

HAPPY DEATHDAY RE-OPENS

'WE ARE FIGHTING A BATTLE AT THE WESTMINSTER' says Theatre Chairman

'WE ARE FIGHTING A BATTLE at the Westminster. It is not clean plays versus dirty plays. It will take more than clean plays to do what needs to be done today. The conflict goes far deeper. The sordid, the violent the cruel, the nihilistic in theatre are expressions of a deeper cause. They are part of what has been called the eternal struggle between good and evil.'

Kenneth Belden, Chairman of the Westminster Theatre Trustees, was speaking at a dinner celebrating the reopening of the Theatre, given by the Friends of the Westminster Theatre, attended by 123 people. Six weeks ago the stage of the Theatre was destroyed and the auditorium damaged by fire in the early hours of the morning. *Happy Deathday* by Peter Howard had to be temporarily suspended. It reopened on Thursday this week.

'In the 'thirties someone published a book called *The War Against God*,' Belden continued. 'That describes our present situation. We are faced in Britain with an immense assault upon God, a hatred of God and of any standards of morality or attitudes of mind which stem from God. There is a widespread determination to eradicate them. It reminds you of Lenin's remark, "Our revolution will never succeed until the myth of God is removed from the mind of man."

'This is the importance of *Happy Deathday*. Howard felt this underlying battle in the modern world sharply. In the play there are some who are out to destroy God, there are some acclaim Him but deny Him by the way they live, and there is the younger generation which destroys it-

self between the other two. In the shock of reality that follows, some find the way to a faith that is valid for them all.

'Professor Spoerri of Zürich University, for many years Professor of European Language and Literature, said after seeing *Happy Deathday* that it is the only play in world literature in which "God has the last word". The same point has been made by many in the Churches who have come to see the play. It has also struck very deeply into the minds of many of all ages who have as yet little experience of God but who begin to understand, like Stalin's daughter, that it is impossible to live without Him.

'We can look at this modern attack upon God, which *Happy Deathday* deals with, from various aspects.

