

Report from India's vital North-East

'On eve of new era for Hills' people'



A VULNERABLE and strategic area of India is the North East. The region, composed of the states of Assam and Nagaland and the North East Frontier Agency, is connected to the rest of India by a strip of land only 40 miles wide. Surrounded by China, Tibet, East Pakistan and Burma, the area contains India's oil deposits and most of the nation's tea plantations.

In the North East last week the Governor of Assam, B K Nehru, wel-

comed an MRA international force with the musical revue *Anything to Declare?* It had been invited by the Chief Minister, B P Chaliha; the General Secretary of the All Party Hill Leaders' Conference (APHLC), Stanley Nichols-Roy; and other leaders.

In 1968 *The Indian Express*, carried an editorial entitled 'Will Assam be a second Vietnam?' At the time, the All Party Hill Leaders Conference (APHLC), pressing the demands of the hill people for a separate state, were prepared for violence to achieve their aim. Bitterness and violence marked the relationship between Assam's plains people, the hill people and the New Delhi Government.

Bid for integrity in government of new state

THE NEW STATE of Meghalaya in India's North East will strive to demonstrate integrity in Government said a political leader of the area last week.

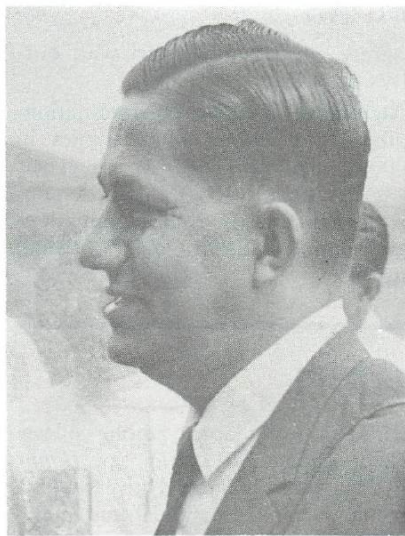
Stanley Nichols-Roy, General Secretary of the All Party Hill Leaders' Conference (APHLC), told Assam businessmen:

'As you know we are going to try a new experiment in political and social relations. But this experiment will not work unless the men it involves apply the ideas of MRA.'

'I suggest,' said Nichols-Roy, who is also a Shillong businessman, 'that the businessmen of Shillong are going to meet a new outlook in their relations with the Government. We shall expect honesty in business and we shall expect honesty in Government affairs.'

Nichols-Roy declared, 'If I have anything to do with the new Government, this is what I am going to fight for.'

K P TRIPATHY, Minister of Finance of Assam, speaking after a performance of *Anything to Declare?*, referred to the dehumanising influence of much modern technology and described MRA as an attempt 'to reintegrate mankind in a massive moral effort'.



Stanley Nichols-Roy

He went on, 'The greatness of this movement seems to be that it is not led by a superman. It is a movement led by average men who try to look inwards and see where they themselves have missed. This attempt of the average man to approach the ultimate is the new phenomenon. This revue will leave its mark behind the North East.'

No violence

The General Secretary of the APHLC, Stanley Nichols-Roy attended a conference at the MRA centre in Western India. On his return he told a meeting of hills people, 'I have learnt through MRA we can stand for our political aims and still love our neighbours in the plains.' Together with a political opponent, the Assamese Chief Minister, B P Chaliha, he initiated an MRA conference in Assam and invited two MRA plays to perform throughout the state.

In 1969 when the bill for the autonomous hill state of Meghalaya was presented to Parliament in Delhi, Assam State withdrew its opposition. It was passed with the biggest majority on record in the Indian parliament, when one year earlier it had been defeated. There was no outbreak of violence within Assam itself. The state comes into being in April, 1970.

B B Lyngdoh, an APHLC leader termed it 'The eve of a new era for the hill people.'

We are sorry to have to inform our readers that we were unable to publish last week's edition owing to a last-minute strike at the printers.



