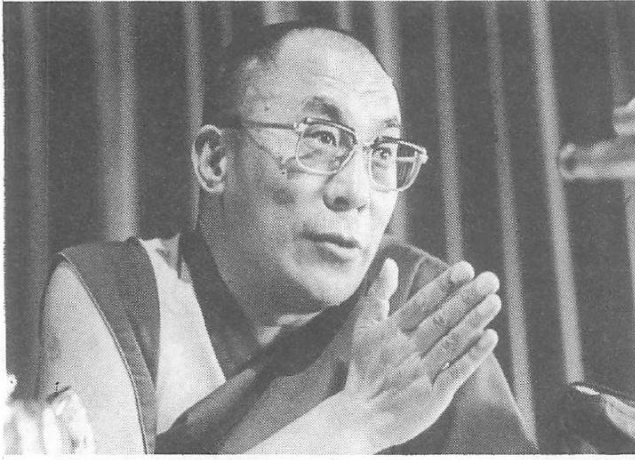
Magnanimous

A few weeks later Charles and Sano were part of a group from the conference who were received by the Dalai Lama in Delhi. When Charles was called upon to speak, he broke down. 'I found myself apologising for what my people had done to Tibet. I also said that the Chinese could learn a lot from the courage, magnanimous spirit and forgiveness of the Tibetans. The Dalai Lama responded warmly.' When they heard that the Dalai Lama was going to visit the MRA centre at Caux this summer, the Oois decided to come to Europe to help receive him.

They are now on their way back to Asia Plateau to prepare for a dialogue between people from the North-East and the rest of India. It is partly a result of a series of visits that Sano and others have arranged between Nagas and Indians over the last few years. 'Understanding is not going to come about from Government policies but from individuals making links,' she said. Charles added, 'At the Dialogue we want to create an atmosphere where people from the North East can express their deepest longings, aspirations and fears.'

'I am working with Indians for the sake of the future of our peoples,' concluded Sano. 'I believe that as neighbours we need to live in harmony.'

Su Richards and Mary Lean



EVERYBODY IS TRYING TO AVOID the tragedy of nuclear war. I believe that the world peace we urgently need is achieved through mental peace. It cannot be achieved through hatred and anger. They are our real enemies. It is not sufficient to talk about world peace if one is full of hatred.

There should be a constant inner battle between anger and love, compassion, tolerance and forgiveness. Then gradually we can minimise our bad thoughts. I can prove that. If you experiment for a few months, you will be able to prove it in your own experience.

First be a good human being—that is the proper method of achieving world peace. Before pointing out others' defects, you must realise your own. Change yourself before you try to change others.

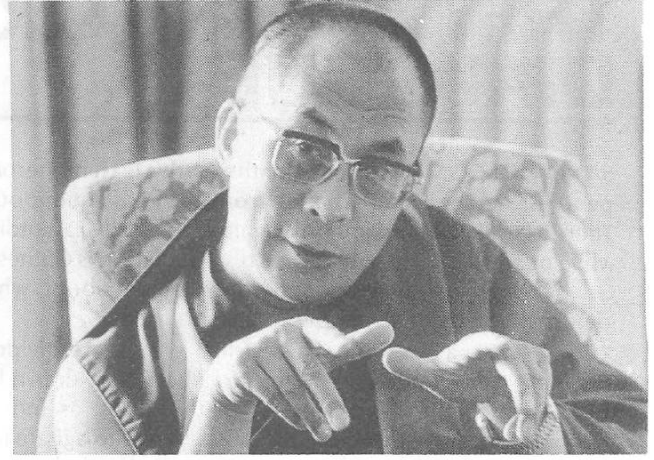
When we talk about individual cases, the effect may seem limited. But there is no independent humanity. We individuals have responsibility for the bigger aim, of genuine peace among humanity. We must have the courage and determination to serve world peace through mental peace—through the practice of compassion and love, of brotherhood and sisterhood.

Tolerance and forgiveness are the key methods of minimising hatred. You can only learn these things from your enemy. You cannot feel hatred, disrespect or anger towards your guru, so you cannot learn tolerance, forgiveness and patience from him, or from your best friend. Hatred usually arises towards your enemy. When you meet him, that is the golden opportunity to test how much you practise what you believe.