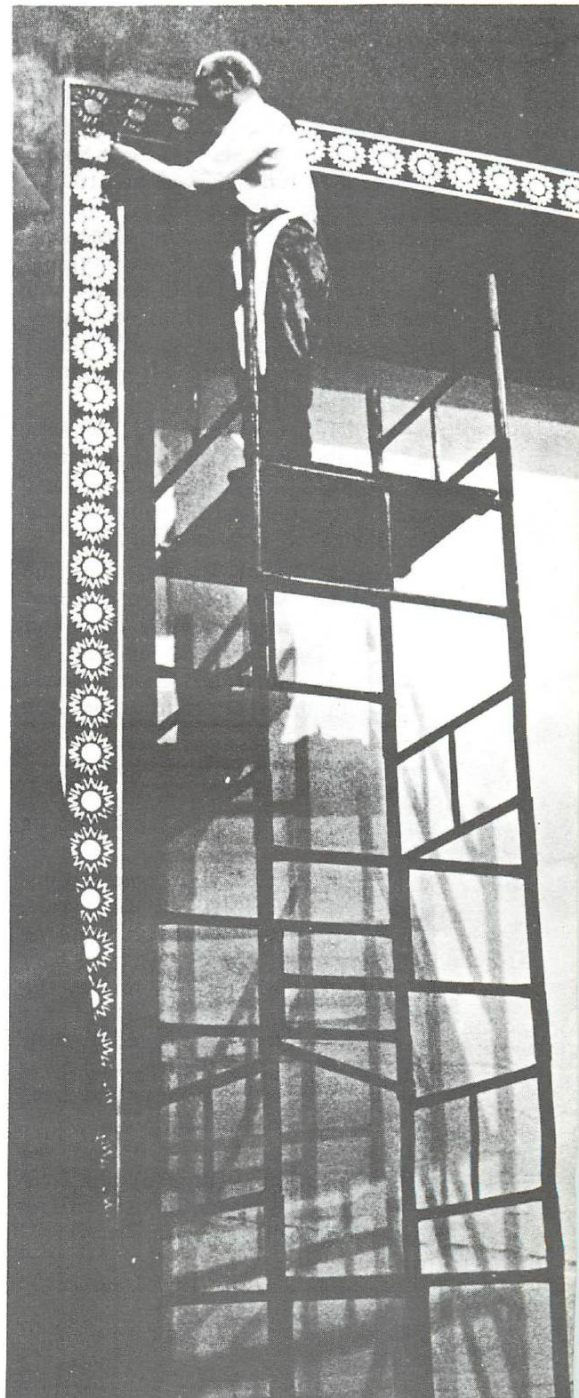
SUBMISSIVE SOCIETY

'There is what can be called the content of life. The impoverishment of life when God is driven out is clearly evident in the play, in the life of the scientist and his wife, and in the effect upon their daughter. No people can thrive on such a starvation diet or find a fully satisfying life.

'You can look at this attack upon God from the standpoint of the productivity of the nation. You cannot pour over people the philosophy that they should do what they like and get what they like when they like, outside working hours, and expect them not to do the same in working hours,

continued overleaf

Gilding the new proscenium at the Westminster Theatre
photo Strong



THEATRE'S SPEEDY RECOVERY FROM FIRE

Cinema International critiques Dictator's Slippers

THERE'S A PUB in Palace Street, Westminster called *The Phoenix*. But the real Phoenix is next door.

The Westminster Theatre re-opened this week with Peter Howard's *Happy Deathday* after its stage equipment had been burnt to ashes six weeks ago.

At 2 am on Monday 20 March Charles Tollervey, resident fireman of the Westminster Theatre, faced an inferno of flame on the Westminster stage. The alarm had gone off triggered by the 160 degrees heat that set the sprinkler system going.

After alerting the fire department, Tollervey fought the blaze single-handed with a stage hose.

Mrs Louis Fleming, wife of the Director of the Westminster Theatre Arts Centre, woken by the fire bell, looked out of her Stafford Place house, saw the area full of smoke and roused her husband. 'When I got into the auditorium', he says, 'and turned on the house lights I could see nothing. The place was filled with smoke and steam. I crawled on hands and knees under the low pall of smoke, calling "Charlie". "I'm up here, Mr Fleming", came the reply.'

Two CID men from the Elephant and Castle were returning to their station at 2 am. They had a look round but could find no cause for the fire and it will remain a mystery.

Kenneth Belden, Chairman of the Westminster Memorial Trust, heard someone hammering on his door and shouting 'The theatre is on fire'.

When he stood on the blackened stage with the auditorium ankle deep

in fallen plaster, he says, 'I wondered how we should meet and shoulder such a blow. But my over-riding thought was "How can we turn this to good account?"'

A few hours later he had his first answer. Newspapers, TV and radio, which had largely spread a 'blanket of silence' over the Arts Centre and the current play *Happy Deathday*, came out with stories and pictures on the fire. One added for good measure a poster of *Happy Deathday*. BBC bulletins, TV programmes carried news of the Westminster Theatre and its play all over the country.

Speedy work in repairing the theatre was the second answer—an answer meaningful for many industries. Under the direction of the Arts Centre's architects, John and Sylvia Reid, 19 contractors were signed up to repair the damage, which, with the actors' jobs, was covered by insurance.

Specialist firms had to construct an entirely new stage, rewiring it with ten miles of cable; replace sixty spot and floodlights; rebuild the proscenium arch which frames the stage; re-plaster, paint and gild the auditorium; clean all seats and every crystal in the chandeliers.

G Collingwood, a Strand Electric supervising engineer, said, 'This would normally be a ten week job. We did it in three.'

Belden and Fleming expressed gratitude this week for the efficient work which made it possible to reopen the theatre so swiftly.

REGINALD HOLME

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whether they are management or labour.

'Modern humanism becomes rationalized selfishness on a vast scale, which can destroy our economy as well as our home life. That is why the industrial workers respond to the plays like *Happy Deathday* at the Westminster. As one Clydeside shop steward said, "The Westminster gives men in industry fresh ideas and frees them from old prejudices."

