

Michel Orphelin as St Francis of Assisi in 'Un Soleil en Pleine Nuit'.

BELGIUM 'SYMPHONY FOR A NEW WORLD'

OVER 1200 people packed the well-known Salle St Michel in Europe's NATO and EEC capital, Brussels, last month to see Hugh Steadman Williams' and Kathleen Johnson's musical about the life of St Francis, *Un Soleil en Pleine Nuit*. The presentation was part of a three-week, six-town, twelve-performance tour of Belgium initiated by the Franciscan fraternity as a main feature of their commemoration of St Francis's birth, 800 years ago.

In all 6000 people saw Michel Orphelin's presentation of the one-man show, which the Catholic daily *La Libre Belgique* described as 'an invitation to the audience to take action themselves to renew their lives'. In a feature on the play on October 4, the actual day of the anniversary, the paper commented, 'Through Michel Orphelin, mime and singer, actor and dancer, Francis of Assisi becomes our contemporary...In identifying himself with the troubadour of Assisi, Orphelin draws on his own experience of the inner life. He too has let himself be challenged by his subject.'

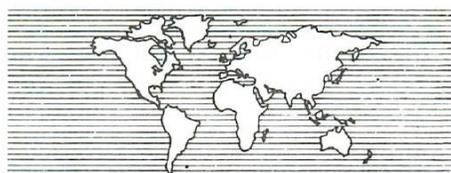
Different groups organised the performances in each venue—in the ancient Walloon (French-speaking) town of Tournai, a group of Catholic teachers; in the Flemish town of Ghent, an association of French nationals living in Belgium; in the Ardennes town of Bastogne and Carlsbourg and the industrial Walloon town of Manage, the Franciscan community and lay fraternity. In each town Michel Orphelin and the international group of technicians and musicians who stage and accompany his performance were lodged with local families.

The performance in Bastogne, in the Belgian province of Luxembourg, was reviewed in the provincial newspaper *Avenir du Luxembourg*. 'The saint who without doubt has brought most people to Christ doesn't have to depend on being discovered only through books,' wrote the paper's theatre critic, Julien Bestgen. 'He is there alone on the stage for nearly two hours confronting the year 2000. His strength is his self-denial; his richness, his love; his demands, his joy. He reminds us that there is only one way out of the present crisis—through a real concern for every brother human-being. In the same way, there is only one way to save our planet—by accepting every created order, from plant- and animal-life upwards, just as Francis the poet expressed it. Michel Orphelin should be followed, literally, by our politicians.'

'So bravo for Hugh Williams' text and Michel Orphelin's interpretation—at once precise but living, sober but exuberant, resolutely contemporary but faithful to the original sources. Bravo, too, to the co-ordinators and artists of sound, projection and lighting. What they offer is a great deal more than a lesson or a programme. It is a light in the darkness or, if you prefer, a symphony for a new world.'

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Special pull-out feature on 'Clashpoint', a play from Britain's cities, inside



Clashpoint in the home—Tom (Bob Riddell) and Rose Jennings (Polly March)

We Australians generally pride ourselves on our national ethos of 'a fair go' for everyone. Yet we are feeling increasing doubts about our record of practising this ethos, particularly towards the Aboriginal people, writes RON LAWLER.

There is a growing political struggle to rectify this. It has focused in a movement for recognition of Aborigines' rights to land ownership. Taking advantage of a world audience at the recent Commonwealth Games in Brisbane, Aboriginal people held a peaceful march for land rights. On the same day another group marched over the border from New South Wales into Queensland where they were welcomed by the mayor and many citizens. Smaller, illegal marches by 'radical' Aborigines followed—and grabbed the headlines.

There is much fuzzy thinking. I know one white Australian who will not buy anything Japanese because of war experiences, yet fails to understand why some Aborigines cannot forget the past. He is ready enough to accept credit for Australia's achievements

but not blame for her wrongs. To condemn another nation for the darker pages of its history while refusing to accept where we have been wrong is phoney and unconvincing.