We all want happiness. Happiness comes from peace of mind. Peace of mind is destroyed by anger and hatred, so first we must struggle with them. To do that we need tolerance and forgiveness, which we can learn from our enemy. So our ultimate, effective teacher is our enemy. From that viewpoint it does not matter whether the other side's motivation is good or bad—so long as it helps you, you must accept it. If we think along these lines we may feel gratitude towards our enemy.

To every good work there are bound to be obstacles. The important thing is our courage, determination and hope. We should never be depressed or discouraged. If we are discouraged, even something possible becomes impossible. But with hope, determination and tireless effort, even something impossible may gradually become possible

Your Holiness, you must have had some very strong thoughts when you had to leave your country. How did you



THE PEACE WHICH LEARNED FROM

The Dalai Lama of Tibet visited the Moral Re-education in Taiwan summer's conferences.

'There is no need to introduce ourselves, because the Dalai Lama told the audience from all parts of the world, in Taiwan, that you because in the past years I have met people from all over the world that you practise what you believe in your daily lives.'

In his speech, and in response to questions, the Dalai Lama helped him to retain inner peace during his exile, 'the Dalai Lama spoke of his work for closer understanding between Tibet and the West. We print extracts from his talk and answers to questions.'

overcome them in such a tragic situation, so as to get an open mind towards your oppressors?

How can I explain it? First, in Buddhist teaching we believe that whatever happens is mainly due to one's past actions and motivation. The Sanskrit word for this is 'Karma'. So when you face suffering, the ultimate blame goes to yourself. Momentarily your finger points outwards, quite naturally. But when you think properly it must point inwards.

Secondly, so long as one's ignorance, hatred, desire and attachment exist, one is bound to face problems. We believe that basic human suffering—death, old age, illness, birth—is the measure of our cyclic existence.

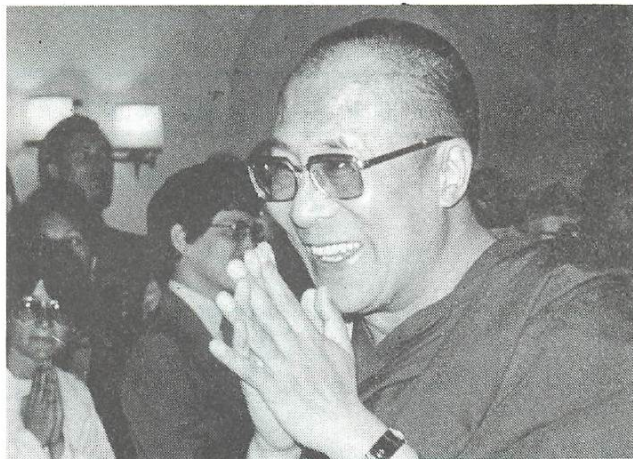
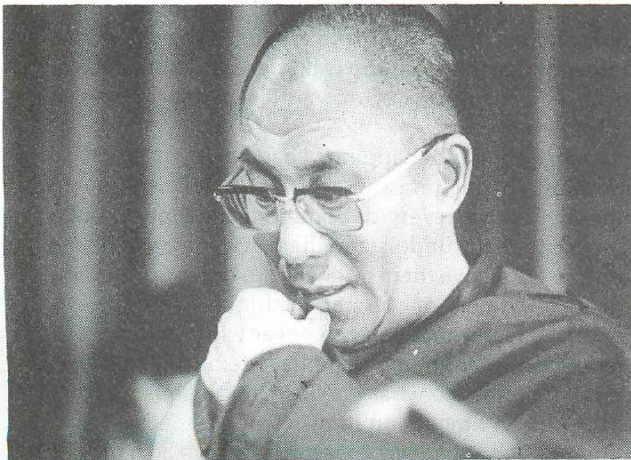
The most powerful reasoning, after all, is that our Chinese neighbours are also human beings. They also have their right to be happy.

These things are so helpful. They are the source of my balanced mind.

I am a Christian. I have an impression that while we have different understandings of truth, we find a certain unity as we each live out what we believe. Would you agree?