'You can also look at it from the view-point of the future of our freedom. Freedom cannot exist without

responsible and unselfish citizens. It must have a moral basis. If the moral basis goes, freedom will go. The permissive society will become a submissive society—in a well upholstered mini-Britain. If we no longer hold the faith in which the concept of liberty is rooted, liberty itself will wither.

'I regard *Happy Deathday* as an instrument in the hands of intelligent men and women who want to liberate the mind of modern man and equip him to overcome the divisions and dangers of our age by restoring the sovereignty of God.'

'CINEMA INTERNATIONAL', a film review published in Switzerland, reported on the filming at Caux of *The Dictator's Slippers*. The magazine, in its No 13 issue, 1967, wrote:

'*The Dictator's Slippers*, which is the fourth work by Peter Howard to be filmed, explores with insight a subject which matters to the whole world. A dictator dies. Will his successors be men who are greedy for power, merciless, selfish, who will sow the seeds of their own destruction? Or will they be men of character who will work humbly and loyally together to bring the answer to the great problems of our time? This is a burning subject for today, and it is treated directly and with humanity by an author who has a profound knowledge of men, as they are and as they ought to be.

'Peter Howard himself summed up the purpose of his plays like this: "I want the theatre once more to play its part in restoring the dignity of the human race, unity between races and classes, and faith in God among all men. I write to encourage men to accept the growth in character that is essential if civilization is to survive."

'A leading Czech declared, after seeing the stage play at Caux this autumn, "It is a very great idea. If it is possible to change men, then we have the starting point for the greatest revolution of all."

'It is perhaps not an accident that the idea of filming *The Dictator's Slippers* was born and put into execution in Switzerland. In this technical age it is understandable, indeed essential, that our country should realise what it can contribute in film production for the world. Does not the experience of *The Dictator's Slippers* show once again how Switzerland could be a pioneer? Why should not Swiss film producers take up the challenge which 1967 offers to the cinema? They would carry on our tradition of service to mankind in the fascinating field of the seventh art.'

*Will we have rice tomorrow, Dad,
Before we go to bed?
You promised we'd have it today, Dad,
Remember what you said?
Why are some people fat, Dad,
And others thin like us?
Was it like this when you were a boy?
Will it be always thus?*

IN THIS SONG ten-year-old Sailal Jedhiya, expressed what millions in India ask daily. Sailal is a Harijan—one of the 120 million people who were called 'untouchables' until Mahatma Gandhi christened them Harijans, 'Children of God'. He is one of the cast of *India Arise*. His question went to the hearts of the 1,450 people who filled Wales' finest hall—the Brangwyn Hall, Swansea—for the British première of this Indian musical.

The *South Wales Evening Post* wrote, 'The underlying theme of the show was the need to shake India out of its apathy and to build a new country. But the appeal was also to Britain to give a lead in the creation of a new world.'

Here was a show that in two hours presented the colour, movement and music of the sub-Continent. The *Western Mail*, national paper of Wales, wrote, 'The folk dances to haunting Indian melodies are graceful and the melodies performed exuberantly.' They ranged from the Rajasthani dance about a young wife who always did the opposite to what her mother-

WILL WE HAVE RICE TOMORROW?

BY MICHAEL HENDERSON

in-law asked to the vigorous Bhangra dance from the Punjab done by acrobatic, turbaned Sikhs.

But it was a show that did much more. 'Our purpose transcends culture', writes Arun Mundkur in the programme. 'It is to propel men across the gulf from analysis to action, from bystanding to their full part in remaking the world.'

The *Evening Post* quoted Rajmohan Gandhi: 'We are learning to listen to God and to obey Him completely. He has changed a number of us who were indifferent before to the things which were going on around

us. If people like us can change then the world can change.'

People would not have rice tomorrow, he told the audience, nor bridge the gaps between nations unless the motives of men were changed. 'The aim of *India Arise* is Wales arise and Britain arise. It is really Britain ablaze and aflame with the most revolutionary idea of all time, that human nature can change.'