Assam State Secretariat, Shillong

Governor of Assam: 'Debt of gratitude to MRA'



Governor of Assam

Hills people's leader: 'New era begins'

B B LYNGDOH, a leader of the APHLC, said welcoming an MRA force to Assam last week, 'You arrive on the eve of a new era for the hill people. We are making an experiment in human relationships. Your coming here and your message will contribute to the success of this experiment.' He and the Secretary of the APHLC, Stanley Nichols-Roy, who also spoke, are members of a committee of hosts to the international force with the revue *Anything to Declare?*

Speaking on behalf of the committee of hosts, P R Kyndiah, the Shillong Municipality Chairman, told the MRA force, 'My own experience of MRA has given me a new dimension of thinking. MRA brings change and change brings



B B Lyngdoh

progress, but we must start with ourselves.'

Members of the 85-strong international force are staying with families in Shillong, the capital of Assam. Their hosts represent the Khasi, Mizo, Assamese, Nepali and Bengali communities and Hindu, Muslim and Christian religions.

London

WIDE-RANGING groups of people saw *Happy Deathday* at the Westminster Theatre last week where it concludes its Premiere run on 21 March. Last Saturday large coach parties from Yorkshire, the North Midlands and South Wales saw the film and participated in a weekend conference on the theme 'What is Moral Re-Armament?'

Bangor

A FIRST YEAR science student celebrated her twenty-first birthday by showing *Happy Deathday* to students in the University of North Wales.

Durham

THE HEAD of a large Catholic college, student leaders and clergy, saw *Happy Deathday* recently in the University at a screening arranged by undergraduates.

Keswick

PANKAJ SHAH from India spoke last week to the Rotary Club on 'India and Her Role in the World', giving news of the MRA centre at 'Asia Plateau', Panchgani. At another occasion, to raise money for the new theatre at Panchgani, *Asian Experiment* and *A Nation is Marching* were shown.

THE GOVERNOR OF ASSAM and Nagaland, B K Nehru, said, 'We owe a debt of gratitude to the members of the MRA movement who are taking so great an interest in the North East.'

The Governor was addressing an audience of 1,150 at a performance of *Anything to Declare?* which included the Minister for Industries of Assam, Government officials and representatives of the linguistic and tribal groups of Northeast India.

Nehru continued, 'Particularly we owe a debt of gratitude to these young people who have come long distances spending their time, energy and money to bring us this modern moral message. The message they bring us is not a new one. It is as old as civilization itself, for without those principles for which they stand, no civilization can possibly exist.'

'It is heartening that we should have these young people here today, not creating hell as they have every right to do because the world is a mess, but devoting their lives to constructive activity and to the very basis on which civilization exists.'

Vital

Niketun Iralu from Nagaland, secretary of the invitation committee headed by Assam's Chief Minister, B P Chaliha, said, 'Tonight, something deep and vital has been touched in all of us here. Perhaps this is what all the areas of the Northeast are meant to live and give to the rest of the world. Perhaps we have tonight begun a journey and caught sight of a vision, which if we sacrifice for it, will lead to healing our urgent and grievous problems. All are needed, and all can play a part.'

The show was introduced by Justman Swer, Chief Executive Member of the Khasi-Jaintia Hills District Council.

The arrival of the cast in Assam was announced by *All India Radio* and reported in the English and Khasi language papers. *The Frontier Times* has daily featured news of the MRA force on its front page.

Happy Deathday and *Give a Dog a Bone* were also shown to youth groups and school audiences respectively.

Bristol

AN ASSEMBLY for the South West and South Wales will take place in Bristol over the weekend April 11-12.

Key to Britain's Survival

by a diplomatic observer

ONE OF OXFORD'S most brilliant intellectuals said the other day, 'Britain is sinking into isolationism. Only danger will reverse the trend.'

Of course, danger is already there if only it were recognised. So much of our standard of living, one of the highest in the world, derives from an international prestige and a worldwide network of commercial and technical contacts built up in days when isolationism seemed alien to every British instinct and interest. Isolationism (ie withdrawal to enjoy the 'good life' at home) would mean less influence for our diplomats, bankers and traders.