There are two main groups in world spiritual thought. The majority of world religions are based on God as Creator. I call them the godly religions. The other group, which includes Buddhism, do not accept God as a creator. They believe in cause and effect.

For me, both these teachings are aiming at better human beings. That is what is necessary and urgent today. Salvation



Photos: Hodel

CH CAN ONLY BE OM ENEMIES

ent core in Caux, Switzerland, on the last day of the

we are all members of the human family,' the Dalai Lama gave his first speech of his visit to Europe. 'I also feel close to the Moral Re-Armament who clearly demonstrated to me the value of other religions. This impressed me.'

The Dalai Lama described the philosophy of life which had sustained him through the darkest period of our long Tibetan history. He also described how other religions, which 'helps to enrich one's own teaching' can be of great value. His suggestions:

...for Nirvana, on which we differ, are the next stage.

There is a common ground which unites us in an effort for humanity. In the last few years we have had much closer contact and understanding between Tibetan Buddhists and Christians, especially Catholics. Some Tibetan monks have visited Catholic monasteries and we have exchanged doctrines, experiences and disciplines. We are trying to work for closer understanding between religions. This helps to enrich one's own teaching.

Buddhists can learn many things from Christian tradition. Christians, although they seem superficially minded to us, work in the practical service of humanity in social work. I have many Christian friends who, in simplicity and devotion, work in the fields of education or health. Sometimes we Buddhists remain in an isolated place and do social service through prayer. That is not sufficient.

Meanwhile Christians can learn a lot from Buddhists—for example, about meditation, a certain technique of investigating the inner world, the soul or the self. Buddhist teaching also has techniques for developing patience, tolerance, love and compassion towards others, including one's enemies. These are suitable for Christian practice.

What happens if people get the experience you have described at different stages? For instance, what if there are two nations with weapons and one has this experience and throws its weapons away, but the other does not?

I think you are talking about East and West, the two superpowers.

The best method (of bringing peace) is human contact. I sometimes feel that this is what the policy makers in the White House and Kremlin lack. Whether they like it or not, they have to live together on this planet. What if President Reagan and President Andropov met face to face and exchanged views as human beings, not as the leaders of great nations? This should happen between other officials too and on the level of the people.

I live in Western India, quite close to the Pakistan border. We receive television programmes from Lahore in Pakistan and from Amritsar and Delhi in India. I look at their dramas, songs and clothes and these are the same. They have the same culture, food, language, the same human face, although of course there are differences too. Yet men have made barriers. This is unfortunate. It is not good to have a hostile attitude to each other.

My hope is that these people will have more human-level contact. That will ultimately help to reduce tension and suspicion. Then it will be possible, for example, to draw up good documents (for peace).

Some countries have a lot and some very little. How can we share the wealth of the world?

Through various methods we need to uplift the awareness of the oneness of mankind. There are already efforts—like your own—to spread this message.

We must educate people, if possible through world bodies like the United Nations. World bodies must concern themselves more with long-term human business like this. Of course they have to be concerned with immediate problems—this war or that war—but meantime there should be more discussion about the long-term future of humanity.

The education system worldwide should not only teach the brain, but simultaneously develop warmth of heart. Sometimes we concentrate on the brain and forget the heart, and that is one-sided. And it is also one-sided to have a good heart and an empty brain! These things must go side by side.

The world economic situation today is such that continents are heavily dependent on each other. To solve our economic problems in a reasonable way, there must be general co-operation and sharing. Industrialised countries must show serious concern for the developing countries from which raw materials come. And these nations must also respect Western nations. They must discuss mutual benefit as brothers and sisters. The economic condition itself is now telling us that this one-sided system may not last long. ■

THE PEOPLE I CAN'T WRITE OFF



by William Jaeger

FOR OVER FORTY YEARS I have worked with Moral Re-Armament in the field of international labour, all over the world. Every year I go to the meetings of the International Labour Organisation in Geneva. There I meet people from all political and industrial backgrounds—left, right and centre; Palestinian and Israeli; SWAPO and South African; Russian and Chinese; Communist, non-Communist and anti-Communist; North, South and Central American; Asian, European and African.

