



At the meeting

Lewisham 1977

LEWISHAM achieved notoriety in 1977. This area of south-east London, where many races live, was the scene of bitter clashes in August between the police and left-wing groups after a march of the right-wing National Front through Lewisham.

But last week a programme was launched which could give Lewisham a new image before the end of 1978.

In a hall 300 yards from where the clashes took place, 100 people of different races came to a meeting with the theme, 'Can every home in Lewisham be a focus of harmony to answer the discord in Britain?'

It was called by concerned south-east Londoners of British, West Indian and Indian origin. The hall was made available by Sidney Smith, City of London missionary in Lewisham. During the previous weeks he and others had gone round many of the homes in the area, taking a leaflet to inform people of the event.

John Richards, a builder who came to Britain from the West Indies 14 years ago, led off. 'We hope by the end of the evening you will not only endorse what MRA is doing but will be ready to assist,' he said. He then introduced a series of speakers, young and old, who were a living demonstration of how God uses people of different races to bring change in people's lives.

Don Embleton, a British accountant, told how unity had come in their home through the care of a West Indian.

Norma Richards, John's wife, told how this, in turn, had helped her find a new attitude. 'I realised I could sit and moan about all the things I don't like here, or I could try and help Britain to be a better nation.'

Damphal Singh met the Richards at a meeting in Ealing Town Hall. 'These people first knock on your door, then they knock on your heart, then on your soul. Now we must light a thousand human candles in Southall to take this light further.'

Long and animated discussions followed the speaking and the film *Choice for an Impatient World*.

'I enjoyed the film' wrote one Lewisham resident. 'It helps us break the barriers of selfishness and hate amongst us.' 'It brings out the change in a person's personality' wrote the chairman of Croydon's Community Relations Council.

JCB

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CAUX 1978

8 JULY - 4 SEPTEMBER

To make a living democracy

In East and West, North and South, people are looking for a living democracy which draws its strength not only from the ballot-box but also from morality in everyday relationships between people.

Scandals are undermining public life. Leaders allow themselves to be corrupted. Individuals push off their responsibility on to the collective. Reorganizing the institutions we have will not of itself save democracy.

Wherever individual conscience dies, the moral authority of the state also dies. The attempt to replace it with the authority of force can never work.

Everyone can find work and a purpose for life in creating a world to God's design.

Caux is the place where people from poor countries and rich, from great institutions and from the rising generation, meet each year to examine the extent of the human revolution demanded by our troubled times, and how they as individuals can initiate it through their own living.

1878 A hundred years ago, Frank Buchman was born in Pennsylvania. His ancestors had come from Europe to find on American soil the freedom to build a society based on their deepest beliefs.

1938 Forty years ago, in a Europe caught in a headlong armaments race, the programme of 'moral and spiritual re-armament' was launched. Buchman saw, beyond the impending war, that the great social transformation of the world would only come through a new birth of conscience.

1978 Today, seventeen years after Buchman's death, the best thought of statesmen, international experts, intellectuals and young militants is reaching the same conclusion to which the ordinary person's conscience is pointing: that a new shape for society depends on change in individual human nature.

From the invitation to the Caux assembly

'The basic laws of humanity need re-stating today,' declared Hans-Joachim Fischer, a leader writer, recently in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, the respected West German daily. 'Survival rather than piety compels us to recall the basic principles which for thousands of years have regulated and sustained human society—the Ten Commandments.' This was part of the debate that has been going on in West Germany as a result of the terrorist attacks, kidnappings and hijackings during the past months.

There has been much recrimination. The Right has accused the Left of encouraging a 'permissive' climate in which terrorism has flourished. The Left has accused the Right of using the terrorist atrocities as an excuse to bring in a police state.

This has only been partially allayed by the teamwork of party leaders in support of Chancellor Schmidt's vigorous rescue of the hijacked hostages in Mogadishu.

Fischer writes, 'The task is no longer to establish the *minima moralia*, the lowest common denominator of values in a society. The *maxima moralia*, the great aims of the community need rediscovering and upholding.'

