

## CAPE TOWN

Rajmohan spent two hours with Mr Ebbe Dommissie, Editor of "Die Burger" the main Afrikaans-language daily. He introduced Rajmohan to Prof. Diet Cillie, a former editor of the paper and head of the School of Journalism at the University of Stellenbosch. Raj said that this was a very good beginning which gave him groundwork for future dates. The next day Dr. Leopold Scholtz, Foreign News Editor interviewed him. (See enclosed cutting and condensed translation.)

Adv. Tom Langley, Conservative MP, invited the Gandhis to lunch at the Houses of Parliament. The party included his wife and son and another Conservative MP and his wife. They had met 35 years ago at an MRA conference overseas and Adv. Langley was adamant that he wanted to entertain the Gandhis. In answer to the question "Emigrate or fight, the other man said 'fight' while Langley said 'we must negotiate.'

Students came to meet Rajmohan at the University of Stellenbosch. In response to his challenge to reach out, a black student and a white student decided that they would work together.

Bill Page took Raj to meet Franklin Sonn. It was an exchange of views and Franklin informed him of his friendships with most of the political leaders.

The Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cape Town, Dr Stuart Saunders received Raj. He found the time informative and valuable. The Hindu Students Association arranged a gathering of 30 students. He was able to deal with existing bitterness and challenge them to play a positive part as a minority in South Africa. They particularly wanted his views on his own philosophy of non-violence as well as aspects of the life of Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian Liberation Struggle. It was a vibrant and stimulating time. After this there was a seminar with about twenty academics. The Chairperson of the Black Sash was there and illustrated that the courage of one person can change a community. Usha talked of the crippling effect of fear. Those responsible for the day at the University were deeply impressed by the Gandhis and want them to return so that they could create more inclusive and comprehensive time for them.

The University arranged a dinner hosted by Raj's relations, Prof. and his wife, Dr Mesthrie. The relevance of Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent struggle came out clearly and the challenge of his life and work is a focus for South Africa.

The Gandhis had coffee with Prof. Willie Esterhuyse, Prof. in Social Philosophy at the University of Stellenbosch and Prof. in Business Ethics, Stellenbosch School of Business. It was a meeting of minds, both parties expressed regret at the short time together. Prof. Esterhuyse, who will visit China later this year, now plans to visit the Gandhis in India. Wilhelm Verwoerd also met the Gandhis at this time.

Mr Lionel Hartmann, Manager of Corporate Public Relations of the Old Mutual arranged a luncheon for the Gandhis, hosted by the General Manager, Mr Reg Munro. The Old Mutual is one of the five largest companies in the country. The Gandhis had a strong impact. Mrs Walbeck, Manager of Internal Marketing came specially to meet Usha and there was an immediate rapport. The photos are already on display in a place of honour. Mr Siebert, of the Western Cape Peace Committee was also present.

After that we took them to the township of Guguletu. There were several ladies who take responsibility in the community, businessmen and PAC and ANC people. There was a general discussion and then they broke into small groups to talk privately to Rajmohan. This was in one of the largest and wealthiest homes in this area. The woman who made the greatest impact on the Gandhis and us, rang us and asked to meet next week. This is just one of the many doors which have opened. In Langa, a nearby township we took them to one of the smallest homes, where they met a community worker and her activist son. She made it clear that the Gandhis could ask any question in the privacy of her home, but not at the community centre. Raj's reaction to her work and battles was 'You are the Mother Theresa of South Africa.' The son gave a report of his activities and Raj was able to give his best. To his mother's joy, there was an excellent response.

Prof. Jannie Malan, Researcher, African Centre for Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) arranged a meeting with students and a lunch at the University of the Western Cape. Raj was able to cover global trends across the world, global villages, ethnic clashes across the world including Yugoslavia, India, Pakistan and Afghanistan. He told the hope-giving story of the Cambodian elections where

80% participated, after much violence and UN participation. The information revolution has created tremendous expectations and it has great potential for education. Issues for reflection: 1. How to disentangle dislike of other groups, illustrated by clashes in India between Hindus and Moslems (140million Moslems in population of 900million). 2. Economic Planning: The State cannot create all the necessary jobs. Socialism/Communist economy cannot do that either. Market economy alone cannot do it. The great need is for schools, teachers, housing. Need for employment is interrelated.

