

Time for New Goals—

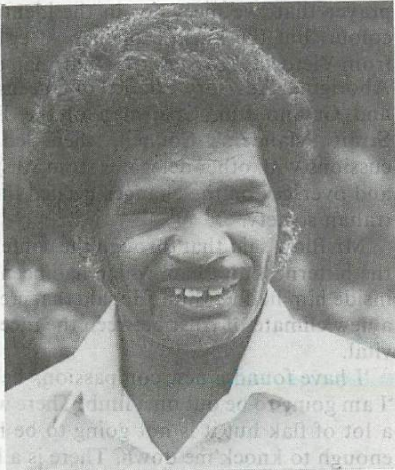
International conference in Brisbane

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PHOTOS BY EDWARD PETERS

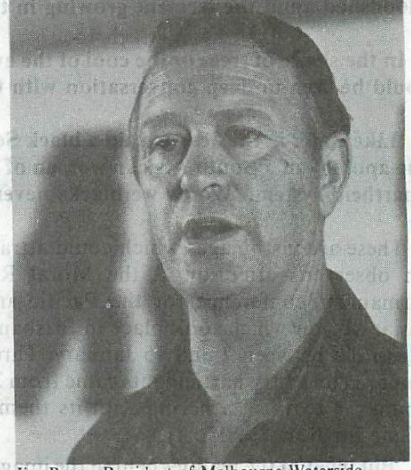
TEXT BY BRIAN LIGHTOWLER AND MICHAEL BROWN



Reg Blow, Aboriginal leader, Victoria ...
'bitterness and hate left me'



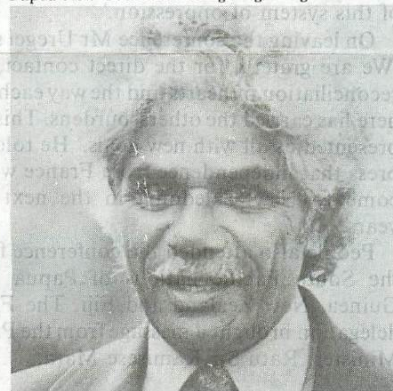
Kumalau Tawali, university lecturer and poet,
Papua New Guinea ... **'self-giving villages'**



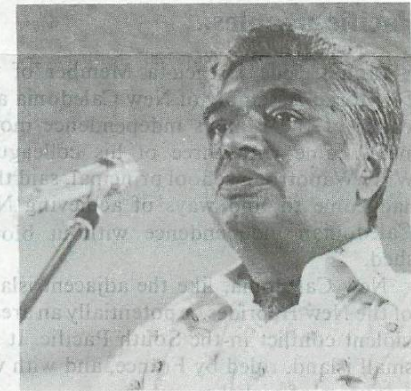
Jim Beggs, President of Melbourne Waterside
Workers ... **'our militancy redirected'**



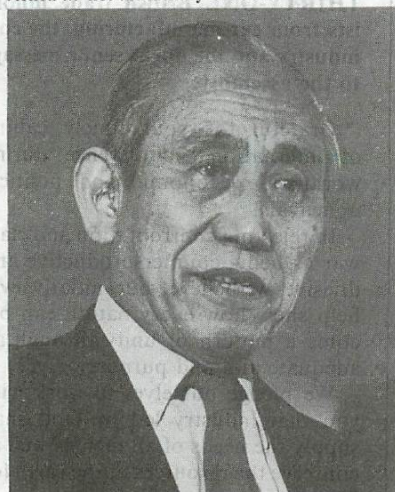
Hiram Ryan, of Aboriginal and Islanders' Research
Action ... **'not the identity of colour'**



Senator Neville Bonner, Australia's only Aboriginal
parliamentarian ... **'all are Australians'**



Bharat Dixit, Indian personnel manager ...
'changing the rich'



Nobutane Kiuchi, advisor to Japanese Prime
Minister ... **'economics is sick'**



Willy Wapotro, school principal, New
Caledonia ... **'independence without bloodshed'**



Dr Douglas Everingham, Labor spokesman for
Aboriginal Affairs ... **'end dependence on us'**

