

NEW WORLD NEWS

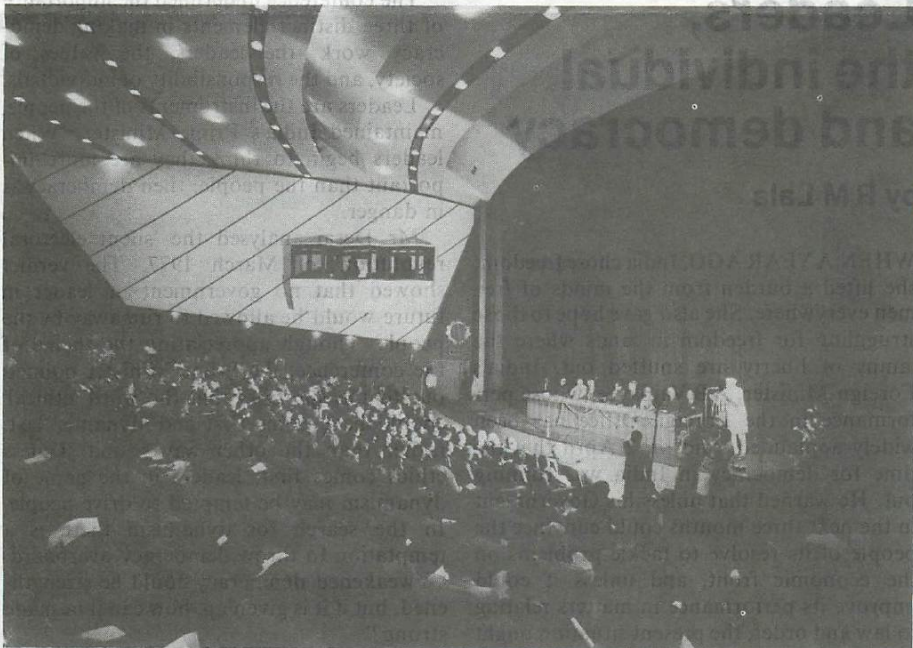
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Punjab Photo Service

The President of India, Sanjiva Reddy, received 25 people from the conference at his official residence. In this picture he is being introduced by Rajmohan Gandhi to (l to r) Subbiah Kistasamy, a teacher from South London, Mrs Yukika Sohma and Mrs Yoriko Sumitomo from Japan, and Dr and Mrs Frederik Philips from the Netherlands.

SPECIAL ISSUE: DELHI CONFERENCE ON A DYNAMIC, DURABLE AND ETHICAL DEMOCRACY



Opening session attended by 500 people, including diplomats, in the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry Hall.



Millions throughout the country heard news of the conference through All-India Radio, the TV and major newspapers in English and other languages. On several days the speeches were front-page news, and the Prime Minister's opening address was the first item on the TV news.

A 20-page report on the conference, illustrated with 30 photographs and containing extracts from speeches, is now at the printers in Bombay. It will be available from Grosvenor Books, London. Details will be given in NWN.



Jagjivan Ram, Minister of Defence, tells the conference that the future of free institutions in India requires vigorous policies, a vigilant public and ethical values influencing all aspects of society. With him is German MP, Peter Petersen.



Conrad Hunte, former Vice-Captain of the West Indies Cricket Eleven, describes to the Home Minister, Charan Singh, his experiences in overcoming rivalries in the West Indies cricket team. The Home Minister received a group from the conference for an hour in his office.

PHOTOS BY DENNIS MAYOR AND EDWARD PETERS

The relevant comparison

RAJMOHAN GANDHI, welcoming the Indian Prime Minister, said:

A YEAR AGO today, you, Shri Morarjibhai, catapulted from prison house to power, assumed the office of Prime Minister.

Today you will be inaugurating a conference that would look for steps towards a dynamic, durable and ethical democracy. The conference has been organised by men associated with Moral Re-Armament.