Raj also made the point that we cannot change the past but we can learn from the past and go forward constructively.

In Somerset West Peter and Shirley Gordon hosted a meeting for our team. They wrote: "Rajmohan Gandhi was encouraged by what he had seen in South Africa, in spite of the fact that there are still many problems. He felt there was progress. In the past four years unbelievable things had happened. There is, however, a great need for decisions made at the top to affect grassroots level." Shirley comment was: Rajmohan's touch with ordinary people is very special.

To assess the Gandhis outreach and impact we cover some of the people they met.

Mr Johann Liebenberg, Senior Gen. Man. Chamber of Mines of SA; Mr Bhadra Ranchod, Minister of Tourism and Mrs Ranchod, Mr Yakoob Makda, Dept. Min. Local Government & Housing/Welfare in House of Delegates and Mrs Makda, Mr Craig Arendse, Trainer in Conflict Resolution, Centre for Intergroup Studies, Ms Koosum Kalyan, Manager, External Affairs, Shell SA (Pty) Ltd, Mr Neville Naidoo, Media & Publicity Secretary, ANC Youth League & Chairman Western Cape Youth Forum, Prof. Annette Seegers, Dept. Political Studies, University of Cape Town, Mr David Screen, Regional Dir. Institute for a Democratic Alternative for SA (IDASA), Mr Roland Willis, Investor Advisory Services Manager, The Association for the Promotion of Western Cape (WESGROW).

Mr Liebenberg's assessment of the dinner he hosted for the Gandhis was: "I thought that it was a fascinating evening and was very impressed with the rather acute perceptions of both Mr Gandhi and his wife, who clearly is a person who was not simply tagging along but participating fully in the learning experience. Especially in the area of affirmative action the South Africans learnt a lot from the Gandhis."

#### JOHANNESBURG/PRETORIA

Rajmohan met leading Dutch Reformed Ministers, arranged by the Director of Ecumenical Affairs for the DRC.

He told them that MRA taught him to listen to the voice of God and obey the thoughts that come. That changed his life. MRA has recently played an important part in bringing reconciliation between Hindus and Moslems in India. His answer to the question about violence in South Africa was:

1. Instead of blaming others, you must look inwards and be honest about yourself.
2. Reach out and help others.
3. Take you to heart the interests, not only of your own group, but all the groups in the country.
4. You must speak the truth to your own group.

The producer of "Good Morning South Africa" (TV1) approached us for an interview saying "What Mr Gandhi has to say must go to the whole country."

In Tokhoza, a strife-torn township and area south east of Johannesburg they met several church ministers and community leaders. At the adjacent squatters' camp, gunfire could be heard only 100 metres away.

In the discussion there, the ministers expressed their frustration at the lack of unity between black and white ministers. Usha asked if they had told the whites what they felt. The response was "that is a very Christian suggestion." They decided to meet with whites as well as continuing to work in unity among themselves.

Rajmohan challenged them to be "mothers and fathers" to the whites. Take on board their hurts and fears with a big enough heart, and win the whites.

The Gandhis met the executive of the Mamelodi Civic Organisation in the township where the Ponos live. Many had seen the TV interview with Rajmohan. What he said about the need for more dialogue and communication at ground level stayed in their minds. These men and women have helped to keep the situation relatively peaceful in Mamelodi compared to other townships. Currently they are handling, together with the police and the ANC, the case of two gunmen who were caught after a massacre in Mamelodi. They believe this arrest may help to unravel the source of violence that is ravaging the township.

Rajmohan addressed a cross-section of prominent figures from economic and political backgrounds at TWS, a public relations company in Johannesburg. A key black leader said, what struck him most from what Rajmohan had said, was that Blacks are in a unique position to facilitate the whole process of reconciliation between black and white because of the hurts they had suffered.

Usha Gandhi was impressed by the unanimous demonstration for peace by the ordinary people of South Africa on 2 September. She met Mrs Elspeth Graham, the initiator.

Rajmohan met one of the chief political columnists of "The Star" newspaper (Johannesburg). Kaiser Nyatsuma is known for his impartiality and uncompromising views and scrutiny when dealing with politicians or organisations regardless of affiliation and believes in a free press in a free South Africa. This enabled Rajmohan to ask questions about situations in this country.