Forerunners of Pacific partnership

Japanese, Aborigines, whites and Pacific islanders meet in Brisbane

- Crowded into a lecture room, apparently oblivious to the humid 32 degree Brisbane heat, black and white Australians with their Pacific neighbours listened intently as Aboriginal leaders expressed their concerns and discussed with the group the challenges they face. A senior member of parliament left at the end with a pad full of points.
- New Caledonians, in similar gatherings, sought how to bring independence without bloodshed amid the ferment growing in their country.
- In the shade of trees or the cool of the evening, groups of Fijians or Papua New Guineans could be seen in deep conversation with those from other lands.
- 'Like water in the desert,' said a black South African as he stood to respond in a meeting to the apology of a South African woman of English descent for her people's acceptance of the apartheid system. 'Words we blacks never hear from the whites,' he commented.

These are just images which could attract an observer's attention at the Moral Re-Armament conference for the Pacific and Asian region which took place in Brisbane, Australia between 7 and 15 January. Three hundred and fifty participants came from 24 countries to this gathering with its theme, 'Time for New Goals'.

But what of the realities behind the images?

Pacific peoples

Yann Celene Uregei, a Member of the Territorial Assembly of New Caledonia and leader of the island's independence movement, came with three of his colleagues. Willy Wapoto, a school principal, said they had come to find ways of achieving New Caledonian independence without bloodshed.

New Caledonia, like the adjacent islands of the New Hebrides, is potentially an area of violent conflict in the South Pacific. It is a small island, ruled by France, and with vast resources of nickel.

So far Mr Uregei and his colleagues have maintained the independence movement on a non-violent course but they are aware that if independence is not achieved within a few years other counsels may prevail.

He told the conference of an incident in Noumea, the capital, some months ago when he was beaten unconscious by a police baton at a public meeting he had organised. Young militants came to him afterwards in hospital and asked if they could use their guns.

Mr Uregei said no, and stated to his young colleagues that they must achieve independence by political means. He said at the conference, 'It is a measure of the power of Moral Re-Armament in me that I was able to say that to people who wanted to go into action.' He added that if the police had struck another man the result could well have been very different.

Philippe Lasserre, from Paris, apologised the next day for 'the colonisation, the atomic

tests, the financial injustices and the beating with batons that Mr Uregei received from the French police'.

He went on to say, 'As a Frenchman I have sometimes found pride in the demonstrations of power that my country has given in various parts of the world. I did not have the sensitivity to realise that this made other people suffer. If I don't question the germs of oppression in my country then I become part of this system of oppression.'

On leaving the conference Mr Uregei said, 'We are grateful for the direct contact, the reconciliation of hearts and the way each one here has carried the others' burdens. This has presented us all with new goals.' He told the press that independence from France would come to New Caledonia in the next five years.

People also attended the conference from the South Pacific nations of Papua New Guinea, New Zealand and Fiji. The Fijian delegation brought a message from the Prime Minister, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara.

Aborigines speak for Australia

One of the initiators of the conference was Reg Blow, Field Officer of the Dandenong Aboriginal co-operative in Victoria and Convenor of the South-Eastern Regional Aborigines' Action Council. He saw the conference as a means of uniting black and white and heightening Aboriginal responsibility for Australia and the world. A senior Canberra official emphasised this, saying that responsible Aborigines should see themselves as spokesmen for Australia as well as for their own people.

Senator Neville Bonner made a complementary point. He was thrilled, he said, to see that the Australians present were a lot of different colours and ethnic origins 'but they were all Australians'.

He then challenged Australians, 'regardless of the colour of our skins, to look within

ourselves to find out where we are going wrong'.

In a plenary session Queensland University graduate, Ron Lawler, said that perhaps a greater evil than discrimination was the apathy and arrogance of the white people, like himself, towards the Aborigines.

He said, 'I want to say how sorry I am myself for this. More importantly, we must take on together so to live that we do not make the same mistakes again.'

'There is no Aboriginal problem, no migrant problem, no refugee problem. They are all Australian problems and are our responsibility together.'

