

French voters put the questions

Many French are seeking to bridge the gaps between Left and Right in their country, and challenge all to grapple with more fundamental issues. Round-table discussions are taking place widely.

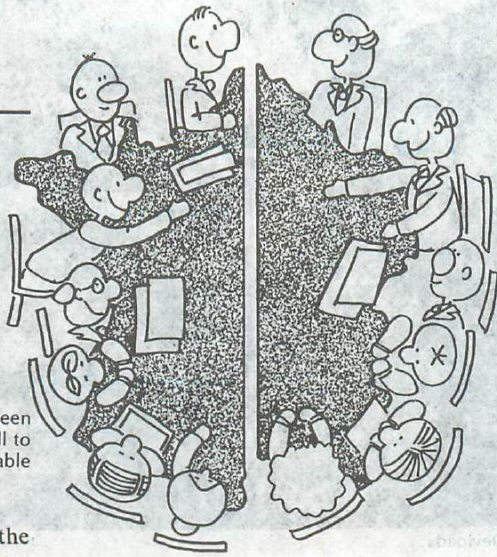
THIS WEEKEND French voters go to the polls to elect a new National Assembly. Four thousand candidates, the largest number ever, are bidding for election.

All over France people have been meeting their candidates with a 'Message to Our Countrymen' drawn up by 100 French citizens from every region of the country. As we go to press, it has reached 1,300 of the candidates. Some parties have themselves sent it out to their candidates.

The message states in part:

'There is a choice even more fundamental than that between Left and Right. The real alternatives are good and evil, and these can be known to us on the deeper level of our conscience. Neither Left nor Right has a monopoly either of good or of evil.

'Economic standards must yield before moral and spiritual standards. If not, whatever the form of government, we will build a society that is irretrievably materialist, in which the individual will lose for ever his dignity and freedom. Honesty, purity, unselfishness and love are elements essential to any community. If we refuse today to call a



Tribune de Caux

halt to selfish insistence on our rights and privileges, to our habits of chiselling and cutting corners, to the reflex which makes us always defend our sectional interest, tomorrow every change of structure will be meaningless.

'If we want to share the load of the underprivileged, we cannot demand for ourselves and our families more and yet more comfort and an ever-rising standard of living. We must agree to share. We must choose between satisfying our selfish appetites and accepting responsibility for the colossal needs of the human family.

'In doing our utmost to apply these moral principles absolutely to our daily life, we who sign this message have become convinced that change in motive and behaviour is possible, and that it will secure the changes in society for which we all long. It is the condition of all freedom and true democracy.'

Round-table discussions have been organised, enabling men of different opinions, sometimes candidates of opposing parties,

NEW WORLD NEWS

Vol 26 No 17 11 Mar 1978 7p

to meet and talk about the moral choices for the nation.

'The evening brought exceptional exchanges,' reported the central France daily, *La Montagne*, about a round-table in Riom. 'It went on till after midnight without interest failing for an instant.... Honesty was the star of the evening.'

The leader of one party, a former cabinet minister, wrote: 'You have chosen the most difficult road. It is also the surest. I hope with all my heart that your thinking and experience will spread and introduce a new climate into French political life, which I am not resigned to seeing become a prey to ideological sectarianism and power-seeking.'

'You will have done much for our country if you can reach above the diversity of individual choices and propagate for everyone the kind of spirit that will turn our political combat into a debate, a dialogue. The future of democracy, a continuing creation which is always threatened, demands this.'

USA Riding West

THIS IS THE LEAFLET (left) announcing the West Coast premiere of *Ride! Ride!*, the musical by Alan Thornhill and Penelope Thwaites.

Ride! Ride!, based on an incident in the life of John Wesley, was presented by the Seattle Pacific University Division of Dramatic Arts and the Taproot Theatre Company.

Our correspondent reports that half an hour before performance on the night he attended, a parking place was very difficult to find and the other nights were equally well attended.

The play's programme quotes Alan Thornhill:

'People sometimes say, "What we need is another Wesley." There are certainly as many hungry, neglected souls living in affluent suburbs or skyscraper flats as ever inhabited Gin Lane in Wesley's day. For the time being we may have to put up with a lot of little Wesleys. Together, they might do for us what he did then.'

Ride! Ride! is also being presented in New Zealand, where a company called Pilgrim Productions has formed to give the show during this year in Auckland, Hamilton and Whangarei.

HOW TO WIN

A SPECIAL TEN-DAY SESSION will take place in the framework of the international MRA Assembly at Caux, Switzerland, this year from 17-27 July. Its aim will be that people of all ages find together a deeper understanding of their faith, of the world we live in, and of the task of a moral and spiritual re-armament which confronts the whole of humanity.

