

WEST BERLIN, 29 MAY, 1975:

In its daily TV news round up this evening Sender Freies Berlin TV network showed the *Song of Asia* force in action as they spoke and sang to the people of Berlin from the steps of the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church at the end of the famous Kurfürstendamm, heart of the city.

The TV programme was watched not only in West Berlin but by millions in East Berlin and the German Democratic Republic.

The hour and a half action at the church steps was led by Thomas Diebold, a student at the Berlin Technical University.

Speaking to the people of Berlin, Niketu Iralu of India said, 'Here in your great city we think of Berlin both East

and West as well as the whole of Germany and the whole of Europe. East and West alike have shared the same history of great triumphs and great tragedies. We now ask you to give to the world ideas and an adequate faith on which to build a just society where man's exploitation by man and man's inhumanity to man will end. In this task we believe the people of Berlin, because of what they have experienced, will play a unique part.'

In the afternoon the governing Mayor of Berlin, Klaus Schütz, welcomed the Asian visitors in the city hall. Wishing them success in their task of 'creating a free world' he added, 'People in Berlin know how necessary it is to have a new message.'

# NEW WORLD NEWS

FOR MORAL RE-ARMAMENT



## Tight security in Bonn as 'Song of Asia' visits German Federal capital



The sound engineer of 'Song of Asia', Vijay Rege, son of an Indian army colonel, presents leaflets for the show to the armoured car patrol outside the Bonn parliament when the cast attended a session.

TWO VERY DIFFERENT and yet not irrely unrelated events happened on the 21st of May in the Federal Republic of Germany.

In Stuttgart there began the trial of the Baader Meinhof group—young men and women accused of turning to murder, kidnapping and arson in their passion to end what they felt were fundamental wrongs in the fabric of society.

In Bonn there took place the première of the Asian musical *Song of Asia*—young men and women, some of whom once felt much the same but now believe passionately that they have found a way to build a just society without resort to violence.

'I was taught to kill and to fight against the government', a Filipino from the cast told MPs in Parliament. 'Then I met a more demanding idea. I decided to listen to my inner voice and to return a gun and bullets I had stolen from my father who is in the army. We were re-united as a family. And my

mother, who is related to the insurgents in the mountains, has since been able to meet them in their hideouts and give them a challenge in their hearts which most of our government failed to do.'

One of the defence lawyers in Stuttgart—since suspended for overstepping his legal responsibility in helping the accused—was asked what lay behind the terrorist actions. He replied, 'We are doing all this to help the third world and stop Germany exploiting less developed nations.'

In Bonn through the visit of *Song of Asia* audiences learned what could really help Asia—and what tasks Asia and Europe could take on together.

As the cast arrived in Germany responsible people were voicing their concern about how to maintain democratic society in face of such terrorism. Many, particularly in church circles, were deeply puzzled that some of the Stuttgart accused came from Christian families and parishes. What element was missing,

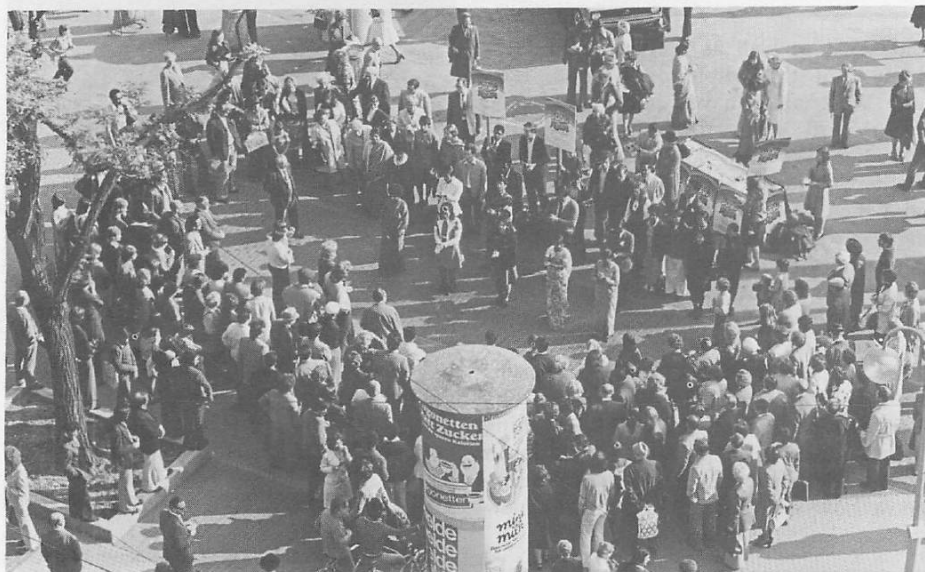
they were asking, in this highly developed and prosperous society?

