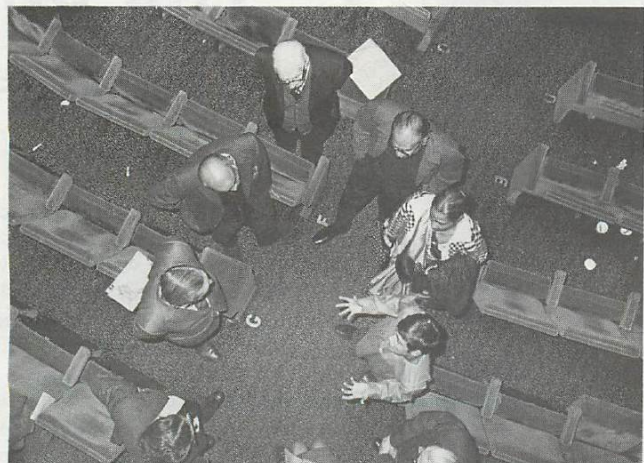


NEW WORLD NEWS

FOR MORAL RE-ARMAMENT



**New
Perspective
on
Asia
and
on
Britain**

**SEE
P2-3**

Conversation
after a
performance.

No Australian figs from thistles

**Rev Dr Malcolm Mackay, former Australian Minister of the Navy,
speaking last month in the Scots Church, Melbourne**

WE ARE LIVING in a time of crisis. There is increasing violence, the breakdown of the nation morally and economically. Chaos is a very real threat.

Crisis means 'turning point' — a time of deciding between courses. Let us make no mistake about the nature and magnitude of the crisis — the degree of change that we face. We are moving out of one age into an entirely new one. The basic systems on which our economic, political and social lives have rested for so long have now proved inadequate. They have to change — in some cases drastically.

Here in Australia our domestic situation grows nearer and nearer to chaos. The battle is far bigger than one between two political leaders with a craving for power. The true battle today is between those who are prepared to back a Government which is out for fundamental changes in the system, virtually at any cost, and those who look back to the old days of full employment, a tiny inflation rate and a burgeoning economy and who feel the present course of events has to be halted at any cost.

Of eggs and omelettes

I believe that neither view is the right one. On the one hand I believe that fundamental changes will have to take place in the economical and political systems of the world. There *is* an excess of privilege, and we *are* overdue for change. On the other hand it seems utterly incredible to me that intelligent people can believe that by stirring up greed, envy, hatred and bitterness it is possible to conceive of a new, more just, more caring society.

There is no finer ideal than a society where

each contributes according to his ability and each receives according to his need. But take a look around you at Australia today and ask: Where do you find people working, producing, giving unselfishly and to the utmost of their ability? Where do you see real caring — the concerned society, where each is eager to see that the needs of the other person are met? Nobody but a fool thinks he can make a good omelette out of bad eggs. Jesus put it that you cannot get figs from thistles.

There are those who believe that it is the system which is the real cause of the greed, hatred and envy which are devastating our age. They miss the point that it has been people who have produced the system — that long before there were any of the developed concepts of economic and social life, there were people whose human nature was the seedbed of the system.

Blunt question

The great vision of the unselfish society has come into the world not from the materialists but from men and women of faith, cradled in moral and spiritual commitment.

There can be no lasting system which has justice, caring, peace and freedom which is not peopled by individuals who have found the way to live above the selfishness which leads to exploitation, the greed which stifles care and concern, and the dishonesties which breed suspicion, resentment and strife. It will take new men to make a new society. We Christians have to believe and sweat and sacrifice for both renewals — but never imagine we can have one without the other.

Let me ask you a blunt question. Do you

find that the deeper the crisis the more difficult you find it to believe that God can and will move mightily to bring the answer? We have not yet seen political violence on a large scale in this land, and certainly we have largely avoided anything like major confrontation. Just suppose for a moment that the unthinkable happened and you and I were faced with a situation of great danger and the threat of death. What would our faith mean to us in such a case?

If you awoke one morning to the awful reality of an invasion or insurrection and heard the crash of guns and bombs and found this lovely church, your house, and much else in heaps of rubble — how strong, how rich, how sure would you be then? If you don't have a God who is relevant for that situation then it's time you did.

Is man a puppet?

SO MANY OF US feel there's nothing we can do, we don't count as individuals, only as statistics, numbers, electric impulses in a computer.