Participants will work in groups of about 20 each. Themes will include:

- Each man's part in bridging the rich-poor gap
- How to win people in opposing camps
- A world-wide ideology
- Faith
- Silence and listening.

Out of the ditch

A story of village India

by Neerja Chowdhury and
Vijitha Yapa

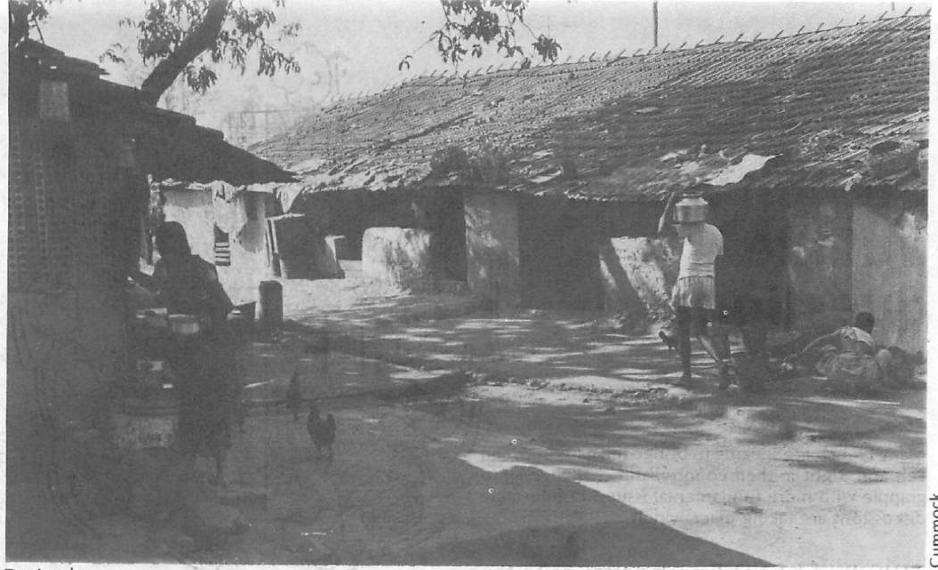
THE WESTERN EXPRESS HIGHWAY races northwards from Bombay, bound for Gujarat. At Borivili, opposite a developing industrial estate, a dusty uneven track with cow dung cakes drying on either side leads to a group of chawls, or bamboo and mud brick dwellings, so common in Bombay. Devipada is the name of the area.

There are 50 chawls here with up to 25 families living in each of them. Devipada does not enjoy proper amenities of electricity, sanitation nor, until recently, a regular water supply. There are two wells in the area which supply water till about January. Then they are dry till the monsoon in June. In the intervening months the chawl people used to have to walk long distances to get water.

The inhabitants of the area number over 4,000. Ninety per cent of them are illiterate. Many earn their living by cutting and selling wood. A number of others work in the nearby factories. Gajanan Sawant is one of them. He is employed in the Khatau textile mills and earns Rs 425 (£30) every month. **Here Gajanan tells what happened when he, with other workers, visited the Moral Re-Armament centre in Panchgani:**

'I discovered that unexpected solutions can spring from the whispers of the still small voice that speaks in every heart. I learnt to listen to this voice. Ideas came. Plans began to take shape.

'Every year around December the well near my chawl got silted up. The villagers talked about cleaning it. Nobody did anything because everyone felt it was the job of the landlord. Some friends and I bought a



Devipada

bucket and rope. On our day off the five of us set to work and lowered ourselves into the well. Other villagers watched as we began to dig. Next day many joined us.

'The digging continued for a month every evening after work. The well was cleared and more water made available for everyone.

'The walls of the well were dilapidated. The municipality provides materials for repair work but not the labour costs. So my friends and I collected Rs 500 (£35) from the chawl dwellers and paid for the repairs. During the drought in Maharashtra, while many wells ran dry, we had enough water in Devipada.

'The earth excavated from the well was used to fill in holes near the chawls which during previous monsoons had filled up with stagnant pools of water. The track leading to the village was widened and tarred so that vehicles could come in from the highway.

'I then began to think of the children of the village. Only a few went to the municipal school on the other side of the highway, the crossing of which is a daily hazard. Most of them hung around loitering or took to gambling at an early age. "Why not start a school here in the chawl?" was the startling thought I had one morning in my time of quiet. I called a meeting of the chawl elders and put forth the proposition of the school. By the end of the meeting I had been promised Rs 190. Many of the villagers joined us in building the 12ft by 8ft structure.