Meanwhile, the newspaper *Die Welt* last month quoted Hans-Jurg Steinlin, President of the West German Rectors' Conference (of university and college heads), as saying, 'The universities and colleges are in an internal crisis.' 'I am shocked,' he continued, 'at the extent of the frustration, defeatism and cynicism which I have found.' A moral vacuum had been left, he said, at all levels, and he urged colleges and their members 'to work for moral re-armament'.

We print here an interview with Michael Herwig, Travelling Secretary for the Student Mission in Germany (SMD), who is responsible for this work at the universities of Berlin, Brunswick, Gottingen, Hanover, Hamburg and Kiel.

Among Germany's students

'MANY ARE AFRAID of students. They at once connect them with demonstrations, strikes and riots. But you only need to have talked with a few students to get a different picture: a crying need behind the aggressive facade, tormenting doubts, a lack of inner roots and orientation.'

Herwig thinks that student attitudes have changed basically in the last ten years. 'In 1968 the revolutionary wave prevailed. The students were idealistic and wanted to stand for justice in the world. Today most follow self-centred aims: How to get more aid for my studies? How to do well in my exams? How to get a secure job afterwards? The "student bulge", combined with the recession, causes enormous pressure, starting at school level. Many have to wait years for a university place simply because their marks in the final school exams are not first class. Then when they have finished their studies, they are unsure of finding a job. Education officials control competition mostly in a purely bureaucratic way. The students see the state only as the great oppressor. Despair over the meaninglessness of the world of learning, coupled with the feeling of inability to alter anything, often makes them susceptible to radical or even terrorist experiments.'

'Students are an emotionally unbalanced generation. Many feel unaccepted—often even in their own homes; and they crave recognition and satisfaction. They use every possible means to get it: success and achievement, rebellion and withdrawal, but above all friendly relations with each other. They seek to satisfy their inner longing, especially

in their early search for a partner. But this often leads to painful experiences. Since there is frequently less concern for the other person than for the satisfaction of their own craving, their partner becomes interchangeable if he or she fails to come up to scratch. This leads to hurts and disappointments.

Hours of calculations

'Here only one thing helps: they must feel they have God's love. Then that inner yearning that no human being can satisfy finds fulfilment. Then they know that they have a task, no matter whether others like them or not. Then they learn to love people without wanting anything from them. Here lies life's anchor. Without this certainty people are hopelessly exposed to every temptation and difficulty and to all the pressures of society.

'Intelligent students in particular, complicate their lives by explaining and excusing everything psychologically: "I act like this because I was brought up like this; and I cannot react differently now because, as a child, I experienced this or that or came off badly." The lack of absolute ethical standards wipes out responsibility for the past and the future. Psychology helps us to understand others. But it must not lessen my own responsibility for the future, whatever good or evil others have done to me.

'For want of inner stability, many students do not know what they should study and

often cannot study the subject they would like. Then they frequently study something else—half-heartedly and with a bad conscience. A mathematics student told me recently he had chosen his course to be able to earn a lot, but he could no longer imagine spending eight hours every day of his life doing calculations. What should I advise him? The crucial question behind all such questions that crops up in almost every conversation is the basic question of life: What am I living for?

Two-front battle

'I could scarcely imagine how I should manage without what I have learned in my work with Moral Re-Armament. Above all, the practice of the quiet time, in which God gives certainty and direction. In almost every conversation about real problems, there comes a point when everything has been said. The arguments are on the table. Then the temptation arises to give the student advice. That is seldom advisable. Not only is it taking more on you than you should, but it would only result in the student returning three days later for fresh advice. You must not fob people off with a glass of water; they must themselves make contact with the inner spring of God's direction. For that reason, I often suggest at the end of a conversation a time of quiet. This has proved valuable—my human advice is arguable, but the other person can work victoriously for what he feels sure of in that silence, even in the midst of opposition and difficulties.