How long our money-earning capacity would then survive in face of competition from more outward-looking countries is a serious problem. Isolationism would, sooner or later, mean the end of the British way of life as we know it.

World role

Change in our world role is, of course, different from adoption of isolationism. Change is being forced on us, but everything depends on the spirit in which we meet it.

If we simply announce our intention to 'withdraw', we shall win small credit—even from anti-imperialist powers who might have been expected to welcome such a policy. Unless change is seen to be part of a new positive, outward-looking concept, it will be interpreted as loss of will as well as loss of strength. No one applauds a competitor who withdraws before the race is over.

There are still numerous spheres in which Britain could make a positive contribution to the world, even if our military strength has declined relative to that of the super-powers. This becomes clear if we reflect on the nature of the world's most critical problems. Viewed in the perspective of the next thirty years, the greatest danger is no longer a Russian-American clash. It is the widening gulf between the rich nations and the poor nations.

Ominously, this split almost coincides with the division between the white races and the coloured races. This means that it also coincides with the split between races with low birth-rates and those expanding at explosive rates. Taken together, these three factors point to the possibility of a conflict

that would make previous world wars look like parlour games.

What can Britain do about this problem? The answer is: a great deal. Britain could help to bridge this fateful gulf by:

- 1 Demonstrating at home how a multi-racial society could work.
- 2 Sending people, with the right skills and the right outlook, abroad to help in troubled areas.
- 3 Re-locating our finances, national and personal, to help narrow the gulf between rich and poor.
- 4 Working for bigger and more intelligent motives than just to squeeze more into individual pay-packets, regardless of what happens to others.
- 5 Demonstrating a creative use of the leisure which is becoming available to more and more people as work-hours shorten, thanks to mechanisation.

It should be noted that all five of these steps lie within our own power. Britain is not dependent on Washington, Moscow or the World Bank in carrying them out.

Key to the future

This shows the relevance of the philosophy of moral re-armament as the basis of national policy. In fact, MRA is already providing, on an expanding scale, examples of these things being

done. Regularly, one hears of young business executives taking leave of absence to go at their own expense to help in Asia or Africa; retired officers and their wives who, instead of enjoying their pensions or bemoaning their tax burdens, decide to go abroad and help; students who use vacations to plan an answer to violence; housewives who take responsibility for their communities instead of spending days at bingo or bridge. These changes multiplied could be the key to Britain's future role in the world.

With the balance of nuclear terror, the use of violence and force by major governments has been lessening. Simultaneously, however, it has been increasing on the part of individuals and unofficial groups. This is an ominous trend. But may the answer not also come from individuals and unofficial groups who do what governments are not yet bold enough to do? History is studded with examples of governments catching up later on what far-sighted and courageous individuals had pioneered.

Governments today tend to fall ever more under the influence of public opinion polls. The result is what might be called 'government by the slowest

continued on page 4

From Northern Ireland to Assam

HAROLD McCLURE (right), a Belfast businessman, said on leaving India that despite her difficulties, Ulster had 'something to offer the world'. Men in MRA were attempting to keep open the channels of communication, giving men the courage to withstand pressures of various kinds and offering youth an alternative to violence as a means of achieving changes in society.

Such a programme, he said last month in London, was valid in many of the world's tense national and international situations.

This week McClure wrote an article in Assam's *Frontier Times* on the editorial page entitled 'MRA in Northern Ireland and Assam.'



The Westminster Theatre

Plays for 1970

7 April to 23 May

The Dictator's Slippers and The Ladder

26 May to 27 June
11 July (eve) to 18 July (mat)
25 July (eve) to 1 August (mat)
and then alternate weeks

Blindsight

by Anne Wolrige Gordon,
daughter of Peter Howard
and wife of the Member of
Parliament for East
Aberdeenshire.