Through nation-wide TV programmes as well as radio interviews, millions had a chance to meet these men and women from twelve Asian nations who feel they have found a revolutionary faith adequate to remould society.

'Though brought up in the Christian faith, I was prepared to follow the path of violence,' another young Asian in the cast told officials of the Christian Democratic Union. 'I faced the deepest challenge to my faith when God told me to apologize to an army officer. I realized that people I hated could be changed when I became honest in my heart.'

The culture and heritage of Asia colourfully displayed in *Song of Asia* drew praise from the critics. In a broadcast by *Deutschlandfunk* to the whole country the commentator described the artistry of dance and music, the superb technical staging, the finely synchronised

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Crowds start to gather as the cast of 'Song of Asia' sing in Mannheim's main shopping precinct.

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German translation and said, 'It added up to rich entertainment.'

The main daily in the Federal capital, the Bonn *General-Anzeiger*, had the headline 'Human problems interpreted with an Asian smile' and wrote, 'At a time when Asia and its problems preoccupy us more than ever and its tensions affect the whole world, the message of these 60 young people is specially significant.'

It was this serious intent behind the production that drew most comment. A *Voice of Germany* broadcast that went out in German, English and several Asian languages, said, 'It was noticeable at the performance that for those on stage from the most diverse Asian countries it was not just theory but dramatized experience. Some of them had lost family members in one or more terrible wars. Some, even teenagers, had been in prison for their actions or their beliefs. But at some point each of them had arrived at the conviction that the road of reconciliation was more rewarding. And in each scene of this gripping, well constructed musical show these convictions were convincingly expressed.'

The arrival of *Song of Asia* in Germany coincided with the 30th anniversary of Germany's surrender at the end of World War II and followed closely on the traumatic events in Vietnam. Perhaps no nation in Europe had followed the developments in South East Asia with more compassion coupled with an unspoken fear than the Germans. For they too knew what it had been like, 30 years ago, to lose their homes, become refugees, and have to cope with bitterness and blame. To hear 'this other voice from Asia', as many papers called it, proclaiming that 'the chain of hate can be broken' was both a hope and a challenge.

Church leaders, Protestant and Catholic, welcomed the Asian visitors. KNA, the Catholic newsagency, in a re-

port distributed throughout the country, wrote, 'Today, when Pope Paul VI in token of Holy Year has called on all men of good will whatever the colour of their skin, their religion or their race to build together a just peace in the world, these young people want with all that they have to make their contribution.'

There was a stir in the German Parliament as the Asian representatives in their colourful national costumes took their seats in the diplomatic gallery. To enter the 'Bundeshaus' they had to pass through the patrol of armoured cars that guards such buildings at this time.

Welcoming them officially in the caucus room of the Social-Democratic Party in Parliament was the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Economic Teamwork, Alwin Bruck, MP. 'No nation can be completely indepen-



Alwin Bruck, MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Economic Teamwork, welcomes 'Song of Asia' to Bonn on behalf of the Social-Democratic Party. With him is Adolf Scheu, MP.

