

Changes in India's North-East

STANLEY NICHOLS-ROY, member of the Legislative Assembly of India's key North-East state of Assam, last week called for unity between the hills people and the plains people of the state.

This appeal marked a change for the better. Bitterness and sometimes violence has marked the relationship between the racially distinct hills people and the people of Assam's plains and the New Delhi Government.

Nichols-Roy told his own people, the Khasi hill tribe, in a crowded meeting in Cherrapunji, 'I have been working in political life for the last eight years and we have not been absolutely loving with friends around us.

'I have learnt through MRA we can stand for our political aims and still love our neighbours in the plains.'

Nichols-Roy, with the Chief Minister of Assam, B P Chaliha, is an initiator of a conference of Moral Re-Armament now taking place in the capital of Assam, Shillong, attended by representatives of the State Government, the hill tribes and the plains people.

Many citizens of Shillong have decided to end the hatred that divided them from other groups and have set things right in both their private and public lives. The Municipal Chairman of Shillong, P R Kyndiah, told the MRA conference that he had resolved a ten-year dispute between the city authorities and the Harijans (formerly the Untouchables). The head of the sweepers was host at a reception given by the Harijan Association for the MRA force.

At the Municipal Corporation Building in Shillong a representative of the Congress Party told the MRA force, 'We are moved beyond words by your thought for us in coming. Until you came we felt we had to stick it out alone. We had no leaders who would show us where to go.'



Kenneth Belden, Chairman of the Trustees of the Westminster Theatre welcomes the force of *Anything to Declare?* at Victoria Station. With him are members of the cast from Morocco, Switzerland, Vietnam, India and Norway.

Photo Strong

'Anything to Declare?' arrives in London

Fresh from triumphs in Northern France

AMID CROWDS carrying banners the 19 nation cast of *Anything to Declare?* arrived at Victoria Station last Thursday. There to welcome them were people from all over London.

The cast plunged straight into rehearsals with director Henry Cass, prior to the opening of the revue on 30 January.

Last Sunday they met with 500 people at the Westminster Theatre to plan for the coming weeks in Britain. A number of the cast spoke and they gave a flavour of the songs from the show.

Coaches are coming each weekend to the Westminster Theatre from places such as Sheffield, East Anglia and Birmingham. Train parties are coming from Scotland and the Midlands. All who come will see *Anything to Declare?* and take part in the continuous assembly through February

entitled 'A Hero's task awaits the common man on earth.'

Anything to Declare? will now continue throughout February, as its run has been extended until 1 March.

The cast arrived direct from France:

'LA VOIX DU NORD', one of France's largest provincial dailies, wrote of the performance of the show in Liévin, northern France. 'More than a thousand people filled the Municipal Hall. The enthusiastic applause, innumerable curtain calls and the stamping feet were ample proof that the review had won the minds and hearts of the audience.

'But the nub of it is not in the show which is simply a means. It rests in an act of faith and hope expressed by more than 100 people who have in fact given up, for the time being or for ever, an easy life.

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'Invaluable work' says Governor of Assam

'THE WORK that MRA has been doing now for many years is quite invaluable,' said the Governor of Assam and Nagaland, B K Nehru, to a crowded audience after a performance of the revue *India Arise* last week in Shillong.

Speaking of a visit to the world assembly for MRA in Caux in Switzerland sixteen years ago, Nehru continued, 'Ever since then I have greatly appreciated the work that they have done throughout the world. They are fulfilling a need which has been felt throughout the ages—this has been attempted by various great teachers of humanity and is now being attempted by this movement in a modern setting. We in Shillong and Assam are most appreciative that you have come here.'

Reports of the conference have been published widely in the Indian press and the Shillong daily, *Frontier Times*, has published seven front-page articles in the last three weeks.

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'Certainly something happened on stage and there is no doubt something happened in the audience too. Henri Darras, M P, the Mayor of Liévin, presided and warmly congratulated the cast at the end of the performance.'

Sitting together in the hall were miners and mine engineers, textile industrialists from the Roubaix area, many students from Lille University, school-children who had come in special coaches from round about, and a group from neighbouring Belgium, including the representative of the Belgian Minister of Culture.

The hall was so full that some went off to bring chairs from home or nearby cafés. There were several rows of people standing at the back of the hall or sitting on piled up tables.

Tested

Felix Lisiecki, a teacher and one of the organizers of the evening, spoke at the end of the show about why they had invited *Anything to Declare?* to Liévin. 'We did it because we feel that Moral Re-Armament is the state of mind our region, our country and the whole world needs. It is not a theory, but a revolutionary idea lived out, which has been put to the test.'

