

Black and white  
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conference  
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AS HOPES for détente in Southern Africa rise and fall, a group of Rhodesians – black and white – have called an International Assembly for Moral Re-Armament. It is to take place in the University of Rhodesia, Salisbury, from 2–8 June.

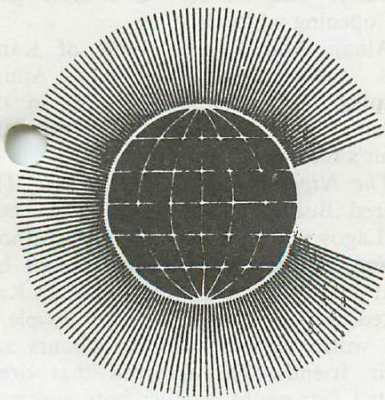
Alec Douglas Smith and Sir Cyril Hatty, a former Minister of Finance for Southern Rhodesia, are among those responsible for this move.

In their invitation, under the heading 'Africa, The Answer Continent', they state their aim: 'To bring the change in people which alone will make political changes work.' Their goal, they say, is 'To create the new society where all are free to do what is right – in a continent

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# NEW WORLD NEWS

FOR MORAL RE-ARMAMENT



Symbol of the Commonwealth

## Miracle at Kingston?

by a UN diplomat



Crest of the Corporation of Kingston and Saint Andrew

How fashions change! Only a few years ago it was said: 'Britain must choose Europe. The Commonwealth is dead.' Today some people say that to choose Europe spells disaster and Britain should again seek out the Commonwealth. Meantime, the Commonwealth countries that were apprehensive about Britain going into Europe are now apprehensive about her pulling out. So much for the pundits. Their political wisdom is laid bare as a tatty collection of half-truths and false alternatives. The Commonwealth is assembling once again at Heads of Government level at Kingston, Jamaica, on 29 April and the interesting fact is that the whole United Nations, Washington included, is watching intensely, even hopefully, to see what happens there.

WHAT HAS CHANGED? Why has the write-off become the in-thing?

First, faith in popular nostrums has been shaken. Events in the Middle East have shaken faith in one-man shuttle diplomacy. Events in the UN have shaken faith in highly publicised confrontations at multilateral conferences.

By contrast, look at the Commonwealth. It is not a military bloc, nor a pressure group, nor a regional group, nor a racial bloc. It has no special sphere of influence. True. But suddenly these negative aspects appear to be advantages instead of disadvantages. The Commonwealth is multi-racial, multi-regional. It includes highly industrialised countries and poor primary producing countries. It includes a member of OPEC. It is a world grouping that threatens no one. Its very richness in diversity suddenly appears valuable in a world baffled and depressed by bloc rivalries and sterile confrontations.

Besides, the Commonwealth has positive assets of its own. Its leaders have a shared way of thinking, a shared language, a shared educational background in many cases and for the most part a shared faith in God. None of these things is very tangible. None is susceptible to market-valuation. True. On the other hand, it is precisely faith in material supports and market values that

has been so acutely questioned by recent events.

It has also been realized that Commonwealth meetings have other advantages. They take place without the distracting glare of publicity characteristic of the UN. They have a maximum of informality. They are more like family gatherings. The last Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Ottawa in 1973 is still talked about because of the spirit it produced. Kingston will be modelled on Ottawa. But there is another reason why hopes are focused on Kingston.

### Snail's pace

It was there last year that a near-miraculous break-through occurred in economic negotiations between the European Common Market and over thirty African, Caribbean and Pacific countries. These negotiations had been moving at a snail's pace for nearly two years. Difficulties and reservations were stacked high on both sides. Suddenly at a Ministerial Meeting in Kingston in July 1974 something happened. Observers are still debating about what produced the new will to agree. The fact is that within six months all the problems had been solved. On 28 February 1975 there was signed the Lomé Convention which, as its pre-

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amble says, is 'a new model for relations between developed and developing states'.

What is significant is that 22 Commonwealth countries are amongst the 46 signatories of this Convention and representatives of the Commonwealth filled key roles throughout the difficult negotiations. This is not to underestimate the constructive contributions of French-speaking leaders like M Babacar Ba of Senegal and M Cheysson of the European Commission; nor of Mr Fitzgerald, the Irish Foreign Minister who was President of the European Council of Ministers; but it is commonly agreed that vital roles were played at successive stages by President Gowon of Nigeria and his statesmanlike Ambassador in Brussels, Mr Sanu; by Mr Ramphal, the eloquent and constructive Foreign Minister of Guyana who is soon to become the new Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Secretariat; by Sir Kamisese Mara, the Prime Minister of Fiji; and by Mrs Judith Hart, the British Minister for Overseas Development.