Captivating entertainment on a high level. **Mannheimer Morgen**

The musical accompaniment really gets into you, the whole show is gripping and stylish, and the dances are lively especially when they are drawn from genuine national cultures.

**General-Anzeiger, Bonn**

Bright and colourful. A challenge to us Europeans... showing up the triviality of our everyday troubles compared to the dire needs of Asia. **Voice of Germany**

Everything - from Western-style songs to the dances of Sri Lanka, from the bamboo dance of the Philippines to the skilfully interwoven dramatic scenes - drew enthusiastic applause.

**Rundschau, Bonn**

dent today,' he told them. 'There can be no peace and prosperity until we get rid of the gap between East and West, North and South in the world. I wish you success.'

In the headquarters of the opposition party - the Konrad Adenauer Haus - the Asian party was received by the Christian Democratic spokesman on development aid, Dr Jürgen Todenhöfer, MP. 'You are doing what the state cannot do,' he said. 'We can make basic laws but cannot enforce basic values. We can give higher pensions but cannot ensure that retired people have a satisfying role to play. Initiatives like yours are the decisive elements to change inhuman conditions and wrong structures. That's why I welcome your visit.'

'We have a lot to learn from Asia. We have to a certain extent succeeded in answering our economic problems but have failed to answer the underlying moral ones. More important than prosperity is the creation of human rights and human dignity.'

'A great insecurity is growing. I hope our people, particularly our young ones, will see through you that there are still men and women ready to commit themselves, not just in street demonstrations, but in their way of life, for moral rearmament. This morning I learnt that it is not enough to know the answer. One must, as you do, go on the offensive with it.'

Replying, Niketu Iralu from India said, 'Germany has a history of great triumphs and great pains. You have suffered. And because of your experiences you are equipped to heal the wounds of mankind. You do not tolerate the second best in industrial production. Could your nation show the quality of moral standards without which our society cannot go forward?'

Thirteen Ambassadors, diplomatic representatives from 16 other lands and 47 MPs from different parties were among those who accepted the invitation



Dr Jürgen Todenhöfer, MP, CDU spokesman on development aid, presents a Konrad Adenauer medallion to Niketu Iralu to mark the visit of 'Song of Asia'. The whole cast were guests of the Christian Democratic Union in their new centre, the Konrad-Adenauer-Haus. *photos: Rengfelt*

to the première of *Song of Asia* in Bonn. They also heard Niketu Iralu speak for the cast: 'We are aware that far-reaching structural changes are needed. We do not believe the alternative is violence or the status quo - which is often corruption and injustice. The countries of East and West have made phenomenal material progress. But all over the world the search is on for a further step. Every scene in *Song of Asia* is something that has actually happened. They represent an experience of hope which in the age of the atom is the key to the future.'

After the performance the diplomats and MPs, students, businessmen and others stayed on to talk to the cast. An African Ambassador said, 'I've never seen a show with so much to learn from.'

It was a group of parliamentarians from nine European countries who invited *Song of Asia* to Europe. One of them, Social-Democratic MP Adolf Scheu, introduced the Bonn première. He said, '*Song of Asia* can help us create a social structure and a real democracy which is not just functional but one

which the citizen has put his heart into.'

'What could it mean if each of us in Bonn in responsible positions started the day with half an hour's quiet to find the way for the day? What could it mean if we started with ourselves and learned to differentiate between good and evil, between truth and lies, between love and hate and treat each other differently?'

'We must strive for good political solutions but do it with new teamwork between people and different political groups. In the Republic of Germany, between 1945 and 1950, we failed to a large extent to do this. If today we can start on this new basis, then we can thank these young Asians for having helped to show us the way.'

Another from the invitation committee, the Christian Democratic Union MP Otto Wulff, welcomed the cast to Bonn. He said, 'All parliamentarians would be very lucky to hear you. Your voice of a new Asia can help unite us and make a new history for Europe and other continents. As far as we can help, we will. May your voice be loud enough to be heard all over Europe.' MDH



Otto Wulff, MP, (right) and other CDU MPs in conversation after the Bonn première of 'Song of Asia'.