It is useless for us white Australians to run away from our guilt. In my experience, the way forward is to face the Almighty, letting Him show me where I am wrong and how to make restitution. Accepting His forgiveness, I can make a fresh start and learn how best to use my life. This experience is available to all. Its fruit will be a nation with a great contribution to the world.

I am proud to be an Australian because of the achievements and qualities of my forebears and the unique spirit and landforms of our continent. The pride I take in my nation grows when I see Australians, of whatever origin, being responsible for all that we are—the good and the bad.

Reg Blow, Adviser on Aboriginal Affairs to the Victoria State Government, is one who has accepted this responsibility:

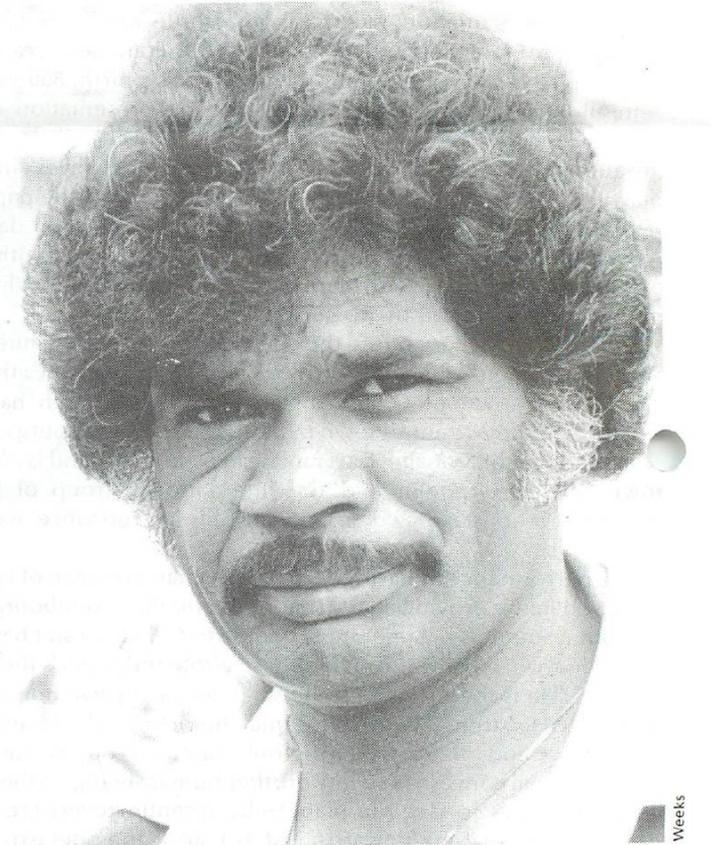
BREAKING OUT OF THE COCOON

AUSTRALIA'S DESERTS GROW larger each year because of the impact of non-Aboriginal settlement. Yet for 40,000 or so years Aboriginal people seem to have accurately deduced the laws of nature and lived by them as custodians of creation. 'What Aborigines can offer Australia is a way of life which perpetuates life,' explains Reg Blow. 'We believe that every living thing has a spirit of its own. So trees and even the light have life. If you give to the fertile valley you maintain its ability to produce, whereas if you keep doing the sort of thing that robs it of strength you will end up with a desert. Our people practise such values as caring and sharing as a matter of survival.' He believes that Aboriginal values could be his people's most important contribution to the world.

Safeguard

Reg Blow was introduced to his people's culture as a boy in the Queensland bush when he went to stay with an uncle who instructed him in 'how to be an effective person'. 'He gave me such things as spirits to protect me, spirits for strength, spirits to find the woman I would eventually marry. I still believe in them. These are the things that have held me together.' However the spirits only protect him, he believes if he 'walks in the light', not doing things that are against the community. 'If they desert me, I become very vulnerable to the other spirits that are always hanging around trying to influence one's behaviour.' This heritage has given him a strong sense of his Aboriginal identity—which he says has been an important safeguard against barbs of racial discrimination.