Is man a puppet of his environment? Manipulated by a mass of forces beyond his control, jerked this way and that by the push and pull of his genetic programming, the impersonal forces of society? Or can he, despite the acknowledged power of all these forces, claim his freedom? Can he declare his dependence on a superior force in faith, undergo a personal transformation, and become part of a thought-through, realistic effort to build a new society.

The Archbishop's call to the nation has provoked a debate on these questions. Do you have any evidence, any experiences from your own lives that show how one man does count, how one man (or woman), or a small group, can radiate a quality, a power, that transforms people and structures too? Please send us any ideas; we would like to print a selection of your replies.

EDITORS

The only v

'SONG OF ASIA

IN THREE WEEKS' playing to packed houses in London, the cast of *Song of Asia* have reached into every walk of life with their timely message of breaking the circle of bitterness and blame. As terrorist violence, burgeoning nationalism, the state of the economy and class war dominated the headlines, thousands caught a glimpse of hope through the convictions and experiences of the young Asians. Many more heard them sing and speak over the radio, or read articles in the press. The foyer was crowded long after every show with groups in eager conversation. Invitations to the cast flowed in: to speak in churches, visit embassies, eat in student canteens, take tea with personalities like Malcolm Muggeridge and Dame Flora MacLeod.

On the invitation of members of parliament from the Labour, Conservative and Liberal parties members of the cast attended a lunch in the House of Commons. 'You are playing a major part in recalling us to what we should believe in and how we should treat each other,' said one of their hosts, Andrew Bowden MP. Bernard Weatherill MP, a Conservative whip, invited the Asians to a reception in his Croydon constituency. He said that *Song of Asia* was helping spread understanding in a divided world. Some of the cast had been involved in their countries' problems in the past. 'But now we can all spread different ideas and ideals,' he said. 'Politics has always been the art of compromise,' commented a Labour MP at a private lunch with some of the group. 'But recently in Britain,' he continued, 'we have compromised on the fundamental moral principles. If you don't have these fundamental moral principles, you'll soon have politics left.'

Giving too little

Nationalism is in the news with the publication of a Government White Paper on the devolution of power from Westminster to assemblies in Wales and Scotland. The cast met for an hour and a quarter in a committee room with three MPs from the Scottish National Party. 'There must be a moral base for all political aims,' said one of the Nationalists. The cast's tour took them on to Wales this week, where a Welsh Nationalist MP is among their hosts.

Men in senior positions on the right and left of British life came in to discuss with the cast. Lord Hailsham told them that Britain was facing more than an economic problem. 'People are simply asking too much for themselves and giving too little to other people. That is not an economic problem. Britain must recover some convictions about



Lunch with Members of Parliament in the House of Commons.



Tea with 97-year-old Dame Flora MacLeod of MacLeod. Schoolchildren after a matinee.

Way left?

' IN LONDON

the ultimate purpose and meaning of life.' He spoke of the danger of 'mutual strife', and added, 'I admired your attack on bitterness. The hope lies in the ordinary people from whatever class. Prosperity will follow a renewed sense of confidence and purpose.' A senior trade union adviser to the Government said that the answer for British industry lay not in the passing of laws but in the changing of people. He added that British trade unions ought not only to be cementing up the achievements of this country, but be a voice for the down-trodden of other nations.

The power of silence

'Thank you for that time of listening,' said a Finnish parliamentarian, echoing the feeling of many who were deeply stirred by the time in quiet, of 'listening to the inner voice', that is at the heart of the show's message. The MP continued, 'I've never experienced such a moment in my life, of simple genius. We politicians are sometimes something of actors! You have discovered a vital third element in the interaction of players and audiences — God, and listening to Him.'

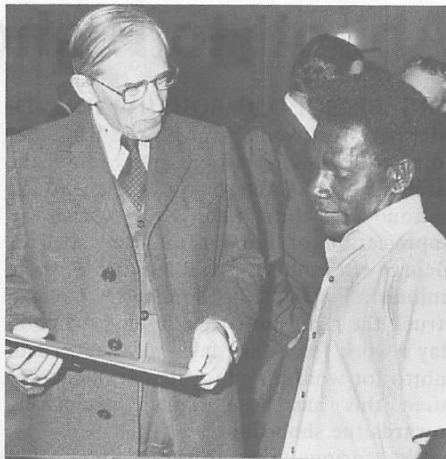
One member of the General Council of the Trades Union Congress, deeply disturbed by the 'terrible selfishness and deep lack of trust in Britain', added, 'I was amazed at the power of that time of silence in the play. Often I feel the need to get away from the problems we face — and reflect on them — but this time of quiet was different.' The national president of another union said, '*Song of Asia* freed me from my tensions. I came with many worries on my mind. I go out in peace.' A leading international socialist figure wished them success for their future work 'as couriers of an idea of faith, which I am trying to understand'.