In two months the schoolhouse became a reality.'

On hearing of Gajanan's hopes and plans for the chawls, the trustees of a nearby Jain temple decided to assist by making available a teacher for six months. Seventy-five children now receive education.

Someone asked Gajanan how in these days of scarcity he managed to give Rs 35 towards the school and Rs 10 every month to the Moral Re-Armament centre. He replied that he used to spend Rs 45 a month on smoking. His inner voice told him to cut it out. He did so and was able to save that money.

All-night parties

The houses are now swept and kept tidy, cow dung being used frequently to keep them clean and free of dust. Inside the homes, neat rows of vessels gleam and catch the eye. The owner of a nearby buffalo herd, inspired by Gajanan's initiative, decided to clean up his cowshed.

Gajanan realised the importance of creating a team to make these ideas more effective. He began to care for his fellow workers, some of whom were in deep trouble. The area was notorious for drinking and bootlegging. Jaisingh works in the same factory as Gajanan. He was in debt because of heavy drinking and was often absent from work. He had borrowed from money-lenders and was paying 60 per cent interest. Gajanan helped him to stop drinking, and then the company, by giving Jaisingh a low-interest loan, enabled him to pay off his debts.

These men work in the Borivili unit of the Khatau Mills. It is the only fully air-conditioned mill in India and has the latest machinery. Mr Shastri, the manager, is one of the many delegates who have been sent by the company to the monthly industrial seminars at the MRA centre in Panchgani.

'Change for me meant an apology to my brother for years of bitterness,' he says. 'I also decided to pay back to the company money I had cheated by obtaining petrol on company account for personal use. I began to see my workers in the factory as fellow human beings rather than instruments as a means of production. Weekly meetings with the trade union officials were initiated and a new spirit of understanding has emerged.'

The next year Gajanan went to Panchgani



The medical students' clinic

to participate and share his experiences at an international conference. His story challenged many. Dale D'Mello and Mike Pereira, two medical students from Bombay, were attracted by what he said and began to see where they could play a part. 'Instead of going to all-night parties on Saturday evenings, we decided to go out to Borivili every Sunday morning to do medical relief work. Though our colleagues initially laughed at us, there is today a team of 16 who take turns to travel the one-hour train journey to work in the village. Some firms helped us by gifting medicines and drugs. A nominal charge of 25 paise (2p) is levied for each consultation, and the proceeds are donated to the village improvement fund.'

Unpaid leave

The monsoon had affected the temporary school structure and the walls were beginning to crumble. Gajanan then had the thought that they ought to raise money to build a permanent schoolhouse. The target was Rs 3,000 (£200). Receipts were issued for funds raised and meticulous accounts kept for every paise collected and spent. Some contributed in kind. A contractor gave 25 bags of cement. Another gave sand and the asbestos sheets for the roof. The building was inaugurated just three weeks before the onset of the monsoon.

A local municipal corporator, inspired by the initiative of the villagers, assisted too. He helped provide the village with five water taps from the municipal water supply. This assures them of water throughout the year.

Now Gajanan and his friends meet every Sunday at eight-thirty in the morning to plan how to spread these ideas and how to bring answers to the divisions that keep men apart. People from all walks of life participate. Among them are workers and managers from other factories such as The Cable Corporation of India, Bhor Industries and Special Steels Ltd.

Gajanan last year took a week's unpaid leave to take his experiences to Calcutta, where the housing situation is even worse. 'We are not going to continue to live in the ditch of poverty,' he says. 'We are going to do something ourselves to better the lot of our people.'

**A slide/tape production,
with 65 slides,
tells this story.**

**It is available from:
Blair Cummock,
12 Palace Street,
London SW1E5JF.**

Price £19

Burn the dinghy

SIXTY BRAZILIANS MET earlier this year for a weekend 'to study the revolutionary impact of the life of Dr Frank Buchman'.

One docker, recently retired, said he had decided to 'burn his boats'—meaning his reliance on financial security—and that he and his wife were freeing themselves to take the ideas of Moral Re-Armament, which Dr Buchman had fought for, anywhere in Brazil or the world. Another retired docker responded, 'I burnt my boats a while back, but I now have to deal with the remaining dinghy!' At which a company director joined in, 'If we decide to follow God's will, I'll have to burn a whole shipyard!'

Widespread action has resulted from the decisions made. Luiz Pereira, a tiler in Rio, has started regular meetings for young people in the workers' housing estate where

he lives, including visits to the MRA centre, out of concern to offer youth an alternative to the all-too-common lifestyle of drugs and violence.