For Reg Blow has had to learn to live in the non-Aboriginal world. His marriage to Walda, a Victorian girl, brought him to settle in an outer suburb of Melbourne. He later became a union delegate for gas workers. He then helped establish and



run a co-operative which assisted his people in adjusting to city life. In 1981 he became Adviser to the Victorian Government on Aboriginal matters. He is now involved in consultations throughout Victoria as part of the new state policy of returning land to Aborigines to make up for past dispossession.

BREAKING OUT contd p7

Weeks

CLASHPOINT



Suresh (Jay Kistasamy), Pat (Margaret O'Kane), Cornelius (Miguel Richards) and Mrs Browne (Carol Denyer) at Paddy's Place.

BEYOND THE LAW

WHEN PETER NEWSAM took over recently as Chairman of Britain's Commission for Racial Equality, he may have pondered the words of his predecessor, David Lane: 'The law alone cannot do the whole job.... For that the hearts and minds of people throughout the country must be won over.'

The 1981 Census figures, just published, show that Britain's black and Asian population now totals 2,400,000. The great majority live in the industrial belts around London, the West Midlands and Bradford—areas with poor housing and high unemployment. Ending discrimination towards this substantial section of the community and promoting racial harmony is everybody's job, not just that of Mr Newsam. The racial element in last year's riots demonstrated the cost of our failure to appreciate this fact.

Britain's race relations have an international dimension as well. What happens in Toxteth or Southall makes headlines in Lagos, Pretoria and New Delhi. Africans and Asians will judge Britain—and the democratic values she represents—by the way people of their own race are treated here. Britain's race relations can kindle hope or increase despair in other countries divided on ethnic lines.

A growing proportion of the human race is making its home in the city. According to the United Nations, 50,000 people a day are migrating into cities. By 2001 half the world's population will have done so.

In Britain, as in other industrial societies, the inner cities have become a melting-pot, rich in human resources, if often materially deprived. The great industrial conurbations are a microcosm of the world as it is. Could they become a pattern for the world as it is meant to be?

If this is to happen there will need to be change at the grassroots of society—on the level of individual attitudes, which, as Mr Lane pointed out, cannot be altered by laws alone. We must see our cities not as a problem but as an opportunity—a new frontier in human development.

Clashpoint, the multi-racial play which we feature in the next four pages, is one of many initiatives people in Britain are taking to bring about such changes and to promote this vision.

ALAN FAUNCE

HOWARD BIRD, a freelance production manager, is 'Clashpoint's' technical adviser and plays the part of John Jennings. He tells how the play evolved:

READY TO GO ANYWHERE

THE RIOTS IN BRITAIN during the summer of '81 shocked the world. They have riots in Watts, Paris, Madrid and Delhi—but not in Britain! What malaise had turned some inner-city zones into no-go areas? It wasn't just a question of race, although race relations did deteriorate during the late Seventies with the growth of the National Front and the break-down of trust between the police and many black British. The media often portrayed black youths as criminals, adding to the mistrust.

High unemployment and government spending cuts hit already deprived areas hardest. Young people, both black and white, were particularly affected; with the young blacks experiencing discrimination, despite laws to prevent this. The apathy and ignorance of many and the agitation of political extremists combined with some extra-hot weather to boil the cauldron.

Overnight everyone became aware that there was a problem. Not everyone was taken by surprise, however. Some had already been working to build links with their fellow countrymen of different classes and races and were well aware of the explosive potential of inflamed feelings alongside icy indifference.