## at a glance

### INFECTIOUS ENJOYMENT

The *Methodist Recorder* of 8 May carried a review of *Good God, It Works!* 'It is hardly surprising,' says reviewer Leslie Marsh, 'that Garth Lean's latest book has aroused wide discussion as it is perhaps the most practical book on faith that I have read.'

He continues, 'Through this "experimental" approach, Lean finds that faith does move mountains, whether of international deadlock, industrial confrontation or personal misery... Life, he says, is a series of experiments. "Faith incurs a risk and faith flags unless such risks are taken day by day."

'He writes with a delightful wit and an infectious enjoyment of faith that as well as out-loving and out-living the pagans, also out-laughs them...'

'For those sapped by the drag of irrelevancies here is the stimulation of an "experiment" that could revitalise the most tired Christian's bones.'

### SHOWING IN PALACE

The all-African film *Freedom* was shown in May in Abeokuta, Nigeria, in the Council Chamber of the Palace of the Alake of Egbaland.

An MRA team led by the Rt Rev S I Kale, former Bishop of Lagos, introduced the film to the Alake, H H Oba Oyebade Lipede II. It was the previous ruler who had lent his throne, crown and regalia for the making of the film.

There were comments of recognition as the audience - which included the Oba and his chiefs - watched familiar scenes of Abeokuta which appear at the beginning of the film. Mrs Keziah Fashina, who plays the part of Mrs Palaver in the film, gave a running commentary in the Yoruba language.

### ARTISTS INTERNATIONAL

'The artist, the creator and the world' is the title of the special session for artists to take place within the framework of this summer's World Assembly for Moral Re-Armament at Caux, Switzerland. These sessions will be held from 1-10 August.

The themes of the artists' sessions, as described in the invitation, are:

- The famine in man's spirit and its connection with the famine, greed, violence and apathy on our planet.

- The contribution of artists in overcoming this world crisis and our part in building a new civilization millions long for.

- The possibility of a cultural renaissance inspired by faith.

- How we artists can work for this in our lives, in our art and in concerted action.

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The invitation is signed by an international committee of artists working in painting, pottery, sculpture, tapestry, theatre, music and photography and coming from Sweden, Switzerland, France, Norway, Holland and Britain.

## TRIBUTE FROM HANOI

After a performance of *Song of Asia* in Paris a Vietnamese invited people from Indochina to his home the next day to meet the cast. People from Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam came, each bringing a dish from their country for the meal.

One who came was a student from Hanoi studying in Paris. He said, 'Your idea is one of the finest in the world. *Song of Asia* made me enthusiastic because the colour and culture of Asia was shown there. I hope that *Song of Asia* will achieve its aim.' Another Vietnamese said, 'The inner voice is the only way.' A Laotian said, 'The show convinced me of this idea. Tonight has taken me a step further. I now want to pass it on to my friends and colleagues.'

## STUDENT INITIATIVE

Continuing its tour of Britain, *Cross Road* was given three times in Cambridge. Two of the performances took place in the University, arranged by a student in Trinity College. In addition to the film and singing presentation, people heard news of MRA at grips with the fundamental issues in the world. Sam Pono, a musician from South Africa, described how corruption, prejudice and hatred were being tackled in his country. He challenged those who said they wanted change in South Africa to be radical enough to start with changes in their own lives.

*Cross Road* has also been performed in the last few weeks in Stafford, at Warwick University and in London.

## RELIABLE READING

*The Black and White Book* has been given an enthusiastic endorsement by the Brazilian Council for Moral and Civic Education. Their recommendation for its use throughout the educational system was published in the *Official Journal* over the signature of the Minister of Education.

A senior official of the Commercial Workers Confederation says, '*The Black and White Book* never leaves my bedside. I rely on it for orientation day by day.'

The seventeenth-century Cathedral of Salvador in Brazil's north-east, renowned for its coloured marble, provided a unique setting for a screening of the film *A Man For All People* last month.