### New interest

The progress marked by the Lomé Convention, coupled with successful Commonwealth conference on Rural Economy problems held in London in February and the revival of Commonwealth consultations at the United Nations, leads to new interest everywhere in this once discounted 'family of nations'. Can there, people are now asking, be another miracle at Kingston? The agenda will be heavy and the problems will be acute. They will doubtless be dominated by the future of Southern Africa and the quest for a New International Economic Order.

As regards southern Africa, President Nyerere recently proclaimed the objectives of the African countries as the liberation of the whole continent from colonialism and racism; but he also recognised that the process of change is underway. Can that process be speeded up sufficiently to avert a blood-bath? The UN General Assembly last autumn tried its hand through public diplomacy: it ended up with a bitter confrontation. At this year's Assembly the situation may be worse. The timing of Kingston is therefore highly significant. Can it – and other meetings due to take place in other places – buy time and allow these forces of peaceful change to accelerate and shape a brighter future for all the races in Africa? Can Kingston, with the intangible assets described above, act as a catalyst for change based on moral standards accepted by all?

As regards world economic problems, the timing of Kingston is again fortunate. Another UN Special Session is already being prepared for September to wrestle with the gulf between rich and poor countries, monetary reform,

trade reform, world food shortages, etc. Kingston, building on Lomé, could help to develop a sense of economic and social interdependence on the basis of what is right and fair for all. If it does it may save the United Nations next session from being as arid and acrimonious as many previous sessions.

The technical problems are indeed complex. But never has more expertise, human and electronic, been available to deal with them. The key question is: will all cross the philosophic bridge towards the full dimension of change – economic change, social change, national and international change, all based on real changes in the lives of people, leaders and led?

At Kingston will the finger-pointing stop? Will the developed countries accept change instead of shoring up the status quo? Will the developing countries also accept change where necessary in their affairs so that wealth is fairly distributed and aid is efficiently used?

In 1975 many old definitions need to be re-examined. Who are 'rich nations'? Which are the 'poor'? Who are the 'developed'? And who need help most?

The world anxiously awaits new leadership. New voices may be heard from Kingston, pointing out new ways. The Mother of the family may find she



Jamaican cane field

is getting unexpected help from the next generation. The Commonwealth may even be entering a new phase of usefulness to the whole world community.

But these are only aspirations, the sceptic may say. Yes. But where there is no vision, the people perish. Moreover, it is also true that even a small minority – if it is determined – can turn mere aspirations into policy directives. To restore a great commonplace truth to its first uncommon lustre, as the poet Coleridge once wrote, it is necessary only to translate it into action.

# Conference heads practical remedies for hatred and

## Messages underline Nige

A NATIONAL CONFERENCE for Moral Re-Armament was held in Lagos, capital of Nigeria, over the Easter weekend. The conference was attended by representatives from all parts of the country. The Rt Rev S I Kale gave the opening address.

Alhaji Ado Bayero, Emir of Kano, was represented by Alhaji Aminu Yusufu, Councillor for Health in the Kano Local Authority, who read the Emir's message to the conference.

*The Nigerian Observer* reported, 'The retired Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Lagos said that human efforts without divine support and blessing cannot but lead people to frustration... Bishop Kale noted that greed had led many people of the world to fear their neighbours and their friends. He observed that deep-seated fear could produce hate and murderous intentions and urged every Nigerian to work towards building a hate-free and greed-free society.'

'The Bishop pointed out that only the very blind and selfish people are satisfied with the attitude and behaviour of the world today, adding, "with all modern scientific and technical development man has failed to match his material development with the development of character."

'He observed that the same primitive passions of hate, fear and greed that governed men in prehistoric times still seem to bar them from building a new society. Moral Re-Armament, the Bishop explained, is a total commitment of one's life in the battle to remake the world.'

*The Nigerian Observer* also published the message of the Emir of Kano.

### Rivals reconciled

Among others attending the conference were trade union leaders, businessmen, leaders of women's organisations, including the National President of the YWCA and the Vice President of the Lagos Market Women, also the Secretary and the Treasurer of the National Youth Council, the Chairman of the Mid-West State Board of Education and members of the Nigeria Police, Army and Customs Preventive Service.

Various speakers underlined the practical nature of the theme of the con-



# ars dies corruption

## Nigeria's world task

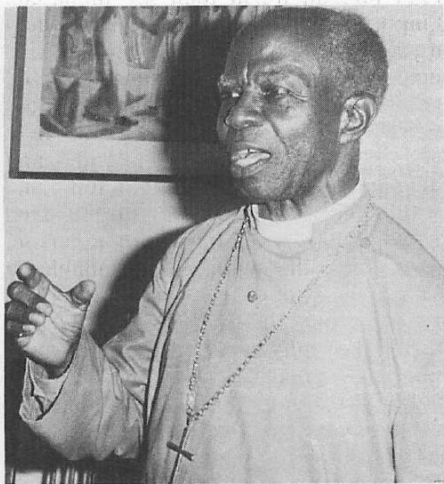
ference - 'Building a hate-free, fear-free, greed-free society'. Trade union leaders from rival unions who had been mistrustful of each other and even worked to undermine one another got reconciled through honest apologies. One union leader, who described himself as 'an arch tribalist', told how through MRA he had stopped discriminating against men of other tribes. He also explained that in order to be popular he had often given union members a dishonest report of his negotiations with management. Now, he said, he told them the truth, even if at times they were not happy with the outcome, and they trusted him more.