30 June to 11 July
18 July (eve) to 25 July (mat)
1 August (eve) to 8 August (mat)
and then alternate weeks

The Forgotten Factor

by Alan Thornhill
Revival of a world-famous
play about two families
in industry.

10 Dec 1970 to 30 Jan 1971

Give a Dog A Bone

by Peter Howard
and George Fraser
Seventh season of
London's
favourite family
pantomime.

continued from page 3

common denominator', or 'government by reaction'. Democracy does imply acceptance of majority rule; but it also implies the freedom of the individual to think and act differently, to pioneer new paths.

British democracy, acting first through committed groups and eventually by government sanction, could help the world in doing what intelligent men everywhere know in their hearts needs to be done to bridge the gaps between the haves and the have-nots, and to initiate a multi-racial society that works.

Carrying out this task will admittedly involve greater funds than we are at present allocating to it. But looking at the sums spent on betting and gambling, on holidays and entertainment, and at the sums lost through absenteeism, alcoholism and unnecessary strikes, who can say that this could not be done? It is up to us to decide.

Yet financial aid is not necessarily the heart of the problem. The United States, with unparalleled generosity, has poured out financial aid for 25 years without producing an answer. In-

creasingly, experts on aid are turning attention to the need for technical assistance, sharing of industrial knowledge, management skills and an answer to corruption.

With the right spirit at home, Britain could certainly take a leading part in filling these needs. In so doing, she would find herself respected as a constructive world power, regardless of the limits on her rocketry or atomic devices.

Isolationism is no answer for Britain. Britain needs to send more people on to the Continent (regardless of what happens in the Common Market negotiations), more people into the Commonwealth, and more people to other parts of the world. And they need to be people with the unselfish qualities of heart and mind that win friends and solve problems. Britain's future role must be related to the production and supply of the new type of man needed to bridge the gulfs in the world, answer its hatreds and cure its corruption. The battle for moral re-armament, with all that that involves, is the key to Britain's survival and her greatness.

Easter conference: Who will shape the new society?



WHO WILL shape tomorrow's society is the theme of an Easter conference at Tirley Garth, Tarporley, the MRA conference centre in Cheshire.

Tirley Garth (pictured left) was made available for Moral Re-Armament by Miss Irene Prestwich whose family home it used to be.

Two performances of a new musical revue will be given during the conference over the weekend, 27 March-30 March.

Australians support British playwright

The Australian Women's Weekly (circulation 840,000) published 25 March a full page article on the British playwright Alan Thornhill and his philosophy, featuring the world outreach of the Westminster Theatre. In the interview Thornhill said:

'Licence in the theatre is supposed to be allowable in the name of freedom, but I can't see why actors should be able to do anything that comes into their heads and get away with it. We still expect our politicians, top professional men, and industrialists to

conform and maintain high moral standards. . . .

'I write to try to reach the hearts of men and put forward an idea of the possibility of change in human nature.

'It was Arnold Toynbee who said, "Change of heart is the heart of the matter." I agree. A change from self-centredness, smallness of thinking, and, of course, from hate.

'Theatre is a powerful influence for good or evil and must take the responsibility for this.'

Thornhill is the author of the world-famous play *The Forgotten Factor* which has been produced in 17 languages and also filmed.

Whose job is it to feed the hungry?

WHOSE JOB IS IT to feed the hungry?

It is yours and mine. The reason—the bottleneck preventing the feeding of the hungry is basically human selfishness and prejudice rather than technical impossibility.

This was the nub of Herefordshire farmer Edward Evans' speech to a 'Women of the Hour' luncheon, a forum of business and professional women. Ambassadors' wives from South America and Africa came to the occasion in the Charing Cross Hotel, London.

Evans, who was High Sheriff of Herefordshire in 1964, gave the following facts on the technical possibilities of feeding the human family:

- New strains of rice and wheat which have been coming into use in the latter 1960's give a yield of four or five times an acre as much as before.

- India's grain production has increased from 56 million tons in 1952 to 95 million tons in 1968 and her grain imports have dropped from 11 million tons in 1967 to 3 million tons in 1969.