An estimated 2,000 crowded into the

Cathedral where the film about Dr William Nkomo, the South African leader who found a greater revolution than hate, followed a Mass. The event was broadcast on the radio throughout the state of Bahia.

In the same week *Voice of the Hurricane* was shown in the large cinema run by the Catholic Workers Federation.

## FILMS IN JUTLAND

Dr Jim Cooper writes from Denmark:

'Here in Jutland the four documentaries, *Belfast Report*, *A Man For All People*, *The Smile of the Apsara* and *What Are You Living For?* are in full use with Danish subtitles. In two weeks there were 15 performances in Aarhus, the second city of the country, and surrounding towns, for university staff and students, Protestant and Catholic clergy, lay and church groups, men in business and industry.

'*Belfast Report* is valuable in showing how men of diametrically opposite attitudes and aims can work together to achieve a higher purpose - which makes it especially relevant in Denmark today. An employer remarked that the division between management and workers here had grown steadily deeper and that there

was the need for the same kind of change in this country as is shown in *Belfast Report*.

'Among those who saw *A Man For All People* and *The Smile of the Apsara* were a number of thoughtful young people who have been involved in the question whether Christians ought to support violence in Africa and Asia. Several expressed the conviction that those films showed the right approach.'

## PREPARATION FOR BANFF

*Cross Road* has been shown in the Provincial Museum Theatre, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. The main purpose of this showing was to focus the aims of the forthcoming conference for Moral Re-Armament to be held in Banff, Alberta, 13-15 June.

Present in the audience were representatives of education, agriculture, the oil industry, the railways, television, the Church and the University of Alberta.

After the show, many people stayed on to discuss the implications of the film's global message. Commented Anglican Sister, 'We need more of this kind of revolution in our daily lives.' Said an educator, 'This film goes right to the heart of the Christian message.'

## Lessons for life

ABOUT A YEAR AGO the Principal of a big girls' school in Madras asked if MRA could help to make their moral instruction classes more interesting and more relevant. It was a need we had met with in talking with many teachers, who often had to teach the subject with little help and guidance, and also from pupils, whose reactions to these lessons were usually far from enthusiastic!

Some of us decided to respond to this challenge. Two things seemed obvious. One was that these lessons needed to deal practically with what was happening in the world today. Secondly that the challenge to live the right way needed to be set high enough. With these two aims in mind, we began to work out a series of lessons and they were then tried out in four classes of girls aged between 11 and 16 years of age. The work was done by the normal class teachers, who were keen and imaginative in applying the new ideas.

One of the first effects was that the girls started to become aware of what was happening in the world. As one teacher said, 'Girls who hardly knew newspapers existed are now avidly reading them for material for their lessons.'

After about six months, we decided to see what the girls thought about it all. So we devised a questionnaire. One of the questions was, 'What do you feel

you have learnt through these lessons?' Practically all the girls said they were enjoying them. The reasons included, 'Because we are dealing with things that are really happening in the world'; 'Instead of just reading from the text book, we could openly discuss our feelings on any particular subject'; 'They helped us to get to know each other better.' One girl wrote, 'I feel I have learnt my place in society... and my role as a citizen of the world. I have learnt to feel a concern for my neighbour, to feel a genuine concern for his needs.' And another, 'I have realized that honesty, truth, unity hold the key to a better future - ours and India's.'

The real aim of these lessons was to effect a change of behaviour through a change of character. The problems in the teachers' minds was how to get people who know what is right to do what is right. How far was this achieved?

'I have changed in many ways like not fighting with my brothers.' 'Before I used to be a bully but now I have changed.' 'These lessons have stirred my feelings and now I wish to help others and dedicate my life to the welfare of others.' 'I used to tell a lot of lies but now I have stopped.' 'I began to listen to my conscience.' And one girl added, 'Not that I have become perfect, but I have improved.'

Ann Rignall