Newcastle housewife Betty Gray was one who had a strong conviction that multi-racial Britain could pioneer a new pattern of society for the world. She believed that official action to develop harmony between Britain's different racial groups was essential—she is a member of the Newcastle Community Relations Council and the Tyneside Committee for Racial Harmony—but just as important were the initiatives of individuals to build friendships. 'Through these friendships develops the spirit that makes laws work,' she said recently. 'Through them, one discovers which

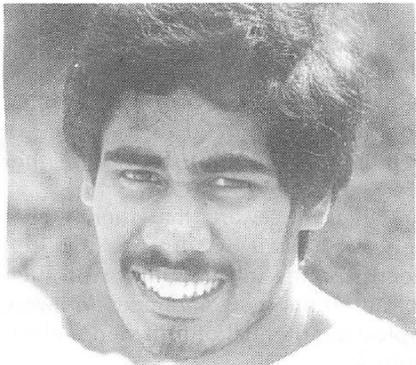
READY contd back page of pull-out



BETTY GRAY is a member of the Newcastle Community Relations Council and of the Tyneside Committee for Racial Harmony, and a former teacher. She first wrote 'Clashpoint' in 1977.

I HAVE A DEEP COMMITMENT to making our multi-racial society really work. In writing *Clashpoint* I wanted to offer an idea that could heal the bitterness of the divisions of class and race which so affect the life of our country. The plot is based on my own experiences of such an idea.

Nothing changes at a deep enough level unless there is a change in our own human nature. Moral Re-Armament, with its guidelines of absolute honesty, purity, unselfishness and love, and its emphasis on the truth that God will show us what to do if we listen to Him, shows people the way to experience that kind of change, and to relate it to the needs around them. Then the whole dimension of change—personal, social, national and international—becomes a real possibility.



JAY KISTASAMY, an economist, plays the part of Suresh Pathak, head boy of East Moor School.

BECAUSE I AM an immigrant with Indian ancestry, most people think I am free from discriminatory attitudes. I always smugly thought the same. It was something of a revelation when I realised that I too discriminate.

Discrimination begins when I put

people into stereotyped boxes like 'Indians always talk with accents and are reserved, blacks always like reggae music, young white men with short haircuts will always hate immigrants...' But if I do this I am imposing limits on people from which they will find it difficult to break free.



CAROL DENYER, who plays Hazel Browne, does freelance secretarial and market research work. She started the Street Theatre Group, Fulham, in 1979. Her husband GARY, a switch-board operator, is the play's sound technician.

'CLASHPOINT' taught us that you do not need professional qualifications to take responsibility for your community.

As a multi-racial cast we have had to grow towards each other. It has been exciting to discover our differences—and surprising to discover our similarities. Other cultures do not threaten our own, but enhance it. Each time we meet as a cast, Gary and I get an overwhelming feeling—'We have arrived home, we are among family.'



BOB RIDDELL, who plays Tom Jennings and Paddy, worked in local government in South London for 47 years and has held office in local branches of his trade union, NALGO.

EMPIRE DAY was a big event when I was at school 60 years ago. We never gave a thought to the people who lived

MEET THE

Fulcrum Players, who present 'Clashpoint' are volunteers from different walks of life always the same. Some of the company

in the countries Britain ruled.

When independent Fiji was received into the United Nations in 1970, her Prime Minister made a speech about Fiji's colonial experience. He spoke of Britain's legacy of the sugar industry and the rule of law, but also of superiority and arrogance, of too much direction and too little participation. I had recently visited his country, and this speech brought me face to face with what the people of our former colonies and dependencies felt about us. I decided to accept responsibility for my nation's past errors and attitudes.



MARGARET O'KANE, a secretary, plays Pat Jennings, a prefect at the school.

WE LIVE IN AN AREA where we whites are the ethnic minority.

A young Asian neighbour was murdered last year for no apparent reason. A Sikh friend, who has lived here for 7 years and contributed greatly to the community as a teacher, tried to get permission for his father to come here from the Punjab, so that he and his wife could look after him in his old age and ill-health. When he arrived the immigration officials refused to believe he was really our friends' father and questioned them for hours. Finally they gave him a permit—but because of the treatment he had received, he decided to go home.