A few hours before the show he addressed a meeting at Swansea University on the theme 'Asia's future and Moral Re-Armament'. Some of the students disputed everything Gandhi said. That evening they came to the show. Afterwards they crowded round to know more. One who had denounced MRA at the University said, 'I wish *India Arise* could be seen by every person in the world.' Others spoke similarly. A post-graduate student said, 'This explodes the pronouncements by comfortable European would-be intellectuals that the answer for Asia and Africa is dictatorship and family planning.'

'We don't remember the Brangwyn Hall being packed the way it was tonight,' said one of Swansea's senior citizens. The singing of the Welsh national anthem in Welsh by the cast captured the audience at the start. The dramatization of the problem—hunger and starvation in the streets, corruption and hatred at home and office, war and death in Asia, was riveted in their minds. The alternatives portrayed in the lives and commitment of the cast were simple and startling. Mrs Michael Barrett, granddaughter of Lloyd George, spoke for the audience. 'We people of Wales must look beyond our borders,' she said. 'We have the capacity, the passion and the voices to take Moral Re-Armament to the world'. The *Evening Post* commented, 'Not one of the capacity audience would fail to have been stirred.'

The sixty men and women from every caste and background on the stage say in their reprise at the end the reply to the little boy's question:

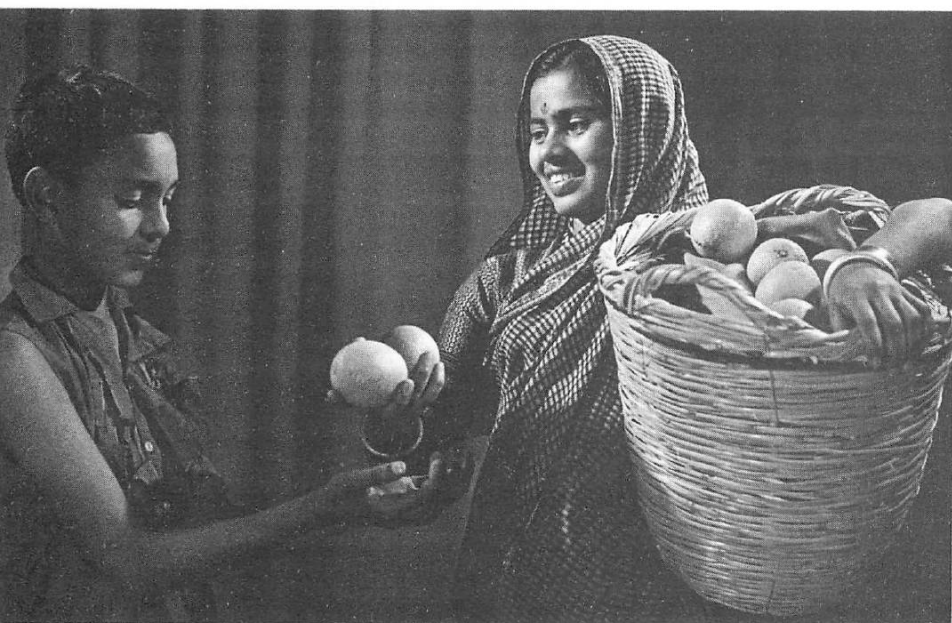
*Yes, there'll be rice tomorrow, Son,
Before you go to bed.
Yes, you'll live in a house, Son,
With a place to lay your head.
For I can see a new world
Where all men have a part,
Come on with me and build it, Son,
Here's the place to start.*

24 page souvenir programme

INDIA ARISE

Photos of the production and
the cast and words of the songs
Price: 2s. 6d. (postage 8d.)

Sailal Jedhiya (left) with Anasuya Paithankar in 'India Arise' photo Channer



UNSWERVING STATESMAN

Tribute to Konrad Adenauer

KONRAD ADENAUER carved his place in history because he was indifferent to the praise or blame of men.

The flattery of friends or the fury of opponents did not worry overmuch the man who in 1934 refused to hoist the Nazi flag in Cologne. Throughout his life he went his way unswerving.