I used to be very concerned about what all these people thought of what I said. It took me a long time to learn not to be controlled by wanting to please people—to be ready, if necessary, to please nobody on earth. This doesn't mean being arrogant, but saying what you mean to everybody.

We English tend to think we are right whatever anyone else says. I have had to learn that if people differ from me, it may be because I am wrong. It is so easy to think I am right. And of course you cannot agree with everyone—there are different angles on the same point. So how do you deal with those who differ with you?

Revolutionary

Some years ago I met a leader of a revolutionary group who had come to see a Moral Re-Armament play. Afterwards I talked to him and his colleague, who had told me that they had spent the day raising money for human rights, which would in fact be spent on guns. All I could say to him was, 'I am sorry for the way we English often behave and think we know best. I would like to learn from you what you really think.'

'You are the first Englishman ever to say that to me,' he said. 'Can I say something to you that I have never said to anyone else?'

'What?' I asked.

'Well,' he said, 'since I was a boy I have been taught to hate the English and to plan to destroy them, because they killed my father in an earlier war.' Then he said, 'What can we do on the basis of Moral Re-Armament?'

He invited me to his home. When I got there, I found I was the first Englishman in that house for 30 years. All the

children came to see what I looked like. His wife was full of questions she had been waiting to ask for 30 years. The man was a devout Catholic. On the wall there was a small cross which he had made out of matchsticks when he was in prison for seven years.

Such things could not happen if I had not learnt that in all relationships change must start with myself. I have to examine my motives every day and to talk deeply enough with people to really understand them. It is so easy to blame someone else and give them no chance to become different. Prejudice, set points of view and misinformation always divide. I have learnt that you can never write anybody off.

Experience has taught me that I have to be one hundred per cent committed to what I believe, to be equally direct with each person I meet and to have equal expectations of all of them. Then, I believe, together we have a chance of remaking the world. ■

Talking again

ELECTIONS TEND to be times of hard words. The 1982 elections in Fiji were no exception, with accusations of foreign involvement and corruption and recriminations which led to a Royal Commission of Inquiry.

Headlines in the *Fiji Sun* earlier this year read 'Four foes now friends', 'I can forgive—says PM'. The story described how the Prime Minister, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, had reconciled his differences with the leader of the Western United Front, with the former Mayor of Suva and with the former opposition leader, Mr Koya. The bitterness had been so great that the Prime Minister had not been on talking terms with the two leaders and had vowed he would never work with Mr Koya again.

'I am grateful that I can forgive people,' Ratu Sir Kamisese said. 'I am a Christian and I say the Lord's Prayer every morning—"forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." I cannot do that without forgiving people.' ■

ANNE RABOURDIN, a French student, spoke about reconciliation at the MRA conference at Caux this summer:

Daring to act

I HAD A DRAMA TEACHER, whose way of working I did not like. For three years I didn't stop criticising her and this was like a poison which grew in me. One day, at a meeting in the spirit of Moral Re-Armament, I suddenly felt that I must apologise to her.

I went to see her and told her that I'd been a hypocrite—I'd always been nice to her face, but behind her back I'd cast doubts on her ability. She was amazed. We were putting on a play. 'Well, now we'll be able to work together,' she said.

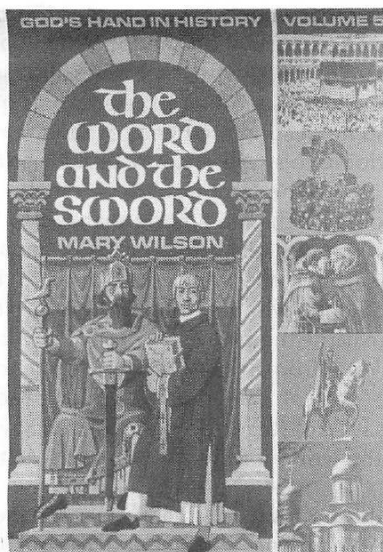
Three days later she fell and was taken to hospital. She had had many problems, which of course I had never seen during those years of ceaseless criticism. One of them was

drink, and two weeks after she went into hospital I had a phone call to say she had died.