Hurts inflicted by indifference or superiority do as much violence to people's hearts as any physical confrontation. To bring healing we must feel the pain with our friends and neighbours. Equality means that we are all one body and that if one part of it bleeds, the whole body suffers.

COMPANY

'in association with Moral Re-Armament, e and cities. Because of this, the cast is not speak for themselves below:



POLLY MARCH, a professional actress, plays Rose Jennings.

I AGREED to do one reading of 'Clashpoint' between engagements. Then I meant to forget it. But it worked a kind of magic. The effect on the audience moved me to look more closely at what the play was seeking to do. I realised that it was a small way I could help people take fresh responsibility in their community situation. Since then I have taken part in as many performances as I can.



SUBBIAH KISTASAMY who teaches in London shares the part of Mr Varma, deputy headmaster of the school, with **HARI SHUKLA**, Senior Community Relations Officer for Tyne and Wear, and **SATRAJ DEWAR SINGH**, a computer programmer. Mr Kistasamy says:

THE PLAY emphasises the moral and spiritual basis on which broken relationships can be mended, racial harmony established and families united. I want it to awaken an awareness in people of the hurts others suffer and the solutions available for their cure.

In Britain we are now paying the

price for the way we have lived in the past. A better world awaits us if we decide to help shape the future on a sound moral basis.



MIGUEL RICHARDS, a builder, plays Cornelius Browne, deputy head-boy.

THE CHARACTER OF CORNELIUS reveals the deep anger in many black youth—an anger which must be understood if it is to be answered.

Clashpoint dramatises division not only between races, but also between classes. But it recognises that people can become different. This is the root of the answer.

World peace could hinge on how our multi-racial society functions.



Professional actress **CHRIS CHANNER** plays Mrs Clarke Jones, headmistress of East Moor School.

WHILE I WAS working with the cast of an African play I found myself bending over backwards to please everyone, for fear that I might be thought prejudiced. I didn't speak out when I felt things were wrong. I was discriminating in a back-handed way, because I was not as open with my black friends as with my white ones. I had to apologise for this hypocrisy before we could have an honest working relationship.

As the West Indian mother in *Clashpoint* tells her white friend, 'You make us into second-class citizens if you think we don't know right from wrong.'



JUDY NEWELL, a production assistant and drama teacher, plays the part of Pat Jennings in some performances.

I WAS WORKING as a supply teacher in a secondary boys' school in Brixton during the riots. Relationships between boys of different races and backgrounds within the school were good even during the most heated weeks, although it was estimated that 50 per cent were indirectly involved in the troubles through older brothers or cousins.

This showed me how problems could be overcome if relationships between various racial groups were stronger—and if we understood each other better. Many in Britain are ignorant of the difficulties that face the black population.

Clashpoint could go some way to close that great divide and heal some of the divisions which culminated in the riots on our streets last year.



NANCY RUTHVEN, co-author and director, is an actress and playwright.

THEATRE has the power to grab your emotions by the throat and fire the imagination with fresh ideas and hope.

What I hope we can offer with *Clashpoint* is 'whole-cloth' theatre, where we are committed to live out the ideas which emerge from the story of the play and where the company is a microcosm of the family of races and classes that we want this nation to be.



Rival marches of the British League and the Society for World Oppressed Peoples threaten to converge at East Moor School: right, the headmistress and deputy headmaster (Chris Channer and Satraj Dewar Singh) discuss the danger, and, above, Hazel Brown (Carol Denyer on right) tells SWOP's president (Polly March) that she will not support the march.



READY contd from front page of pull-out

attitudes need to change; which customs need to be adapted; what other cultures and faiths have to contribute to society; what from our nation's past may need to be put right with another nation.'