What MRA enunciates is hard to practise but simple to understand. To each of us it says: change yourself if you want others to change; think of what is right, not who is right; test your life against the standards of absolute honesty, purity, unselfishness and love; obey your conscience.

One hundred years ago, Dr Frank Buchman, the man who launched Moral Re-Armament, was born. He died in 1961. Those of us who knew him, remember him with gratitude and affection. The role of Moral Re-Armament towards a partnership of races, the emphasis of MRA that society cannot change unless man's character is changed, the reminder by MRA that man can, if he chooses, turn for direction to the inner voice, these have received recognition.

This conference however has not been convened in the hope that more people would say that MRA is useful or necessary. The conference's aim is to seek ways towards a democracy that works better.

When our people a year ago put you, Mr Prime Minister, and your colleagues into power and therefore on trial, they also put themselves on trial.

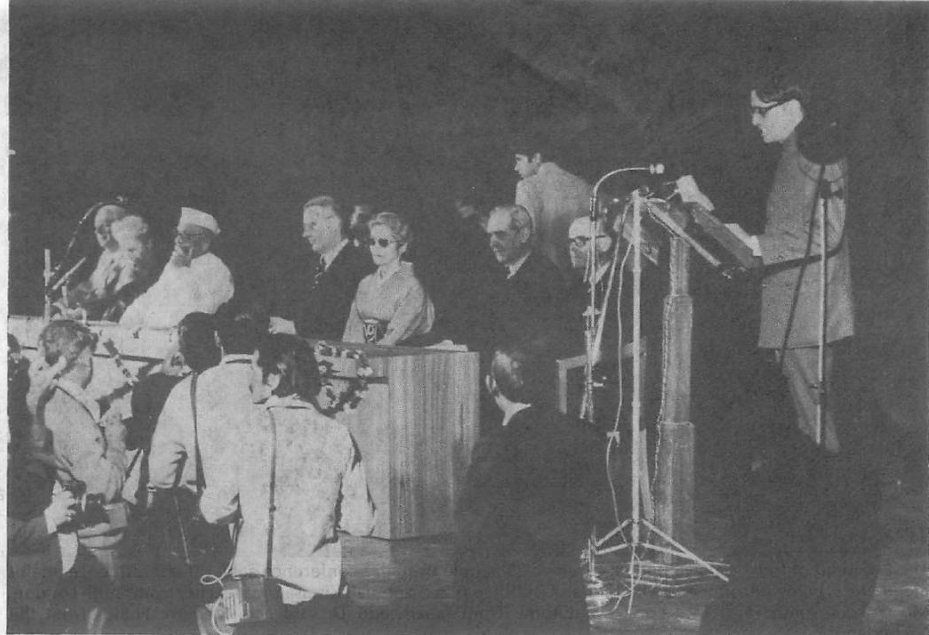
Democracy's success or failure in India will be decided in part by our Government and in the main by the people of India. That the treatment of man by man in this nation of hundreds of millions of people be decent can never be ensured by a government. Harshness, hunger, injury, indifference, these will increase or diminish according to how we the people live.

Still, the public meets the government almost at every turn and the performance of the politicians, the civil servants and the police of the government heartens or hurts, disillusion or inspires the man in the street.

After a period of 19 un-free months we have breathed more freely. Yet the relevant comparison is not between conditions today and conditions during the 19 months, it is between what exists now and what ought to exist.

One year ago, almost exactly to the hour, a large majority of the elected representatives of India, assembled not far from here at the *samadhi** of Gandhiji. There they took a pledge to work together in a spirit of dedication and to set standards in personal and public life. Each of those who took the pledge knows in his heart whether or to what extent he has fulfilled it.

**memorial place*



Rajmohan Gandhi speaks. (From l to r) Dr KE Beazley, Australia, Mrs Peter Howard, the Prime Minister, Peter Petersen, MP, Germany, Mrs Yukika Sohma, Japan, Dr Frederik Philips, the Netherlands, Dr Anton Skulberg, former Education Minister, Norway.