'It is important not to make things too easy for people; otherwise you deprive them of what is most valuable. It is not a case of curing symptoms; people must become fully available for what God plans for them. Recently a girl came to ask whether she should study a certain subject. What was I to say? I cannot decide her way of life! So I said, "Perhaps you should put your whole life at God's disposal." That was quite a shock to her. She went for a two-hour walk. Then she was ready for this step. Later the question of her studies became clear and now she is enjoying them.

'Some say, when they have worked in our groups for a time, that they would now like



to be fully committed Christians and fellow-workers. Then I sometimes ask, "Do you know what that means? If you want to be a fully committed Christian then it means that you have no more plans of your own—for your holidays or your studies or for marriage and profession. Are you ready to let go of everything and become completely available for what God plans for you?" What a relief when someone battles through to such a basic decision.

'My work is characterised by a battle on two fronts. One is for the pious who, faced with a world they believe is lost, think only of rescuing a few people. I put forward with passion my conviction that God is concerned with *this* world and that we shall one day be asked what we have done for the lowliest of this world, for those, too, of the Third World who are going short and even starving.

'The other is for those who are burned up by the problems of the world and who are committed politically. They run the danger of losing their spiritual grounding and of beginning to work with the same methods as their opponents—with confrontation and violence. Here you have to fight man by man and woman by woman that they make contact with the inspiration of the living God and find an intellectual and spiritual basis for their political activities.

A film unrolls

'We are hard at work in the universities finding and practising the third way, that makes the pious responsible and brings the politically active into contact with God.'

On the question of what his journeys to Africa and Asia had meant to him, Herwig says: 'For me they were decisive. Once you have seen the slums of Bombay or Soweto, you can no longer go on living as before. You feel that anything that does not meet those needs is too small. Even those students who felt burdened by the pressure of examinations and a hostile Minister of Education get things into perspective when they realise the poverty of the Third World.

'When I was in Rhodesia, I experienced a sort of Damascus Road, the crucifixion of my outsize ambition. My whole life had been marked by this ambition. At school I had made my speech at my final oral exam in Latin. At the university and later for God's Kingdom I wanted to achieve something great. And there I was in the middle of Africa with all its needs—full of myself, but useless for God's plan. During a church service I saw a film of my life unroll before my mind's eye. And it was now quite clear: I no longer wanted to be anything special, if only God could use me for anything in His Kingdom, however small and insignificant. I prayed about it with a friend. From then on a peace came into my life, and later the call to the Student Mission.'

What does he think is the main task in the present situation in Germany? Herwig says: 'Two things are crucial: Facing the past squarely and taking responsibility for the burning problems of today, especially those of the Third World. The first is the special

HOLLAND

Look in on families

by Howard Grace

IF YOU WANDER through the streets of Holland at night you are struck by the absence of curtains from most windows. You can look right into people's living rooms and see families gathered round the TV set or scrabble board. It all looks very friendly. But is it? Are there some skeletons in the cupboard?

The realities of family life is the subject of a new slide-tape (diaporama) production from Holland called 'Families—Looking in and reaching out'. Twelve Dutch families include you in a variety of experiences and convictions that make you realise that families are the same the whole world over.

There is the couple eight years happily married with two children who begin to feel the need of a deeper meaning for their lives. A younger couple with two children bring a foster child into their family. The owner of a chemist shop decides not to open a second shop so that he and his wife can give adequate time to their family. In contrast to that, an officer in the Merchant Navy and his wife feel it right for him to stay in his job even though it means his being away from home for months on end.

There is a young couple, married last year, who talk about the basis of starting out on married life. And a lady whose husband was killed in a plane crash when her daughter was eight years old.

All these experiences and others, sometimes movingly, sometimes humorously, come together and allow you to 'look in' on their family life.

concern of the older, the second of the younger generation. Both belong together. Facing the past without being ready to take on new responsibility is masochism. World responsibility without repentance is arrogance. Our way must lead from repentance and forgiveness to a new calling and responsibility. For that our society needs completely new values. Materialism in every form has led to the materialism of the terrorists. The suffering that has resulted should drive us to God's aims, values and standards—that is our opportunity today. But I know from myself and I sense from many Germans that we are still immature in these questions and lacking in moderation. We urgently need to grow up to be fit for the future and the tasks that are allotted to us.'