Out of her experiences and her desire to pass on to others her vision for multi-racial Britain, Betty Gray wrote a play. The first version of *Clashpoint* was given as a play-reading in London in 1977. Nancy Ruthven, an experienced playwright, saw it. She liked the ideas in the play and its approach—'not just the obvious racists-become-nice, but both race and class issues portrayed through school and home,' she said later. She offered to help Mrs Gray 'polish' the script and this was the start of a collaboration which has seen the continuing evolution of the play. Others have contributed, too. For example, a performance was given in July 1981 at a Moral Re-Armament conference on multi-racial issues. Comments by delegates were invited—and offered. The authors took note and a re-write of the play followed.

In April 1982, Alan Faunce, a member of the Council of Racial Equality for Hammersmith and Fulham, invited *Clashpoint* to his area. By this time, the volunteer company had been strengthened with one or two professionals including myself. One of the audience, Carl Johnson, Treasurer of the West Ealing Anglo-Caribbean Society, with others, invited *Clashpoint* to Ealing. He commented afterwards, '*Clashpoint* moved me so much that I decided to be reconciled with an Englishman who, I felt, had told lies about me for his own benefit. So I have now built bridges and become reconciled with that person.' An Englishman who saw the play remarked, '*Clashpoint* has changed my thinking and attitude towards minority groups.'

Other invitations began to arrive—Coventry, Liverpool, Lewisham. The Liverpool performance took place in June in the Paddington School hall on the edge of Toxteth. A cross-section of the city's people was there—councillors, leaders of the Caribbean, Hindu and Pakistani communities, members of the Liverpool-born black community and people from industry, waged and unwaged. 'This play should be seen everywhere,' said one member of the Community Relations Council. This was echoed by a teacher, 'Now you should go to the leafy lanes of Liverpool. People don't understand what actually happens in the inner cities—the pain, the pressures, the potential.'

The biggest break for all of us was an invitation to take *Clashpoint* to the Moral Re-Armament conference centre in Caux, Switzerland, in the summer of 1982. Till then rehearsals had had to take place at times which suited the

cast, many of whom had jobs. Now we were together for a long enough period to improve both the acting and the technical side. Betty Gray was with us in Caux and together we were able to discuss the future of the play in the context of Britain's needs.

We felt slightly timid performing in front of Caux international audiences. Yet South Africans told us that the play's message was as relevant to their country as it was to ours. An American said that if a Puerto Rican took the part of the Indian, the play would have important things to say in New York.

Then, our confidence restored, back to Britain—Ealing, Newbury, Newcastle and Croydon so far, with most performances bringing new invitations.

Newbury was in many ways a fulfilment of the 'leafy lanes' advice. We performed in St Bartholomew's School which has nearly 600 sixth-formers, more than any other comprehensive school in Britain. Situated pleasantly in the Berkshire countryside, nearly all Newbury's inhabitants are white. Howard Grace, a teacher at the school, explained, 'We felt that putting the play on for students, parents, friends and staff would help broaden attitudes and understanding of things that concern our fellow countrymen.' He went on, 'We were struck by this alternative to confrontation and riots as a way of getting across the aspirations of people who live in the inner cities. Last year's riots left many people here feeling the police needed to take tougher action. *Clashpoint* left people searching their consciences. They felt challenged to take a new look at their hardened attitudes.'

The Croydon performance was a feature of 'One World Week'. The response was enthusiastic. Yet equally important was the multi-racial teamwork involved in mounting the play and doing the publicity that attracted 200 on a rainy night. This was epitomised by the man who had previously said that 'all blacks should go back' but stood welcoming the audience at the door of the hall.

Clashpoint is a theatrical chameleon that can adapt to any setting from a school hall to a fully equipped theatre. We are ready to go anywhere we are invited. Our hope is that wherever we go we can, in Betty Gray's words, help 'heal the bitterness of the divisions of class and race which so affect the life of our country'.