Visiting the Vundla home in Soweto, meant much to everyone. The late Philip and Kathleen Vundla were old and valued friends of Rajmohan's.

One hundred and twenty guests, including press, gathered at a hotel near Pretoria. Chaired by Prof. Cornelius Marivate, introduced by Conrad Hunte, the evening started with a few minutes of silence to commemorate the people who had lost their lives in the devastating earthquake that had hit the west of India. In his address Rajmohan gave a highlight of his stay in South Africa. He was shown the sandals that his grandfather, Mahatma Gandhi made in prison for General Smuts, who was responsible for his imprisonment. This, he said, proves his philosophy of doing good to those who harm you. He likened Mahatma Gandhi with de Klerk and Mandela. Smuts and Gandhi, respected each other, although they did not always agree. This kind of tolerance is what is needed at the grassroots level in a country.

In thanking Rajmohan, The Hon. Judge John Trengove said: "Rajmohan Gandhi has spoken about Dr Mandela. I have known Dr Mandela for many years. I was part of the prosecuting team in the first Treason Trial and got to know him there. I also visited him once while he was on Robben Island. To me it is utterly amazing that a man who has suffered to the extent that he has, incarcerated for twenty seven years, can come out and be so forgiving, so humble, and preach reconciliation after all that he has been through and if he is able to do that, I am sure then we must all be able to do it."

They met with a group of young people. One asked: "What would you say to the youth of South Africa?" He said "They have many challenges ahead of them and it is important that they open their hearts and minds to different groups and cultures; not allow any barriers between friends have the right attitude towards history and the past. Do not judge anyone by his past, what is important is what one does today and tomorrow. How do you solve the built-in divisions between groups who have been killing each other, but who now have to work together.

Mr and Mrs Joosub, a from Laudium, Pretoria, hosted a dinner for thirty five friends. Mr Joosub, a businessman, had known the late Dr William Nkomo for many years. At a meeting in the Community Hall afterwards, Rajmohan spoke at length about his grandfather and challenged the Indians to open their hearts and culture to become part of the new South Africa. "You cannot burn the past. If you do, you only burn the present and the future. Do not judge a man on what he was in the past. Judge him on what he is today." Mrs Joosub described the time as a "divine exercise."

The Gandhis also had dinners with Mr and Mrs Bhasin, Head of the Indian Cultural Centre in Johannesburg, and with Dr and Mrs Gerald Pillay of the Department of Biblical Studies at the University of South Africa. Rajmohan phoned Dr Frank Mdlalose, Secretary General of Inkatha.

Rajmohan and Usha visited the home where Mahatma Gandhi had lived in Johannesburg, now owned by an architect who is restoring it and arranging for its recognition as a national monument.

On 2 October the Gandhis were invited to attend the 125th birthday celebration of Gandhiji at the Indian Cultural Centre in Johannesburg.

After this, they attended a service at St Columbas Church, in the garden of remembrance, where a plaque for Bremer Hofmeyr was unveiled.

At the most populous region in South Africa, the PWV area (Pretoria/Witwatersrand) Raj and Usha met a prominent ANC person. He made a visible contribution in ensuring calm and restraint after the assassination of Chris Hani.

He received them warmly. He visited India with Chris Hani the previous year. They were impressed with the way the numerous armies are working together. South Africa can learn from this Indian experience, because of the diverse armies here.

He showed great respect for Mahatma Gandhi. He acknowledged Mahatma's influence in the creation of the ANC in 1912. Nelson Mandela's exemplary behaviour on Robben Island changed and 'tamed' angry young lions like himself. The struggle was not against whites, but against apartheid. Mandela also succeeded in making friends with the warders, who were white. This man feels that the battle for freedom and democracy and non-racialism was won on the Island, long before 1990.

Rajmohan Gandhi said "Without the help of God, it will be impossible to build a new South Africa." As a Catholic, he agreed absolutely.

The Gandhis were able to meet outstanding black ladies, Chairpersons for the ANC Women's League. There was mistrust between these women, because one associated with whites and the other refused to do so. It was the first time that lady went to the home of white people. This has removed the suspicion she had towards her friend and they have decided to work together with whites.