I am full of fears of all kinds—stage fright, fear of others, fear of seeing myself as I am. I'm afraid of admitting my mistakes, which often leads to an attitude of superiority. At Caux I have been able to overcome two of these fears—the fears of making a commitment and of doing anything uncomfortable. I have continued on the path my teacher showed me by helping African students and people from Montpellier to put on a play, *Où allons-nous?* I have rediscovered my faith and I feel I must use my gifts for theatre in its service. ■

BOOK REVIEW

THE WORD AND THE SWORD



'THE WORD AND THE SWORD' is an absorbing account of people from the 7th to 14th Centuries whose faith affected the history of Europe and Asia. It is the fifth in Mary Wilson's series *God's Hand in History*. The book is particularly designed for 15 to 18 year-olds, but will intrigue older readers as well.

The book begins with the story of Mohammed's life with its clear-cut values; and there is a fascinating chapter on the spread of Islam and the intellectual ferment it caused in the universities, particularly of Spain and Sicily, where Arabic numerals including the zero were developed. In view of present day attitudes to Islam this sympathetic account should be required reading for Christians.

Later chapters tell how, in the 8th and 9th Centuries, the savage tribes of northern Europe came into touch with Christianity and so with the wider circle of European life and thought. Two men played a particular part in this. Boniface of Devon crossed the North Sea and worked for 30 years in Holland and Germany, challenging belief in the pagan gods and finally laying down his life as a martyr. A hundred years later Anskar in Denmark and Sweden opened a door for Scandinavia into the Christian family.

Charlemagne's great concept of Europe as Christendom,

with spiritual and temporal rulers working side by side, is well described, as is his recruitment of Alcuin of York to direct his Palace School. The pattern of education which Alcuin created was to survive for over a thousand years.

Alfred the Great exemplifying true kingship; 'Good' King Wenceslas; Cyril and Methodius giving the Slavs a written language and showing an inspired way to deal with minorities; Francis of Assisi's answer to materialism and Dominic's reconquest of the universities for Christ; Marco Polo's journey to China; Bridget's and Catherine's struggle to recall successive Popes back to their duties in Rome—their strivings and adventures have startling relevance to modern life.

The final chapter is about Russia, where the princes, divided and cowed by the invading Tartars, are shown by Sergius how to obey the still, small voice. *They are reconciled and united and together turn back the hordes of invaders.*

These reminders of the common heritage of eastern and western Europe give an insight into the way faith works in human affairs to turn people from victims into victors.

The book is beautifully produced with a most attractive cover.

Constance Smith

'The Word and the Sword' by Mary Wilson, published by Grosvenor Books, 54 Lyford Rd, London SW18 3JJ, paperback £1.95, with postage £2.45; hardback £4.95, with postage £5.65. ■

Sussex enterprise

A DESIRE TO SEE a 'new spirit' in Britain, led Richard and Pat Ducé, with the financial help of over 80 others, to publish a half-page advertisement in two weekly newspapers, *The Hastings Observer* and *The Bexhill Observer*. It described what they felt would be needed to build a better Britain, and provoked a lively correspondence.

Through the nominations of the readers of *This England*, the Sussex couple won the magazine's Silver Cross of St George award for 'spirit and enterprise'.

In part, the half-page said, 'We want to live in a country we can be justly, but not arrogantly, proud of—because there's fairness; because there's both the opportunity and the willingness to work and to serve.'

A charitable Christian trust volunteered to finance a second full-page advertisement which was published recently. This in part says, 'Basic to God's way are the moral yardsticks of unselfishness, honesty, purity and love. Derived from the Sermon on the Mount, these absolute standards are to be found in all the world's great religions and best thinking. No one is likely to become perfect. But the choice of guidelines is either relative standards which reinforce our selfishness, or absolute standards which are necessary in finding the true guidance of God.'

'Overall,' said Mr Ducé, 'We've had a very positive response.' ■

CORRECTION

The annual sales of Standard Telephones and Cables, England, is £1,000m. The editors apologise for their mistake in *New World News* of 1 October 1983.