'We can and we must instill into each man and woman of this area this pioneering spirit for a new world. It



Henri Darras, MP, receives a copy of 'Caux: Strategy for World Change' from a member of the cast Photo Maillefer

will then be a pilot area which the country and the world will want to follow.'

Speaking after Lisiecki, Robert Tilge, until last year Representative of the Employers' Association for the Nord and Pas de Calais, said, 'France will be made by the will of the French people, by the energy of the French, by the love of the French for one another. I thank the men and women of Moral Re-Armament who have given us a magnificent presentation of what the world could be.'

'And I ask you not to treat this show, which you have certainly enjoyed, just as a show, but as something to make us think and which means that tomorrow we can say, "They came to Liévin and something has remained".'

Nigerian Chief sees 'Freedom'

THE OLOTO OF OTO, Chief J E Ogundirun, and 500 of his people watched the film *Freedom* on the meeting ground in front of his palace this week, in the village of Oto on the

Mrs Kezia Fashina



island of Iddo, close to the Lagos railway terminus.

Freedom, written and produced by Africans, deals with the realities of corruption, hate and tribal division which face nations on gaining independence.

The Chief sat on his throne on the verandah of his palace as Mrs Kezia Fashina, formerly a Lagos City councillor and a leading member of the cast of the film, introduced the film in Yoruba.

As the film was being shown Mrs Fashina gave a commentary in Yoruba over the loud-speaker to the evident enjoyment of all present, most of whom stood throughout the performance, fascinated by the drama of it.

The Oloto is President of one of the largest markets of Lagos, holds great traditional powers, and is also an appointed member of the present

Lagos State administration.

The President of the Nigerian Post and Telecommunications Union recently asked for a performance of *The Line is Good*, a humorous sketch about a telephone exchange, at a Union social.

The sketch, written and acted by telephone exchange workers, shows what happens when one of the employees makes absolute moral standards practical. He gave no more free trunk calls to his friends as a start in combating the corruption of the country.

A police officer who saw it commented, 'I value this more than I value my monthly pay.'

Since the performance one of the sketch's authors is greeted on coming to work at the telephone exchange with the shout, 'The line is good, Peter.'

FROM 'ANYTHING TO DECLARE?'

Paris 'demo' girl brings down the barriers between people

TWENTY YEAR OLD Martine Algrain had just started her year-end examinations at Catholic Institute in Paris when the May riots broke out.



photo Strong

With other students who had passes she was ushered into the examination hall through a side door and locked in to complete her papers while demonstrations were in progress outside.

Emerging from the exam, she discovered that the entire Paris transport system was on strike making it impossible for many to get home.

Martine welcomed and supported the general student uprising. She was fed up with the existing state of society, unhappy with her own family life, and she sensed, as did many others, that things in France would never be the same after May. She was one of many students who wanted something more out of their education than a good career.

She was looking for an aim and a way of life and responded to the Marxist concept of a classless society, where it was claimed the authority of police and state was not necessary.

During the same period, her church in Versailles was experiencing its own revolution. The doors were opened to all comers and the church became a forum for heated debate between generations and ideologies.

People smoked, girls wore pants in church and some sat on the table that served as an altar. Old forms were rejected and young people spoke on

Sundays, giving their own interpretations of the Bible. The air was filled with expectancy and hope, but the holidays came and the revolution died out, leaving cynicism in its wake.

Looking back on her participation in the May demonstrations Martine says, 'If we don't have a clear aim in our lives all we do is follow those who shout louder. Aside from criticism we had nothing new to propose. When I met MRA I found a group of people with something constructive to do.'

Two summers ago, Martine was on holiday in Switzerland, and quite by chance she visited the international centre for MRA in Caux, overlooking Montreux.

There the dishwashing machine in the kitchen caught her eye immediately as the ideal solution to her distaste for dishwashing at home!

But she was also struck by the young men and women she saw in a British musical at Caux. While she had consistently criticized Sunday church-goers who did nothing to halt wars in Vietnam or Biafra, she felt that the people at Caux had the kind of conviction that might actually bring solutions to difficult situations.

Some months later the revue, *Anything to Declare?* came to Paris. This time it was Martine's contact with a young Swiss woman which gave her something new to ponder. The Swiss girl was open and direct about her own life and her family and in response Martine found herself talking for the first time about the difficulties in her own home, where she was deeply divided from her father.

'Even my friends who have known me for many years did not know anything about my family,' Martine says, and yet in a few hours time she had discovered that simple honesty can immediately bring down the barriers between people and point the way to solutions of difficult problems.

Martine returned to Caux last summer for a week that has never really ended, for she stayed to join the cast of *Anything to Declare?* and to work

for a year with MRA. After several weeks of meetings and conversations, the day came when she realized that she knew as much about MRA as she could learn without facing its challenge to her own life. To go further she realised she had to take decisive forward steps.