Pereira has now decided to give up his job for six months. He and his wife, who have taken leadership in answering the problems of slums in Rio, will travel to India next week to take their experience there.

Leonardo and Ita Lima went to their home city of Salvador where they showed the film, *Men of Brazil*, the story of the fight by Leonardo and his colleagues to clean up corruption in the port of Rio, to Cardinal Avelar Brandao and 50 of his closest associates during a spiritual retreat. The Cardinal immediately asked for MRA films to be used in the Church's campaign, which this year has the theme, 'Justice and work for all'. At the first two occasions, 700 students saw films and heard from Rio students who raised their own fares to travel the 1,000 miles to Salvador and present the MRA programmes.

AJC

The slippery slope

WOMANS OWN today carries an article by Malcolm Muggeridge entitled 'The Slippery Slope', dealing with the issue of euthanasia.

This appears following a week of controversy on the rightness or wrongness of switching off life-support systems for several patients.

Muggeridge, in his article, says that the mounting agitation in some quarters for euthanasia would have come much sooner but for 'the awkward circumstance' that the only regime in the history of the world which has so far legalised killing off the physically and mentally incapacitated, was Hitler's Third Reich. 'As this figured in the war

crimes with which the surviving Nazi leaders were charged at Nuremberg,' writes the controversial author and broadcaster, 'a certain amount of time had to elapse before such a murderous procedure could be transformed from a Nazi atrocity into a commendable piece of enlightened and humane legislation.'

Muggeridge's article is tied in with the new play, *Sentenced to Life*, which he and Alan Thornhill have written jointly, and which opens at the Westminster Theatre, London, on 17 May.

He says that this play, which explores the issues around euthanasia, 'offers no rule-of-thumb judgements'. But it does bring out 'the spiritual considerations in a dilemma which today is too often seen purely in terms of eugenics, economics and personal comfort.'

On the kitchen floor

IT WAS 11.15 at night. 'Here are your four guests', said our friend and speedily left for home in her car depositing ladies from a Welsh mining village on our doorstep. They had all come from seeing an MRA play at the Westminster Theatre.

My mother speedily drew her new guests into our little flat - the fire was warm and the coffee and sandwiches prepared. It was Saturday night and we only had four beds.

Excusing herself, for a moment she stood in our little kitchen seeking God's direction - where was she to sleep? Though 75 years old, her thought was to get a thin sleeping bag out and sleep on the kitchen floor.

Next morning no one asked where she had slept but a communist miner's wife learnt later what had happened. Somehow God used my mother's bruised bones to change that lady's life.

Elizabeth Coxon

Thoughts from a hospital bed

by Walter Farmer

There is a world beyond these walls
With people moving free,
'As I have done through all my years
Till pain imprisoned me.

Each with a choice for good or ill
Builds the person of the name,
So that at the tally time
Shall we know peace or shame?

Then the truth of all is near,
'There is still time, my son:
Be ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
Each day with Me begun.'

RHODESIA

Love till it hurts

by Phoebe Foss

I LOVE AFRICA and this last year in Rhodesia gave that love a new depth and breadth. It is a land of true beauty, from the blue mountains, forests and waterfalls of the Eastern border, to the wind-sculptured, granite hills and fabulous Bushman cave paintings of the Matopos mountains, where at 'World's View' Rhodes was buried. There are the amazing rocks balancing precariously on top of each other, the feeling of space, and the brilliant orange, pink and red combination as the fiery sun finally sets beyond the horizon.

Yet, as every person knows, it is a land torn by the horrors of a war in which every family is involved. War creates hurts, hates and bitternesses. But I have seen how God, given a chance, can heal all these. I have had friends injured and felt the agonies of bereaved families. And I have seen the power of the Holy Spirit working in the hearts of those who have chosen to love and not to hate, to care and not to curse.

A friend of mine found a new relationship

with her family when she listened to the voice of God deep in her heart. She hadn't found it easy to communicate with her parents—her father is a politician—and she was often critical. She thought to apologise for where she had been wrong and not only to tell them where they had wronged. It wasn't easy. But when she had taken that first step, she was freed, a new spirit was born and the family was united.

It is that spirit of reconciliation which took a group of students, black and white, from the University of Rhodesia, deep into the operational area to visit a mission school, to tell why they are working together for the new country to be based on God's way and not the way of man.

Living in a country so threatened, I learned the need for a real commitment to God, the kind of commitment that Jesus showed us, one that means complete sacrifice, means complete all-outness, and means that Christ is central in every single thing we do, however small. The commitment that means we will stand up for Him, no matter what comes our way. It also means a real responsibility for the work God has given us to do, not always leaving it to older and wiser people. There is no hierarchy in God's work—we just need to be run solely by Him.

