

# Young visitors bring us 'something new'

From our correspondent

**PRETORIA** — Several Catholics are with an unusual group of visitors due to arrive in South Africa today.

They are a "mobile force" of 25 young workers, students and musicians from 13 countries, including Malta, Portugal, Morocco and Japan, as well as Scandinavia, Holland, France, Britain and the United States.

The group comes in response to an invitation signed by 70 South Africans — black, white and brown — from all over the country. The invitation reads:

"We ask your help at this critical time in our country. Attitudes are hardening and we urgently need some new and inspired factor in the situation. We believe that a force of men and women from many lands who put God's direction above every personal and national consideration, and who know how to enlist others in this way of living, could play a major part in bringing something new to birth in Southern Africa.

"We are also conscious that this part of Africa is a world ideological focus, and if you can help us find the right road here, you will at the same time be helping Europe, Asia and America."

The young people came together at a Moral Re-Armament youth conference at Caux, Switzerland, last year. They have each accepted the principle "as I am, so is my nation," and believe that the change of motivation they have experienced is applicable to national and international problems. Several gave up jobs or postponed their studies so as to be free to travel to South Africa.

Two young South Africans have been travelling with the group during its visits to the oil ports and cities of Scotland and to other parts of Europe. They are Bulie Ndamse, a graduate of Fort Hare University and daughter of a former Education Minister of the Transkei, and Hazel Clark, a South African musician from Natal. An early arrival is Jean Sutherland, a Cape Town Catholic, who has been working for MRA in England, Canada and America.

She and Mary Lean, a former Oxford student who has already spent two years in Southern Africa, are already here making arrangements for the group.

After a stay in Johannesburg, the plan is for a small group to go to Rhodesia as an advance party while the main group goes to Cape Town.

Visits to the Cape Town and Stellenbosch universities as well as to the University of the Western Cape are on the schedule, and there is an invitation from the Potchefstroom University. They will also travel in the Eastern Cape, Natal and the Transkei and hope to visit South West Africa.

Their aim is to mobilise all the young people in the country who feel that there must be something they can do, but don't know how to set about it.

As Mary Lean puts it, "we want to bridge colour and class and pioneer something new, spreading freedom from bitterness and arrogance and working for peace."

How do they define peace? "Peace is people becoming different." But, they emphasise, "if you want people to be different in your country — start with yourself."

The trip will also be an education and a training for the group, strengthening their own commitment.

Jean Sutherland and Bulie Ndamse travelled in the United States together and made considerable impact because it was not realised that black and white South Africans could work so effectively together.

Sam Pono, a young black musician from Queenstown who is now working in Johannesburg, is also connected with the group. He is a former Oxford student who, as Mary Lean puts it, made a tremendous impression there both on the more revolutionary blacks and conservative whites.

Due to be published during the group's visit here is a book by Peter Hannon from Northern Ireland, who has been living in Cape Town for the past three years. The book's title is "Southern Africa — What Kind of Change?"

The visit by this young group is one of a series of interchanges between young South Africans and Europeans. Over Christmas, 42 South Africans attended the Caux conference and visited Northern Ireland. Among them were Darius Mangope, son of the Bophuthatswana Chief Minister, and Jean Mbanga, daughter of the Minister of Education of the Transkei.

Also with them were a former president of the SRC of the University of the Western Cape, and white, coloured and black students and young professionals from all over South Africa and Rhodesia.

The group will be accompanied by Mr and Mrs Gosta Ekman. Mr Ekman was editor of the Swedish paper, Svenska Dagbladet.