She knew that the division which existed between her father and herself was wrong, but everything in her resisted writing to apologize to him because she was so sure that he, not she, was in need of change. She did remember reading, though, that it would be easier for a person who thought himself only 1% wrong to put that right than to expect the man with 99% wrong to begin.

Martine had always felt that wars were stupid, a senseless loss of lives simply because two governments disagreed. But she realized that there was little point in her criticizing governments if she had glaring division in her own home.

Though it was not easy, she wrote to her father apologizing for her hatred and feels that her step has made possible the beginnings of a new unity in her home.

'It's the fashion not to believe in God these days,' Martine says and she has been typical of many who have considered intellectual arguments against God, looked at the behaviour of people who profess a belief in Him, and rejected His existence.

In MRA she found that no one forced her to believe in anything she could not accept. But she also began to find a faith as she experienced the results of obeying thoughts that came to her when she considered her life and actions in the light of four absolute standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love.

And that faith is increasing as she works with others from many nations, faiths and backgrounds to bring a new spirit to the world.

EVELYN THOMSEN

FEBRUARY WEEKEND ASSEMBLIES

Westminster Theatre

Saturdays

11.00am

'What the World most needs in 1969'

2.30pm

'Anything to Declare?'

7.30pm

'Taking up the revolution of MRA'

(place to be announced)

Sundays

11.00am

'Remaking the World'

3.00pm

'Remaking Men'

FROM 'ANYTHING TO DECLARE?'

'Let's end hate', urges Eritrean

WOLDEMICHAEL ABRAHA comes from the Province of Eritrea in the North of Ethiopia, where he was in his final year of high school last year.



A year ago he was interviewed and selected by his headmaster to travel with a delegation of six from Ethiopia to Caux, the international centre for MRA in Switzerland, for a training course there.

'We were all from different groups, religions and languages and we were all suspicious of each other,' Woldemichael said.

Ethiopia has both Christians and Moslems, Amharas and Tigres (tribal groups) and northerners and southerners. Differences between them have led to much hatred and even open hostility in recent years.

'The training we got at Caux united us,' Woldemichael continued, 'We decided we could work together and show an example to our country.' At Caux Woldemichael also discovered that there were many things in his own life that needed change.

'The first was hatred. As an Eritrean student I hated the government in Addis Ababa,' Woldemichael explained that in 1962 Eritrea was joined to Ethiopia and representatives of the central government came to rule over the province. Many in Eritrea resented this.

At Caux, he spoke before the Crown Prince of Ethiopia, H I H Merid Azmach Asfa Wossen Haile Selassie, and said that he had lost his hatred as an Eritrean for the southern

part of Ethiopia. 'The only thing that will unite Eritrea and Ethiopia is Moral Re-Armament,' he went on, 'and my commitment is to change men and to bring the spirit of MRA to Ethiopia and the surrounding Moslem countries of Africa.'

Whole continent

Woldemichael decided at Caux that 'it's not enough just to have more successful graduates to solve the problems of Africa. We need men and women really given to God. It meant breaking through my own selfishness and pride.'

When asked what he felt Africa's destiny should be, Woldemichael replied, 'I love Africa. I love my country. But I really hate the laziness in many of us Africans. Something must start in ourselves before we ask for

more help from Europe. It's beginning to happen through MRA.'

'Many people in Africa feel frustrated because they are the receivers of aid,' he went on, 'and many in Europe feel superior to us because they are the givers. This aid is often wrongly used. By dealing with the human factor this is being changed. Africa could set the example with this change in people's motives. The great hope and richness of the continent is its people.'

Woldemichael has been travelling with the cast of *Anything to Declare?* since last summer because he believes Africa should play its full part in re-making the world. 'Through travelling with the cast,' he said, 'I was able to understand the real problems and needs of other people, and in the places I have been in Europe I have discovered the problems and the answers to the problems are much the same as in Africa because they are basic human problems. I believe that people can change and understand one another and thereby solve the problems of the world.'

CAMPBELL LEGGAT

CAUX CONFERENCES 1969

The following series of conferences have been announced at the Moral Re-Armament world assembly centre at Caux in Switzerland:

Easter	3 to 7 April
World Assembly	23 May to 14 Sept.

In the framework of the world assembly the following special conferences will take place:

Agricultural conference arranged by Swiss farmers	27 to 29 June
Medical conference	25 to 27 July
Educators' conference	1 to 11 August
Conference of clergy and laity from all denominations	13 to 21 August

Each weekend during May, June and July there will be meetings for delegates attending the international conferences in Geneva.

Training courses are also arranged at the assembly in international cooking, languages and secretarial work.