FROM PUNE TO CLASHPOINT

by Keith Dunn

'WHAT'S A COUPLE like you doing in a place like this?' is a question one might ask Colonel Ram Rege and his wife Meera. They have recently arrived in England from their home in India, to act in *Clashpoint*, a play dealing with racial and social conflicts in Britain.

Travelling is not something new for the Reges. Throughout his 25-year career with the Indian Army Education Corps, the Reges and their two children, Leena and Vijay, have lived in many different parts of India. Col Rege was responsible for the education of soldiers from many parts of the country and different language groups. 'We taught them Hindi, which the government designated as the official language of the army,' explains Col Rege.

It was when the Reges were stationed in Pune, India, that Mrs Rege got to know the work of Moral Re-Armament. 'I had come across various kinds of social work before,' Mrs Rege explains, 'but I had always seen people with selfish motives and jealousy, the seniors running over the juniors. In the work that MRA was doing, I didn't see that.'

Soon afterwards the Reges' daughter, Leena, then 12, attended a youth programme sponsored by MRA and made a deep impact upon the family on her return. 'She got up early, did her studies, and didn't fight with her brother,' says Col Rege. 'This had an effect on all of us. I was short-tempered and bossed the rest of the family like a commanding officer, but I began to see a way to change this.' Mrs Rege adds, 'I had ill feelings toward my mother-in-law, but I apologised to her and we became closer.'

On the road

The Reges began to help with MRA projects in the cities where they were living. For instance, when the show *Song of Asia* visited Calcutta, they helped to arrange the accommodation, publicity and to sell tickets. 'Our home was a hub of activity,' Mrs Rege smiles. 'We had so many to stay with us, three were sleeping in the sitting room, two in one guestroom, two in another.'

Col Rege retired early in 1974 to work full time with MRA and the next year they were invited to travel to Europe with *Song of Asia* as 'parents' to the young people in the cast. Leena and their son Vijay were also part of the cast.

Travelling thousands of miles, staying in many different homes, in various countries, might seem quite an ordeal for a mature couple, but Mrs Rege says they enjoyed it. 'The local people were so keen to help us and we made so many friends,' she explains. 'We saw the effect of the play on people. Instead of talking intellect to intellect, we were able to talk heart to heart.'

After travelling with *Song of Asia* for one year, the Reges returned to India, where they have helped organise indus-



Ram and Meera Rege after a performance of 'Clashpoint'.

Cummock

trial seminars at Asia Plateau, the Moral Re-Armament centre in Panchgani. 'We want industry to function more smoothly, without strikes and corruption,' explains Col Rege. 'Our programme is geared to give top management, union leaders and workers a new motivation.'

Col Rege feels that when workers' domestic problems are solved, things also improve on the job. 'Many of the men have patched up conflicts with their wives and families,' he says. 'Some who were spending large amounts of their pay on alcohol and neglecting the needs of their families were able to stop doing this. We encourage the participants to bring their wives to the seminars.' According to Col Rege, there has also been change among managers. 'They have learned to look at workers as people, not machines.'

This summer when the Reges were visiting Leena, who now lives in Calcutta with her husband and two children, a new challenge came their way. 'Our son-in-law told us that he had had a letter from Britain asking for someone to come and play the part of the Indian deputy headmaster in *Clashpoint*,' says Col Rege. 'So many British have come to help us with the work of MRA in India that I felt I couldn't say no.'

However, the path wasn't totally clear for them to start their venture. Someone was needed to look after their household in Pune. Their son and daughter-in-law, who live with them, would be occupied, he with his job, and she with her final law exams. 'When we talked to them of going, their first reaction was to say no,' says Mrs Rege. 'I was very worried and I prayed about this.' However, she adds, 'They told us the next day that it was more important that we go and they would look after things while we were away.'

Eight days before the Reges left for Britain they received a phone call saying that there was a part for Mrs Rege too. 'Whenever I heard of conflict between different ethnic groups, I always prayed that somehow God would help me to bring reconciliation between people,' she explains. 'I had the feeling this was the answer to my prayer.'

'We have heard of the racial troubles here in Britain and of course we have some of our own in India,' says Col Rege. '*Clashpoint* has an important role to play in improving relationships.'

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