Hiram Ryan, Executive Officer of the Foundation for Aboriginal and Islanders' Research Action, opened a meeting with the prayer that 'we meet not in the identity of colour, but the kinship of man'. Reg Blow from Victoria, Les Stewart, Chairman of the Aboriginal Advisory Council of Queensland, and Getano Lui, Chairman of the Torres Strait Islanders' Council, then led discussions with other delegates from Australia and overseas on the changes needed in Australian society.

Mr Blow said that through the conference the bitterness and hate which had been deep inside him had left him. He said that creating a new climate of trust between the races was vital.

'I have found a new compassion,' he said. 'I am going to be out on a limb. There will be a lot of flak but it is not going to be heavy enough to knock me down. There is a lot to do.'

After the session Mr Lui commented that the importance of what took place was that men spoke freely and honestly what was on their hearts and minds without fear'.

Conflict in industry

During recent years political and industrial confrontation has increased in Australia, some say to a dangerous extent.

Senior executives of companies and union

COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE

THIRTY-ONE British trade unionists from car manufacturing, the coal industry and the docks sent a message to the assembly:

'Grateful for your timely calling of international conference during world-wide economic and political upheaval.

In rejecting confrontation and class war as being counter-productive and divisive, we believe your initiative will help show how every nation can become a pattern of unity through an adequate aim and purpose.

We pledge ourselves to work with you that industry led by God shall supply the needs of all men as well as conserve the resources of the earth for future generations.'

officials pledged themselves to work to reverse this trend. They said that the effective answer to confrontation was the taking on of a greater task together, eliciting the support of all sides of Australian society.

Jim Beggs, President of the Melbourne Branch of the Waterside Workers' Federation, said, 'The Waterside Workers' Federation, the spearhead of industrial and political disputes in Australia in the nineteen fifties, is now one of the most productive and constructive unions in the country.

'It's not that we've lost our militancy, but we've redirected it in a positive way,' he said.

'It's not wages and conditions that men come into my office about—it's their family life—the cornerstone of society.'

India—Australia—Japan

With the re-establishment of freedom in India the scene in Asia has taken a different shape. India, Japan and Australia can now begin to work together as democracies for the future of the continent.

Bharat Dixit, Industrial Relations and Personnel Manager for the Petrochemical Division of Mafatlal, came to the conference from India.

Mr Dixit told the conference that MRA in India had helped preserve the liberties and rights of people during the Emergency under Mrs Gandhi. 'Despite press restrictions during that time a Moral Re-Armament weekly magazine told people to stand up for their rights and responsibilities.'

Mr Dixit said problems had not lessened with the new government of India. 'But now we have better ways to solve them,' he said.

'We have poverty, lack of education and 60 per cent of the people are unemployed. Moral Re-Armament can help by changing the attitudes of people—the very rich and those in leadership.'

Twenty-three came from Japan including Nobutane Kiuchi, an advisor to the Prime Minister and President of the Institute of World Economy, and General I Sugita, President of the Veterans' Association of Japan.

Mr Kiuchi said that a strictly materialist view of economics was a root of many evils in modern society. 'The economics of today is very sick,' he said. Continued inflation and the acceptance of seven per cent unemployment as normal was proof of its sickness.

'Today's economics is based on figures, so it cannot deal with the hearts of people,' said Mr Kiuchi. 'Everything is determined by the quantity of goods. There are many proofs that you cannot consider life only in terms of quantity. Of course, economics must deal with material goods. But we can add the world of the heart, of how people feel. You must add to the science of material things the science of human nature.'

In the final session of the conference it was announced that Australians would attend conferences for MRA in New Delhi and Panchgani, near Bombay, and assist with people from other countries in a nationwide action in India's industrial cities. The Japanese said they were planning to send a group to New Delhi in March.



Some of the Aboriginal and white Australians who convened the conference. (L to r) TH Ramsay, senior executive of Broken Hill Pty Ltd, Jim Beggs, Mrs Margaret Tucker, Mr and Mrs Reg Blow and Ron Lawler.