- Professor Colin Clark, Director of the Agricultural Economics Institute at Oxford, estimates that the cultivable surface of the world can feed and clothe at least ten times the present population.

- Michel Cepède, the recently elected 'Independent President' of the Council of the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), strongly attacks the concept that population limitation is the answer to the threat of starvation. He says, 'Attempts to adjust the number of people to the means of subsistence do not merely insult human dignity, they

constitute an evasion of the problem rather than a solution.'

Yet there was a gap—a human gap—between what could be done and what was being done, Evans said. The Pearson Report sensed 'a weariness and a search for new directions'. The Second World Food Congress's Plan, just published, says, 'There has been little attempt so far to involve people in the process of development.'

Spanning this gap was not the job of experts but of ordinary people, he said. Rajmohan Gandhi, Chief Editor of 'Himma!', invited European farmers to go to India. They asked him how they might help. His reply was nothing to do with technical advice. He said, 'Teach us Indians to care for one another, then we will feed one another.'

Feuds end

Illustrating this Evans told what happened when a Danish fruitgrower went to India. Hoping to help Indian farmers the Dane described his methods as a grower, but soon found that their methods were so different that they could not accept what he said, and it seemed as if there was nothing he could teach them. Disgusted, he went to Gandhi and said he wanted to pack his bags and go home. Gandhi said, 'Could you just stay over tomorrow? We have two brothers who are farmers coming in as guests. I understand there has been a feud between them, and I believe you might help.' 'Help?' said the Dane, 'I have got a brother-in-law myself whom I have quarrelled with and we have not spoken for eight years. How can I help them?' He talked this over with a



Edward Evans

friend, and that same day wrote a letter of apology to his brother-in-law and next day told the guests what he had done. That evening true and deep reconciliation took place between these two brothers who were leaders in their village. Their farm production went up. My friend stayed on. He became known and loved by the villagers as a man rather than as an expert.

An old man of 79 came to the MRA centre 'Asia Plateau' at Panchgani in India recently. He said, 'I have learnt to listen to the Inner Voice, and I had the thought: "India needs food. You must use all your land", so I took out my plough and have been working six hours a day since. If I can do that, younger men can work ten hours.' And he described how he had also had the thought to go and ask advice from the young Government Agricultural Adviser, aged under 30, about what seed he should grow. He swallowed his pride and did it. The result: He was the first in the village to introduce the new hybrid seeds, and their use has spread so that in his village and neighbouring villages production has doubled.

Giving other instances—the Shah's revolution in agriculture in Iran, the training scheme for farmers in Kenya at Narosurra and the joint Australian-Indonesian milk producing project in Djakarta—Evans said, 'Change in the character of men is the thing to explore in the 70's. In this way not just farmers but everyone can have a part in feeding the hungry.'

Industrial 'Participation' conference in Rotterdam

'PARTICIPATION' was the keynote of a labour-management conference in the big European port of Rotterdam last weekend.

Workers and managers at one session expressed their experiences of participation. Prominent in this exchange of views were the Secretary of the Rotterdam Drydocks Works Council, the Assistant Personnel Manager in charge of the training of apprentices and the Works Manager.

One hundred and fifty people came to the conference, including workers and senior managers from both the

docks and shipyards of Rotterdam, Catholic and Protestant industrial chaplains and people from Belgium and West Germany.

One of the principal speakers from outside Holland was William Jaeger, from Britain, who has a close knowledge through MRA of industrial and labour problems across the world. He challenged Dutch industry, which is still enjoying a large measure of labour-management co-operation, to give an answer to other countries, such as Sweden, France, Italy and Denmark, where relationships are deteriorating.

... and Stockholm

MANAGEMENT and trade union representatives from the big industries of Sweden, such as the Kiruna iron ore mines and the Volvo car industry, as well as officials of government agencies, took part in a weekend conference here.