One of the greatest examples of his loyalty to inner conviction was the Saar settlement after the war. The French insisted on a plebiscite to decide the future of the Saar. The German nation was divided. Adenauer said: 'A plebiscite is the only right way.' Attacked by Right and Left, labelled 'the Chancellor of the Allies', he seemed to risk his whole career. He stood firm. The plebiscite took place. Germany got the Saar—and the respect of the French.

Another example, and probably the one by which he will be best remembered, was his single-minded fight for a treaty of friendship with France to replace the centuries of bloodshed. He and his great ally in this project, Robert Schuman of France, both recognised their debt to Dr Frank Buchman for the part played by Moral Re-Armament in building this 'Bridge over the Rhine', and Buchman was decorated by both governments.

He stood equally firm on the question of Europe. He saw Germany's future only in terms of European unity. Again risking his political career, he refused to put the issue of German re-unification before the wider issue of creating a free society for all men and all nations.

'Unseen but effective' was how Adenauer described MRA's part in the making of important post-war European agreements.

He was always simple and direct. I remember him at a meeting in Königswinter, near Bonn. He had been leading a conference of his CDU Party chiefs, and brought some of

them to a performance of the MRA play *The Forgotten Factor*. Speaking at the end, he summed up the situation with his typical Cologne humour and brevity. 'Gentlemen, if we had all seen this play earlier, our conference would have settled all its points in half the time.'

At a Bonn reception I once asked one of his chief aides what it was like working for Adenauer. 'Probably very different from what you think,' was the reply. 'Hard work—yes. But rush—no. He probably does more than anyone else in Bonn, he's always in a political fight of some kind, he has faced very great crises—but he is like the calm at the centre of the whirlwind. Nothing throws him off balance, and we have come to the conclusion that his deep Christian faith is the reason. He does not swerve in politics because he does not swerve in his heart.'

Adenauer's career and achievements are a towering challenge to the 'Get-with-it' mentality, in politicians and public, in this and every country, which rushes to do what is popular, accepted or successful, brushing principle aside.

SYDNEY COOK

BRITISH GRATITUDE

THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE was sent to the German Ambassador in London from MRA in Britain:

'The Council of Management of Moral Re-Armament in Britain, on behalf of all the men and women of Moral Re-Armament, ask your Excellency to convey to President Lübke their sympathy towards the German people at the death of Dr. Adenauer, and their heartfelt abiding gratitude for his ceaseless fight to fashion a free, sane, united Europe as a bulwark for the world.

'We salute his fearless loyalty to the Christian heritage of Europe, his refusal to be diverted from his convictions by pressures of lesser interests and his unwavering pursuit of aims

which brought hope to millions that a peaceful world is possible and normal. He leaves a heritage which is permanent and which none can destroy. We honour his steady and skilful efforts to bring understanding between the German nation and the people of Britain, and we want to play our part in continuing that task.

'We are grateful for his long association with Dr Frank Buchman and Mr Peter Howard and for his clear voice, sounding through the years, which proclaimed Moral Re-Armament not only as the need of Germany but as the hope of humanity. He gave courage and conviction to people all over the world and helped them understand God's purpose for this age. We assure his family of our thoughts and our prayers.'

GRIEG concert

RUTH LAGESEN, leading Norwegian pianist and conductor, will be presenting a programme of Edvard Grieg's piano music at a concert in the Westminster Theatre Arts Centre on Sunday, 7 May at 3 pm. Tickets from the Box Office, VIC 0283.

'GIVE A DOG A BONE'

PREVIEWS of the film of Peter Howard's *Give A Dog A Bone* were given this week at the Westminster Theatre Arts Centre for cultural attachés and educational officials. The Arts Centre Educational Programme Director, Kenneth Rundell, termed the film 'an essential weapon for teachers in their battle against the anti-social instincts that are so powerfully exploited in the entertainment field'.

WESTMINSTER THEATRE ARTS CENTRE

Palace Street, London SW1

LABOUR'S WORLD ROLE

Principal speaker: WILLIAM JAEGER
Mr Jaeger has recently met industrial, trades union and political leaders in Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Hong Kong, India, Ceylon and the Lebanon.

Sunday, 7 May, 10.30 am