Principles for parliament

Dr Douglas Everingham, MP, former Minister for Health, now Labor spokesman for Aboriginal Affairs and the Northern Territory.

THIS CONFERENCE, especially the experience of our black South African speaker, Cornelius Marivate, who found constructive co-operation worked better than bitterness with an Afrikaaner administrator, encourages me to seek bi-partisan moves with my political opponents especially in the field in which I represent my party.

I think most politicians of all parties could commit themselves to the aims of this conference. I would be pleased to suggest a few more principles which I think could become generally accepted in democratic parliaments as both desirable and attainable.

- 1 The sacrifice of some material advantage to someone less fortunate through no fault of his or her own.
- 2 Less consumption of limited resources by the affluent.
- 3 Helping others to reach their own independence—not to prolong their dependence on us.
- 4 Providing more material incentives for more productive effort and expertise but to improve life quality more than industrial output.
- 5 Stepping up communications—not cutting them off when disputes occur between nations, groups or individuals. Don't call home your ambassador when you are arguing with a country, send three more!
- 6 Support for good laws regardless of who sponsors them or gets most of the credit.
- 7 No denigration of the motives of others which are only inferred, not admitted or proven. It's always a very great temptation to rubbish your opponent because he's your opponent.

Thanks to Australia

A former Deputy Foreign Minister of Laos, Tianethone Chantharasy, thanked the Australian Government and people for accepting refugees from Indo-China. Mr Chantharasy, who was Laotian Charge d'Affaires in Canberra from 1967—71, is now living in Australia with his family.

FOR THE SECOND TIME I am a refugee. I fought for the liberation of my country from the French.

Many of the refugees who come from Indo-China have suffered through physical hardship and emotional distress.

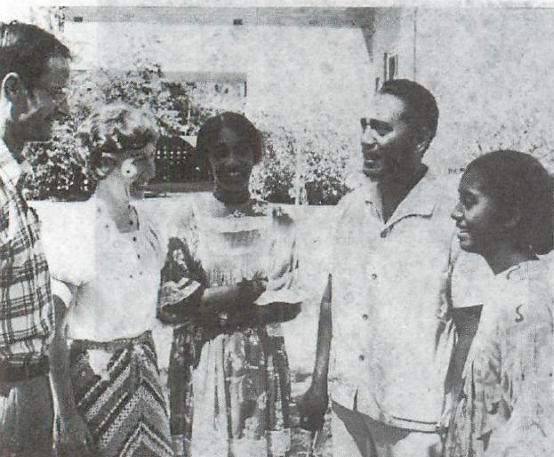
Our world has known so many movements of refugees. One day it will have to stop. Each person has a right to stay where he wants to. We are grateful to the Australian people who have welcomed the stowaway boat people who do not know where to go.

Before we can become stable citizens in this country, we refugees must find the secret of liberating our hearts from fear and hatred. A heart poisoned with hatred is the source of violence.

Then at peace with ourselves and others, we can contribute to the strengthening of character of people in this Asian-Pacific region.

In Laos, too few tried to bring a cleansing to our nation when there was still time. Everybody waited for others to act. Tyranny knocked at our doors, but many nations were silent. Tyranny begins where character leaves off. Without strength in character, no nation is secure, no society can endure.

Our country today is a reminder of the moral choice on which our society must be built. There is a choice even more fundamental than that between Left and Right: it is between right and wrong.



Philippe and Lisbeth Lasserre from Paris meet Yann Celene Uregei, leader of the New Caledonian independence movement, and Nana and Sissa Uregei.

Political gladiators

Gordon Wise, Secretary of Moral Re-Armament in Britain and son of a former Premier of Western Australia.

POLITICS HAS BECOME too much like trench warfare, instead of an honest, forthright debate and seeking of a common cause hammered out in pursuit of what is the best plan for the people. There is ample scope for genuine dissent. But the sustained spectacle of able men delighting in each other's mistakes and discounting each other's successes, is wearying to the general public.

We may say, 'You must be practical. It is only human nature to be selfish.' But it is also in human nature to choose to be unselfish. God gives us the freedom to make the right choices and the grace to accept them.