KvO

Reprinted from *Caux Information*



The families meet

But the diaporama also shows the conviction of these families to 'reach out' and make a contribution in society. The commentary of the diaporama concludes, 'Our homes can have an outreach into the life of the community around us and into other parts of the world. For that to happen it needs more than people who try to set a good example and hope that somehow a better world will automatically happen. It needs people who have the passion and faith to create that better world and rethink everything they do in that perspective.'

Barbecues

For the past two years these families and others have been meeting together to talk about the role of the family as the basic unit of society and to see what this means in practice. The adults sometimes meet by themselves and sometimes with their children of all ages. Games, barbecues and discussions play their part.

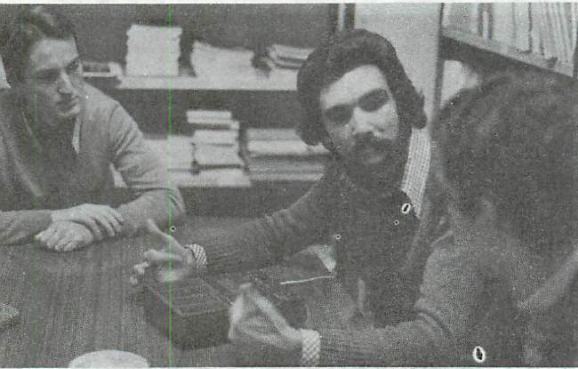
The diaporama was made in Dutch, then translated into English. Each of the people in it speak their parts in English. Then some German families saw it and were keen to have it in German. So recording in German is presently going on in the same way.

The running time is 32½ minutes and it has 147 slides. Each copy costs 275 guilders (£65). Enquiries can be made to 'Family Diaporama', Amaliastraat 10, Den Haag, Holland.

SLOVENIAN IN CARINTHIA

THE BLACK AND WHITE BOOK has appeared in Slovenian, the Slavonic language spoken in parts of Austria and Yugoslavia. A publishing firm in Austria has brought out an edition of 5,000 copies and is distributing 4,000 copies in South Carinthia, the area where Slovenian is spoken.

'This handbook—in German and in Slovenian—can be a valuable help in the efforts for a deeper understanding between both communities in Carinthia,' write the translators. 'The so-called minorities throughout the world can be of the greatest significance for peace. Change from an inflexible attitude can be most readily brought about through the perspective which lifts us Austrians above our own problems.'



Radio Renascenca interviews Luis Marques (rt) and Jean-Louis Nosley

PORTUGAL

Book for mass meetings

'DURING THE LAST three years my country has had a revolution, two military insurrections, six different governments and four elections,' says Luis Marques, a student from Portugal. 'Neither the ideologies of Left or Right have given us the freedom that will enable us to live democracy. Real freedom lies in the choices each one of us makes.'

Luis was one of those who invited five young people from Britain, Sweden and France to help with the programme of Moral Re-Armament in Portugal.

Soon after their arrival in Lisbon the group was interviewed on *Radio Renascenca*, the Catholic radio station. When asked why they had come, Ann Corcoran from Britain replied, 'What is happening here in Portugal is important for the world. We are eager to know if Portugal can demonstrate that it is not only possible to win democracy but to live it and make it work.' The interview included evidence of Moral Re-Armament at work in Brazil and Southern Africa and was interspersed with music provided by the group. Later the President of the League of Friends of Radio Renascenca bought 1,500 copies of the MRA book, *Where do we go from here?*, for use in their programme of mass meetings around the country.

I quit the job

120 miles north of Lisbon lies the city of Coimbra whose university, founded in the thirteenth century, has provided much of the country's leadership. The group were invited there by Padre Joao Evangelista, who first visited the MRA World Assembly at Caux in 1975 and feels passionately the need to bring Moral Re-Armament to Portugal.