Photos by Channer, Howard, Gardner, Cummock.
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BREAKING OUT contd from p2

Mr Blow first went overseas in 1977 when he attended an international Moral Re-Armament conference in New Zealand. Meeting his Maori hosts and other indigenous people, he saw for the first time that others had suffered in similar ways to his own people. He says, 'That widened my horizons. Within our Aboriginal groups we seem to have insulated ourselves from other parts of the community. This has limited our personal growth and development. We have to break out of that cocoon we have built ourselves so we can take in fresh ideas and develop ourselves to see beyond our own personal plight.'

At the conference he also first heard absolute honesty, purity, unselfishness and love spoken of as standards to live by. 'Maybe you can't achieve 100 per cent,' he says of these standards, 'but if you apply yourself 100 per cent to living them, you've done your best.'

Far from bottom

Two years ago Reg Blow again travelled to an overseas MRA conference, this time in India. There he saw people who were less well-off materially than the Aborigines. 'I had thought that we were on the bottom of the ladder. There I saw we were far from the bottom,' he explains. 'At least we can claim unemployment benefit whereas in India there was none. People who worked actually received about 80 per cent of their needs. They were busy just trying to live. We can live well with social security benefits but create the major part of our problems by having a fixation about our own plight.'

At the conference he got to know another Australian, a manager in a large mining company. The manager says that through this he learnt how Aboriginal people felt, as well as much of their background and history. He decided to help his colleagues understand the Aborigines' situation and 'how together we can develop the resources of the country in a way that is right for everyone'. Since then Reg Blow and the manager have kept in regular touch.

Unlikely friendship

Mr Blow says, 'He and I shouldn't really get along because Aboriginal belief is totally against the way in which miners are exploiting the land. However, by his openness he has convinced me that his company is partly responsible for the high standard of living that our country enjoys, as well as providing work. This could be regarded as brain-washing but because I know that he aims to run his life by absolute moral standards and is honest, I have faith that what he says is right.'

The manager arranged for Mr Blow to address his colleagues. 'I put forward an Aboriginal view of our situation in Australia. This created understanding of our apprehension when mining proposals are made. As a result, I was involved in giving advice to a mining company when they were drafting guide lines for mining and exploration groups in dealing with Aboriginal communities.'

Of his relationship with the manager he says, 'Because I, too, aim at absolute moral standards in my life, we have found a mutual agreement that promotes respect and wants the best for each other.' He sees this as a pattern for Australia—people not only respecting each other but genuinely aiming at the best for them without any guarantee of gaining anything from their achievements. ■

ARGENTINES— 'FIRST FORUM'

A GROUP FROM ARGENTINA were among the participants in this summer's Moral Re-Armament assembly in Caux, Switzerland. One of them, agronomist Professor Jorge Molina, described the conference as 'the first international forum, where the bridges of reconciliation could begin to be built, offered to us Argentines since the conflict'.

'We arrived at Caux conscious of how much help our country needs,' he went on. 'Here we have become aware of how much our country has to give to other nations.' Dr Molina, whose work on maintaining the fertility of tropical soils has won him international acclaim, has carried out development projects for the FAO, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in many parts of Latin America. He had just been conferring with African government officials in Caux on how to increase food production in poverty-stricken parts of their continent.

At Caux the Argentines were able to discuss the wider consequences of the South Atlantic confrontation and how to prevent disastrous repercussions through the world.

Next year

'Europe and North America cannot go on ignoring the destiny of 300 million Latin Americans,' said Dr Molina. 'Continuing division between Europe and Latin America, and between North and Latin America, could result in a nuclear-armed South America—a great danger to the world.'

Ellinor Salmon, a founder of the United Nations Association of Argentina and a leading member of the British community in Buenos Aires, paid tribute in Caux to the way all British institutions and property in Argentina had been protected during the conflict. This was unusual in time of war, she said. 'I knew that Argentina, the country to which I owe so much, needed the answer of Moral Re-Armament. I feel myself responsible that I did not live it fully.' She had now given a home to MRA in Buenos Aires and already had volunteers to help her and other Argentines take the message of MRA to the people and leaders.