President Sadat, in the context of his recent courageous initiatives towards the Israelis, was asked to define politics. He said that he did not care for the traditional definition of politics, 'the art of the possible'. He said, 'Politics is the art of building up a society where the will of God is enacted.'

As for being practical, is there anything less practical than the way in which so many democracies conduct election campaigns—a

mixture of bribes offered and blame apportioned, while a public, in whose name the gladiatorial contest is being fought, sits at the ringside trying to decide which lesser evil to choose? And what could be less practical than the present headlong gobbling up of the earth's resources, the squandering of the legacy which should go to future generations? We will squander that legacy if we only see politics and government as a means of heightening further our standard of living, a standard which we have now taken for granted as being our right.

To expect a change in human nature may be an act of faith. But to expect democracy to face the coming challenges without changes in us and in our leaders would be an act of lunacy.

It should be normal for a country such as Australia, which still regards itself as Christian, to call for a levelling off of our standard of living and put our future efforts and creativity into the lifting of the levels of the world around us.

I see the Commonwealth countries here represented having a vital role in making the Commonwealth a community of nations who care about each other and about the rest of the world and who take practical steps to express that. This could happen in the right use of natural resources, the provision of food for those who need it, the development of multi-racial societies which work harmoniously and in bridging the gap between rich and poor nations.

CONFERENCE REPORT

A full report of the conference will shortly be available from Box 1078J, GPO Melbourne, Victoria 3001, Australia.

A\$1.00 each, airmail postage extra.

Wisdom of Solomons

Kumalau Tawali, university lecturer and nationally-known poet from Papua New Guinea.

PEOPLE TALK ABOUT REVOLUTION. I saw revolution on two legs, when I met humble white Australians who were willing to apologise for the wrongs their people had done to my people during the time they were our colonial masters. When they said sorry for past wrongs I felt that instead of fighting them we could sit down together and plan under the inspiration of God the future of our peoples.

Only months before my country became independent political experts were predicting bloodshed and chaos. Independence came on 16 September 1975 and not a single shot or bullet was fired nor a single drop of blood shed. The flag of our former colonial masters was lowered rather than dragged down and torn to shreds. It was lowered with respect, reverence and tears.

Many people are still saying that the attainment of our independence is meaningless and not genuine because we did not have

to struggle for it; that when the Australian Government decided to give us the liberty to run our own affairs it was actually a paternalistic gesture and a pat on the shoulders of our leaders and people. There may have been a lack of perfection of good intention on the part of the Australians, but I believe that the act of mutual agreement between my people and the Australian Government was one based on sensitiveness and sober human understanding.

Creator of Dreamtime

I say this with a challenge to the white Australians present here today; that if you could do this with my people who are far away I believe you can do it with your own people here—the Aborigines. In the plan of the creator of the Dreamtime, the Aborigines with their great spiritual strength and insight have a role to play in the humanisation of mankind before it destroys itself.

I want to share with you one element behind my country gaining independence without bloodshed; team spirit. In my country we certainly have our fights, much of which you hear, read about and see on television. But when one of the 20 provinces in my country, the province of Bougainville, which is now called the North Solomons,

threatened to break away in 1976, it was in the spirit of negotiation, reconciliation and consensus that the Prime Minister of my country and his team and the representatives of the people of the North Solomons province found a solution without resort to violence and force. Could this be the spirit in which peoples in the world solve their problems and live together?

The greatest need still in my country is how we manage to live harmoniously together, the different tribes and ethnic groups. We must not be childish and excuse ourselves by blaming others as the cause of our problems. They may have played a part in causing them. But no one except ourselves is responsible for the corruption in our own society.

The people of the Pacific with their warm-heartedness and friendly spirit are meant to be the forerunners of partnership without paternalism, discrimination and hate. Perhaps in the secret plan of the Almighty, they are meant to create a society of self-giving villages of people who listen to the Spirit of God daily. And in obedience to the truth which the Spirit imparts, they shall bring to birth a truly pacific society, to which the world's people can come and learn how to live as sons and daughters of the Creator's love.