A prominent businessman and former Lord Mayor of London said, 'You should run for three months. If you decide to, I'd like to help with your itinerary. You've got something to say that will be relevant for as long as humanity survives.'

B K Nehru, Indian High Commissioner to London, met the cast during the interval. He told them, 'It has been a very wonderful performance. And of course the content is superb. A wonderful message. My wife and I have always followed MRA with great interest. I hope you will have a very successful tour and meet with all the interest you deserve.'

'I expect you all to go to the theatre during the next week,' Bishop Goodwin Hudson told all his congregation at the end of a presentation by members of the cast. He

SONG OF ASIA contd p4



Indian High Commissioner, B K Nehru, during the interval with (r to l) Te Rangi Huata, Neerja Chowdhury, Rupa Chinal, Niketu Iralu and Russi Lala.

Sensitivity

SONG OF ASIA is a kaleidoscopic presentation of cultural glimpses of Asia, which endeavours to give vent to the feelings and aspirations of Asian people. Not only that, it attempts to bring to the awareness of the western world what Asia, in its own humble way, and Asians, with their sensitivity, can contribute towards a better world.

This, in short, is the message and hope that the artists involved in this drama express. The entire dramatisation is accomplished by songs, dances, comic episodes and very human situations culled from different countries of Asia. It is colourful and spectacular. The tragedy and comedy is brought out with an unabashed simplicity and sincerity.

Being an Asian myself, what attracted and filled my rapt attention is the grace, combined with humanity, that characterised *Song of Asia*. Auden once said that we should love one another or die; I think *Song of Asia* is a crystallisation of what the great poet had said.

Jaya Kumar
reviewing 'Song of Asia' in 'Sennet',
student paper of London University.

(Top left)

The Dutch Ambassador to Ireland, Dr Felix van Raalte, with Leo Laita from Papua New Guinea.

(Middle left)

Producer Suresh Chandra, from Fiji, with Albert Ingram, a senior foreman at British Leyland and an initiator of 'Action '75'.

(Left)

Nuns meeting a Laotian member of the cast.

PHOTOS BY RENG FELT

SONG OF ASIA contd from p3

collected £30 in a coffee pot towards their expenses after the service. To a Salvation Army Commissioner *Song of Asia* was an exhilarating and challenging experience. 'A revival of true heart religion will come not from the expected West, but from Asia itself,' he said. William Cockell, Vice-President of the Methodist Conference, and responsible for the training of 120,000 young people, added, 'It is a very powerful show, with a clear moral message.' To the Director of the Festival of Light, it had a powerful educational use: 'It is ideal for opening up moral and spiritual perspectives for children,' he wrote.

Hundreds of pupils and teachers from 23 schools attended special matinees. 'You've made us think of far bigger questions than our own affairs,' said one pupil. 'It's how to deal with hate and violence.'

Felix, the newspaper of Imperial College, promised that students who make the short journey to the theatre 'will be rewarded with a captivating evening. One of the things that strikes you about the musical is the conviction with which the cast convey their ideas. The short scenes, which are linked by bouts of amusing repartee between a naive young Indian and an old sage, are mainly drawn from the real-life experiences of members of the cast.'

Welcome challenge

The group has been welcomed to Britain by an extraordinary cross-section of the country's life ranging from bishops to international sportsmen; from senior employers to members of the executive of the National Union of Mineworkers; also by parliamentarians and leaders of the Indian, Pakistani, West Indian and African communities. Britain needs the experience of reconciliation and hope these young Asians bring, they state in a message. 'We welcome their challenge and believe they will help us to enlarge our horizons.'