Closing the Theory-Practice gap

Story of
a South Indian social worker

RAGOTHAMAN comes from a village in Tamil Nadu, South India, and has this year got his Master's degree. His parents sent him to Madras for his education to live with a guardian uncle. 'I was separated from my parents at the age of five. Their aim was to give me a good education and thought the future of my family would depend on my education. They were prepared to sacrifice anything for it. I was given all the material facilities but that did not shape my character.

'I studied social work and was very concerned about the social problems of my country. We used to discuss for hours together and conducted periodical surveys on the same problems.

'Once I was interviewing two juvenile delinquent boys. One was a pick-pocket and the other a boot-legger. I advised these two boys not to indulge any more in these activities and to start a new life. (But I did not think of the money which I had taken from my uncle's cash-box.) That same evening I went to buy liquor from another boot-legger. Such were the contradictions between my helpful advice and my own living.

'In economics we studied that we have 30,000 million rupees of black money in the country. A relative of mine who had influence with the Government authorities was about to get a quota of stainless steel for a factory which only existed on paper. We intended to sell the steel in the black market. Yet I condemned corrupt businessmen and politicians

'Someone told me that if you listen to your inner voice, it would answer your longings. When I decided to try the experiment of listening for God's guidance at the MRA conference, a new spirit was born in me. I wrote my relative not to accept the quota as it was not honest.

'Then instead of going home after the conference, I went straight to Bangalore to see my best friend. Before I had spoiled his life by leading him in bad habits. When I stayed with his

family, he was surprised to see me behave differently from the wild noise I used to make. He asked me what had happened to me. I told him how I had changed and stopped all these habits of smoking, horse-racing, cards and night-clubs. He expected to learn more of these habits from me as before he used to make a daily trunk call to Madras to find out my latest achievements. That same evening he came to me and said, "If this miracle is happening in your life, I am sure it will happen to me." So he decided to stop too, and he is leading a different life.

'Although I was a social worker, this was the first time I had helped a person. My simple story of change did more for him than my psychological theories did to solve the problems.

'Changing people like my best friend is a more fascinating job than accepting the job my brother-in-law asked me to take in a bank.

Comment on India and Britain

N F LEDWITH, a partner in a City of London firm managing six mutual insurance associations, comments on his return from a business trip to India.

IN INDIA the newspapers are crammed with the politicians' struggles for power. Every party is split, and coalitions are made and broken daily. In one cartoon a character said, 'I have crossed the floor because my new party has more of the money, cars and power necessary to enable me to serve the public.'

I have returned to a Britain where the newspapers are equally crammed with news of the struggles for power in industry. The alliances, the manoeuvres and the narrow self-interest are all closely paralleled.

It is not power we should be thinking of, but of what needs doing, and how to do it. Service should be individual caring, so that each person becomes



Panchgani: MRA world conference centre

'Four months later I decided to work with MRA. In the beginning many of my family members wrote me angry letters telling me to leave MRA because it spoiled their plans for me to get a good job, be married and fetch a good dowry. Usually I used to react to this kind of opposition and if I could not resist the pressure, I would give in. But now I am firm in my convictions because I sincerely feel that this is the best way that I can help my country. Slowly my family is beginning to understand.'

For the last five months Ragothaman has been getting training from R D Mathur, who is the director of the MRA centre at Asia Plateau, Panchgani. Now he is a man responsible for the staff of the centre and has learned how to solve jealousies and disputes amongst the men. Ragothaman's commitment is such that in Mathur's absence, he takes charge of the maintenance and security of this three million rupee investment.



N F Ledwith

what God intends for him. Only so can a complex society be humanly satisfying, instead of being an offensive mechanism of power over people.

Our task today is to put right abuses, and patiently to build ourselves and others into a society that really works. The first step may be simple. One of mine was to apologise to one of my seniors whom I had hated for nine years. But it goes on to a conscious, deliberate construction of a society made up of men and women free of crippling human failings, and guided by God. That is mankind's birthright, which MRA is seeking to restore.

I am as busy as most men of affairs, as the French call it, but I have accepted this task as my daily preoccupation.