At a conference in Salisbury I met an exiled Ugandan bishop who spoke of what

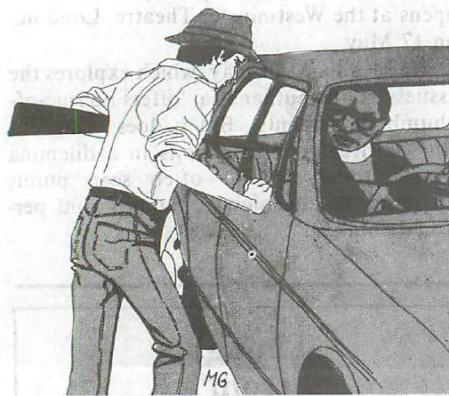
the Cross meant to him. He said that real Christianity can only come when the Almighty's hands piece together the broken pieces of man's experience, and we are christened at the Cross. Then light punctuates the darkness and love becomes victorious over history. Through that reconciling love comes a vision to see what we are meant to be.

I know that for me the Cross was not always central. I was well aware that I needed a much deeper experience of Christ. I saw that He could not enter into a heart which did not love each person I met as a brother. My thought was, 'You must love each person until it hurts—it is the greatest privilege, but brings the greatest responsibility.'

It is very British to keep people at a distance and have a certain 'cool' about us. I saw clearly the ever-widening gulf between Rhodesians, black and white, and the British. One day I had a heated argument on this with a friend. The only way to overcome the reaction I felt was to realise that our copybook was not clean. Not to be defensive, but to ask God for forgiveness. And then rise above it and find out what He wants on a basis of what, and not who, is right.

I believe that the future Zimbabwe will be a pattern for the world if people keep their minds and hearts open to both the word and the love of God. This applies as much to us in Britain as to America and the rest of the world.

Shooting back



ENEAS is the minister for a large parish in North-East Rhodesia, where guerrilla warfare has heightened tension between the races.

One day he was driving home to his mission and was stopped at a road-block. The white soldier mistook him for the President of the United African National Council, and called out to the other soldiers on the road-block, 'Here is Bishop Muzorewa.' 'Shoot him,' was the comment of one of them, and they came towards him with their guns.

Eneas showed them his identity card, and

they waved him on. But he burned inside at the thought of this cruel joke.

These soldiers, he knew, were local farmers, doing their regular stint of military service. And he knew the very man who had called out, 'Shoot him.' It was a man who farms near the mission. He began to hate that farmer and every other white. 'I began to dislike the very sight of a white skin,' he says. But he had a nagging sense that this was a wrong attitude.

Then another minister, an African nationalist leader, told him of a discovery he had made, that God could speak in his heart and show him what to do. When Eneas listened for God's direction, one thought sprang to his mind: 'I must go to that farmer.'

He went to the farm-house and knocked on the door. The farmer received him somewhat coldly. 'Do you remember me?' said Eneas. 'I am the man you threatened to shoot. I was bitter about that. But bitterness is not the way, and I am sorry for it.'

The farmer's manner changed instantly. 'Please come in,' he said. 'I will see if my wife can get us a cup of tea.' They sat and talked. The farmer became interested in the work Eneas was doing at the school, and through the mission. Many of his preconceptions, he realised, were false. He came to a service at Eneas' church—then to a meal in his home. Eneas and his wife returned the visit. The farmer began to interest his farming friends

in Eneas' work.

Encouraged by this, Eneas decided to meet other farmers. It was not easy. Sometimes he met hostility. One told him how much he distrusted Africans, and recounted incidents to back up his allegations. 'I will tell you a story,' replied Eneas, and recounted how he had been treated at the road-block. 'But you always get some difficult whites,' said the farmer. 'It is the same with us,' replied Eneas, laughing. 'Don't put us all in the same camp!'

At one time Eneas heard that a white farmer and his wife were quarrelling. By this time he had come to look on whites as people with the same needs and troubles as his own people. He asked God to show him how to help this couple. One day his wife said, 'Let us take them a gift of eggs.' The farmer was just going to the fields as they arrived. Eneas went with him. They talked together, as did the two wives back at the house. When the men returned, they all prayed together. That afternoon healed that quarrel, and when, two weeks later, Eneas and his wife returned to visit the couple, they were received with open arms.

Now two of the local white farmers have joined the school council, and four contribute money to the school. The wife of one farmer teaches free of charge at the school. And trust has been built between two communities where distrust reigned before. **JCB**