This element specially interested those from overseas communities in Britain. A leading Sikh said he wanted to devote his life to the ideas he had seen on stage, and a founder of Bombay's Dalit Panthers, who draw their philosophy from America's Black Panther movement, wanted to introduce them to his people, the Harijans (formerly Untouchables). The deputy editor of the *West Indian World*, which circulates widely among Britain's immigrant communities, spoke of the message of healing rather than confrontation. Reviewing *Song of Asia* in his paper, he wrote, 'They came and pricked the hearts of the European people with their soul-searching songs and stories, tugging at the conscience of the audience. A glimpse of what Asia could be — a continent ready to learn and to teach, to forgive and to give. It highlights the hidden treasures of Asia — its faith, its colour, its basic unity amidst its

Abbott to Bishop

THE BISHOP OF SOUTHWARK, Dr Mervyn Stockwood, said on the BBC that some trade unionists were angry about the Archbishop of Canterbury's message to the nation. He then went on to give an appreciation of Labour pioneers such as George Lansbury. Speaking as a trade unionist, I personally thought Dr Coggan struck the right note when he said, 'A good day's work for a fair day's pay isn't a bad motto for worker and for management.' So often this has been slanted exclusively towards the shop-floor.

It's curious that Bishop Stockwood should give credit to George Lansbury. For when the Bishop places emphasis upon a change of environment being essential before we can expect a change of character, his philosophy contradicts that of the Labour pioneer. Lansbury clearly expressed his beliefs when he said, 'You may work for a change of system and a changed world, and you may get them, but unless you change the hearts of men you are defeated in your aim because they will not face up to their responsibilities in a moral and spiritual way.'

This to me is the dilemma the Labour Government finds itself in with some of its Socialist policies. We have changed the system in a number of our major industries, replacing private enterprise with nationalisation, perhaps quite rightly so. But what do we see? Exactly what George Lansbury warned us of, gross irresponsibility from management down. Because of a lack of moral and spiritual fibre, the attitude is, 'The Government's a big firm, the money doesn't come out of our pockets, so why worry?' And so private plans and fiddles come before the interests of the firm.

I know, because I spent the last 21 years in a nationalised industry. I can also say that a change of system offering greater materialist benefits would never have changed the 'I'm all right, Jack' philosophy of my own life.

diversity. It weaves a pattern of the history, the heritage and the culture of this vast continent. Profound truths alternate with fun and humour as the show unfolds and true stories are enacted on stage. They are singing to change the world. Don't miss it.'

Members of the Rhodesian African National Council in London attended one performance, and saw in it possibilities for a new spirit in the critical situation in their country. Seven Ethiopian exiles were at another performance. Some come from areas where guerrilla war is in progress. They had two long sessions with the cast. 'We've tried every way except this one,' said an air force general, 'maybe this is the only way left.'

A delegation of five Canadian Indians flew to London to invite *Song of Asia* to

Ironically it was through someone from an opposite social background to myself who, by his commitment to the principles of the Sermon on the Mount, injected a new factor into my life. I became acutely conscious of a voice within me speaking as clearly as though over my shoulder saying, 'You are bitter and critical of your parents and your country, but what are you doing to put things right?'

Environmental scapegoat

I had to look back through my life before I felt the real impact of the challenge. I realised that I was using my environment during my upbringing, with all its insecurity and exploitations, as a scapegoat to avoid doing what was morally right myself. I also realised that sixty million people on this track is perhaps the reason why Britain is where she is today. The moment I accepted the challenge to put right what was wrong my own life the miracle happened. I became motivated along the lines of 'How can I best serve others and my country?' instead of my former attitude of 'What do I get out of it and how does it affect me?'

Since that day I have felt compelled to take moral and spiritual responsibility, sometimes reluctantly, but through it I find myself giving constructive leadership to my industry and country. I believe that the majority of men and women have a potential for greatness, and it is along these lines they will find it.

As one who has appreciation for George Lansbury's Christian outlook, I hope and pray that Archbishop Coggan and other leaders of the Church will make the Lansbury challenge I have quoted reverberate throughout this land.

FRANK ABBOTT
a member of the Transport and General Workers' Union

their country. They said it portrayed the basics of their own culture, would help strengthen moral values in their own people and country, and knit together the peoples of Asia and North America. George Manuel, Chairman of the National Indian Brotherhood of Canada and of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples, told the Asians, 'I am grateful for the effective way in which you have expressed what needs to happen in the world.'

A Japanese journalist working for the External Services of the BBC said after the show, 'It is a mirror of Asia. Often it is said that the cultural, racial and religious varieties of Asia are a disadvantage. Tonight I got a feeling they can be changed into advantages and assets for her own people and the world.'

ANDREW STALLYBRASS