Many young people are disillusioned and frustrated. The political turmoil has disrupted their studies and left them uncertain about the future. There were many occasions for the group to meet and talk with these people. They were always eager to know

what part they could play in bringing change. Two groups producing Peter Howard's play *The Ladder* wanted to learn more about the ideas behind the play. Meetings were held with students involved in social action and young politicians. Evenings were spent in homes with discussions lasting late into the night.

During a two-hour session with a sociology class in one Coimbra college, Luis told of his own experience: 'I always used to blame the politicians for what was wrong in the country. But when I faced my life honestly with absolute moral standards I saw where I needed to change. I had to apologise to a friend whom I was only nice to because I wanted to go out with his cousin! I was honest with my parents about a job I had translating pornography. I quit the job and told my boss I had made this decision. Honesty with my father freed me of my fear of him and established a new relationship. Decisions like this have shown me that we can be free from the things that bind us and begin to think responsibly for our country.'

Portugal, with a population of only nine

million has, in the last few years, received nearly one million refugees from Angola, Mozambique and Timor. Padre Francisco Fernandes, from Timor, invited the group to Mass and afterwards had them speak and sing to many of the refugees. At the end of the programme one family invited them for a meal in their home, an army hut which they share with four other families in the refugee camp. A delicious meal was prepared on a wood fire and the group were entertained with songs and dances from Timor. Padre Francisco said: 'All we have left is our faith. We shall do our best to pass it on. Your visit is a light which will shine in the darkness of our pain and suffering.'

Famous in Portugal's history are explorers like Magellan and Vasco da Gama. Colonel Miranda Dias, one of those who invited the group, spoke on the eve of their departure and referred to Portugal's tradition of exploration. 'Today it is up to us Portuguese,' he said, 'with you young people and all who are ready to fulfil the plan of God, to take this message to the four corners of the world.'

ROB CORCORAN

Nothing to do with race

by Allison Lodge, speaking in Lewisham last week

I COME from England. Some weeks ago I was rude to a West Indian lady in Britain. The first time in her home, received with coffee and cake, I said to her, 'I am surprised you have such a lovely home'.

There didn't seem to be much to be said between us after that, I felt uneasy. I was afraid to look deeper behind my words in case I found some awful racial prejudice.

But in fact the thoughts I had about it were:

'You are lazy. You did not take the trouble to find out who this lady was, or what she did for a living, or to imagine the kind of home she might have, before you went there.'

'Then, to be able to say what was in your head, without considering how it might be received, shows a callousness and cruelty.'

These thoughts surprised me. But very soon I noticed that many of the people I met in daily life I treated in the same way. It seemed to have nothing to do with race. And I was ashamed.

This particular lady, a librarian, forgave me my words with great grace but added: 'Many people here say the same thing to me. Whereas in fact I came from a far more beautiful home in the West Indies.'

An Englishman said to me: 'It's hard to see what's wrong with our country anyway.' It is true that there is so much to be grateful for in Britain. But how do others see it?

A black British nurse said, 'I come from an

island of faith. We look to Britain as our mother country. The first Sunday I went to church in Britain, the minister was embarrassed and said, 'Oh, we don't have anyone of your background here.'" This nurse was not altogether put off, as her aim had been to worship God, anyway.

But perhaps if we don't know what our neighbours' experience of Britain is, we've not bothered to ask, or we've wounded so deeply with our opening remarks that they can no longer tell us from their hearts.

I stand in the train to London each day with other office workers of all nations. In travelling, using a clean office, having my lunch dishes washed, I am served by at least four people from overseas. But I know an Indian teacher here who feels that there is not nearly enough appreciation expressed for all this work done.

But the picture could look different. After a generous evening in the home of an English doctor, a West African secretary said, 'I had been warned I would be treated badly here. Now I can tell them back home it's a lie.'

We need a greater open-heartedness in this country. We need a deeper unity between peoples. More of us need a spirit of ready forgiving. We need a richness in our relationships, to give us inspiration for our nation's policies. We could set our wills to a constant effort of thought and heart, to showing real consideration for peoples.