### 'Best thing of my life'

One contractor, who was formerly Secretary of the Lagos Market Women, told how, after nine months struggle in her conscience, she had apologised to three enemies and not only built a new relationship with them but had found a faith 'that nobody can take from me'. A lecturer at a catering school said that through showing the films of Moral Re-Armament to the students, who came from all twelve states, a completely new spirit of unity had been created, whereas before, due to tribal hatred, there were times they had fought with kitchen knives. A Port Harcourt businessman who had been involved in the civil war noted that it was very common for people to dwell on negatives about the country, and went on to say, 'There are difficulties, but in fact for me it is the best thing of my life that we have been involved in one of the greatest acts of reconciliation that any country has tackled on this earth. This is very important and I am grateful.'

A portworker who operates a crane in the Lagos port referred to the much publicised congestion there and said, 'The real congestion is not in the port, but in the hearts of men. Only when the congestion in the hearts of people is removed will the other problem be resolved.'

Many gifts of money and food were made to the conference. A young personnel officer in a bank and an accountant at Lagos University paid for the printing of the invitations. ■



The Rt Rev S I Kale, retired Anglican Bishop of Lagos, addresses the conference.

OUR TASK at the conference is to be able to look at our world today, and especially this country, as it is and honestly and fearlessly to diagnose its ills. We have in our programme adopted the great principle which MRA stands for: remaking the world through a life of dedication or commitment.

That human efforts without divine support and blessing cannot but lead to frustration and disillusionment has been abundantly proved. Just now the grounds are parched and trees and shrubs wither for lack of rain. The farmers look up and pray for rain. So, too, we see the need for the watering of the spirit of men and women in our society so that it can live again.

There is an old prayer: 'Revive Thy work, O Lord, beginning with *me*.' Beginning with *you* and *me* let a society free of hate, greed and fear be built up in Nigeria, each of us regarding ourselves as bricks or mortar filling a place in the plan of producing that society.

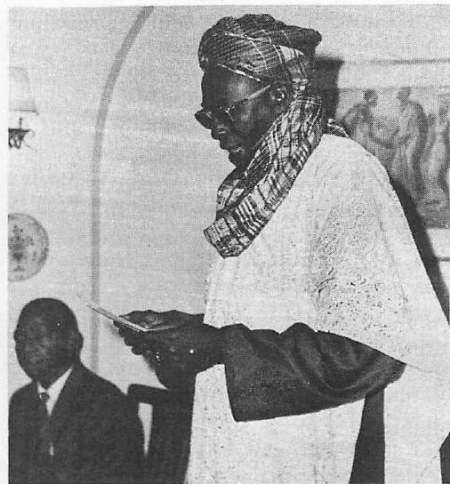
May we all be led to act bravely, after seeing clearly how to make our contribution.

God be with you and bless you!

### From the opening speech of Bishop Kale

The Chairman of the Mid-West State Board of Education, M O Elebesunu, introduces the all-African film 'Freedom' in which he plays the part of the 'King'. With him are Mrs Elsie Chiwuzie and Mrs Keziah Fashina, who play the 'Queen' and 'Mrs Palaver'.

photos: Amata



Alhaji Aminu Yusufu, Councillor for Health in Kano Local Government Authority, reads a message from the Emir of Kano.

NIGERIA TODAY needs a big enough purpose to which all her sons and daughters of every tribe and creed can subscribe. No human society, however rich or powerful, can long maintain its freedom and harmony if it veers away from the moral and spiritual values set by Allah through the ages.

At this season when the Moslems remember the birth of The Prophet Mohammed and Christians mark the Resurrection of the Christ Jesus, it behoves all of us to review the type of society which Allah sent these pioneers to create for mankind. In the light of that, we need to pray to Allah to show us what needs to change in each one of us if we are to become His instruments to realise that Allah-architected society.

As The Holy Koran teaches us: 'Allah does not change the condition of a nation till the people themselves change.'

The theme of the current Moral Re-Armament conference - 'Building a hate-free, fear-free, greed-free society' - is a true reminder to all sincere patriots and well-wishers of Nigeria of the divine task that Nigeria is called upon to pioneer for the other nations of Africa and the world.

I pray that Allah will guide and bless your discussions and decisions.