The Argentines were in Caux largely because, in the midst of the fighting in the South Atlantic, some Uruguayans had invited Argentines, North Americans, British and other Latin Americans to their country, for a time of seeking together for God's wisdom about how to bring healing.

Some of the meetings took place in the home of Oscar Alaniz, who had been an executive of a regional organisation of American nations. Speaking about the meetings, he said in Caux, 'It was first necessary to clear out the little Malvinas wars from our own hearts.' His marriage had been remade as a result of the conference in Caux in 1981. This had led to his wife and he refinding their earlier calling to build unity between people and nations. This summer they were in Caux with their daughter, who is a doctor, and their grandson.

During August 1983, there will be a session of the Caux conference with a 'Latin American emphasis'. Europeans, North Americans and people of the Latin nations will discuss how to heal the growing rifts between their continents. ■

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ESCAPE TO LIVE

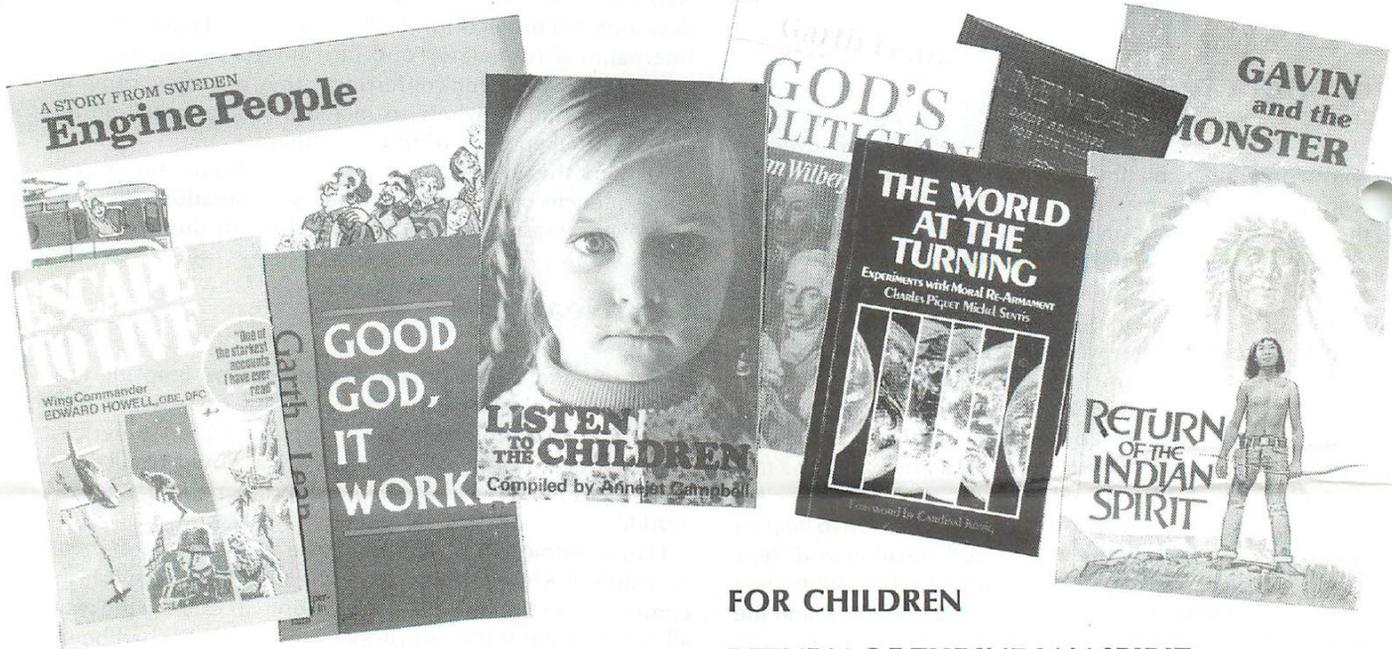
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