### From the message of the Emir of Kano



●THE PREMIÈRE performances in Australia of *Ride! Ride!*, the musical play by Alan Thornhill and Penelope Thwaites, were given for crowded audiences at Albany, pioneer sea port of Western Australia.

The President of the West Australian Methodist Conference, Rev Wesley Lutton, in the presence of the Mayor of Albany, H Smith, said, that *Ride! Ride!* was not only a moving story from the action-packed life of John Wesley, but also a story of the love of God relevant and basic to modern life. The play was presented by the Methodist Musical Society of Albany.

*Ride! Ride!* will also be given in the United States in mid-October, by a large cast at Southwestern University, Texas. This has been announced by the head of drama, Angus Springer. He writes, 'I would not be thinking of doing this were it not for the fact that on the night of 30 July, 1965 *Mr Wilberforce MP\** grabbed hold of me and has never let me go!'

## WHAT WE CAN DO

AT THIS TIME our thoughts turn to the tragic plight of those who suffer—in Vietnam, in Cambodia, in Eritrea and in Northern Ireland; to the refugees for whom danger, suspense, bereavement, homelessness and hunger are a daily reality; to those who lie in prisons in many countries, not knowing whether or when they will be executed; to the victims of this age of savage violence everywhere.

We may be able to do little for them directly. But what would it mean if we could find a force strong enough to cure the climate of selfish indifference and of blame which provides the ground roots in which violence grows?

The secularisation of our society in the West has brought about the satanisation of society in many parts of the world. Ancient cultures of centuries of faith are being destroyed by this monster marching across the earth. The cost of our selfish materialism is not just to our own society; it leaves behind a trail of bloody coups and young men with guns armed with ideologies of hate.

The hallmark of our secular society is that it absolves us from responsibility by laying the blame on others. 'Today we are trying more than any earlier generation not to believe in responsibility,' writes John Taylor, the new Bishop of Winchester, in his book *The Go-Between God*. 'Our idea of sympathy is to diminish responsibility by laying the blame on parents, glands, environment

\* *Mr Wilberforce MP*, Alan Thornhill's play about the battle to end the slave trade, was performed at the Westminster Theatre, London.



Television in Burgundy films members of the cast of 'Song of Asia', the show which is now touring France. 'A European premiere of which Chalon can be proud,' was the headline in the 'Courrier de Saone et Loire'. 'Behind the songs, dances and scenes,' wrote the paper, 'is a profound picture of Asia. These young actors have brought us something new, colourful, unexpected and of a rare beauty and quality.'

photo: Rengfelt

—anywhere but at the door of this poor victim of circumstance. That is not Jesus' way. The one thing he seems to have condemned utterly was evasion of choice.'

The outstanding thing about our age is that while millions of 'decent' people avoid any responsibility greater than their own jobs, homes and their standard of living, the men fuelled by bitterness and power-lust take responsibility for the way the nation goes. They know what they want and they are ruthless in pursuit of it.

Some of them may be capitalists and some socialists, but the issue is not capitalism vs socialism. It is what fuels the drive for power. The fuel decides what they do with the power when they have got it.

The priority need is for those who do not want secularism, or dictatorship, or just to preserve the materialist status quo, to become a force; a force of ordinary men and women who have decided to become responsible and who are prepared to pay the price in unselfishness and in fighting spirit. Fortunately, such a force exists.

What power fuels them? It needs something strong enough to break us out of the cells in which we are trapped—of blame, bitterness, or fear of responsibility. Fortunately, such a power exists. It has been called by various names in different countries down the ages, but recognised as a fact: the Holy Spirit, the greatest power in the world—God at work in the human heart. It is available to anyone who wants it more than he wants his own comfort.

HUGH ELLIOTT

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that is hate-free, fear-free, greed-free and famine-free.'

Also in the conference invitation is a statement from Dr Elliott Gabellah, Vice-President of the African National Council of Rhodesia: 'If we get our priorities right, we are not going to start by solving the problems, we are going to solve the problem of man and put him straight. Solving other problems will follow.'

'I found a power I can rely on, not the white man or the black man, but some power greater than white and greater than black. That is the power that will solve our problems in Southern Africa. Only that power will change men.'

The Rhodesian government has given the go-ahead; and the Principal of the University, Professor Robert Craig, publicly welcomed the Assembly.

The organisers expect that many countries in Africa, as well as from around the world, may be represented. Already acceptances have come in from people in Zambia, Ethiopia and South Africa.

Among topics with which sessions will deal are: 'A better way than violence', 'Government answers that really work', 'Education for tomorrow's world', and 'Development issues in Africa'.

Farmers will receive special attention, for Rhodesia, with her highly-developed agriculture is a potential 'granary for Africa', surrounded by a number of countries faced with starvation. Farmers are expected from Kenya, South Africa, Britain and Sweden.