Leaders, the individual and democracy

by R M Lala

WHEN A YEAR AGO, India chose freedom, she lifted a burden from the minds of free men everywhere. She also gave hope to those struggling for freedom in lands where the lamps of liberty are snuffed out. India's Foreign Minister, AB Vajpayee, whose performance in the Foreign Office has been widely applauded, said on 2 April that the time for democracy in India was running out. He warned that unless his Government in the next three months could convince the people of its resolve to tackle problems on the economic front, and unless it could improve its performance in matters relating to law and order, the present situation might create a danger to democracy once again.

It is when India is in such a searching mood that the Prime Minister, Morarji Desai, inaugurated in New Delhi a world conference on 'A Dynamic, Durable and Ethical Democracy' sponsored by Moral Re-Armament. The presence of delegates from 20 nations underlined the interest of many in the world to make the largest free society function and succeed.

The conference underlined the importance of three distinct elements in making democracy work—the leaders, the values of society, and the responsibility of individuals.

Leaders are the instruments of the people, maintained India's Prime Minister: 'When leaders begin to think they are more important than the people, then democracy is in danger.'

Mr Desai analysed the 'silent electoral revolution' of March 1977. The verdict showed that no government or leader in future would be allowed to run away by the people. Though appreciating the theme of the conference, the Prime Minister pointed out to the sponsors that the word 'ethical' should have come first and 'dynamic' last, rather than the other way round. Unless ethics comes first, leaders in the name of dynamism may be tempted to drive people. In the search for dynamism there is a temptation to throw democracy overboard. 'A weakened democracy could be strengthened, but if it is given up, how can it be made strong?'

Later, addressing a group of conference delegates at his residence, the Prime Minister said, 'Unless morality comes to governments, it is not possible for any of you to change the world.'

Dr KE Beazley, Minister for Education in the Australian Government (1972-75), who was for 33 years a member of the Australian Parliament, gave the keynote address. 'There is a fine line between the authority to make



Dr KE Beazley, former Australian Minister for Education, chairs a session on democracy and the law. (L to r) R D Mathur, Director of Asia Plateau, HR Khanna, Chairman of the Law Commission, Dr Beazley, Law Minister Shanti Bhushan, Conrad Hunte.

decisions on behalf of the people and power over people,' said Dr Beazley. Election to office in a democracy was an entitlement to serve and not a prescription to power. Dr Beazley, who on his retirement last year was called by the *Melbourne Herald* 'beyond any doubt one of the best members of parliament Australia ever had', is renowned for his policy of teaching Australian Aboriginal children in their mother tongue, and for putting every Aboriginal child on scholarship. During his tenure as Education Minister, Dr Beazley also made generous grants for the nutrition of Aboriginal mothers, lest their children suffer from brain damage and retarded growth.

He explained that he took these steps not in the interests of some 'market economy, but because of the ethical consideration that we should stop treating them as a conquered people'. He expressed the mainspring of his statesmanship when he declared, 'If you do not accept the importance of conscience, you accept only the importance of power.' He quoted a fellow statesman who said, 'The only people who can be trusted with power are those who do not want it.'

'Democracy,' said Dr Beazley, 'is the expression of an enlightened conscience.' He continued, 'The independence of the judiciary is not merely a constitutional balance, a check on power. It is a way of arriving at truth.... If a citizen cannot sue the government before a neutral and independent tribunal; if a Solzhenitsyn cannot sue Stalin, there is no way of arriving at truth in the State.'

'I was invulnerable'

Another former Education Minister, Norwegian Dr Anton Skulberg, spoke of two types of leadership—leadership based on confidence and leadership based on fear. Till recently a Member of the Council of Europe, Dr Skulberg gave an instance from his career of how absolute honesty creates confidence. At the commencement of his career, at his very first meeting as a Municipal Councillor, he was elected Mayor of his town. He had to contend with the Leader of the Opposition who had been 40 years on the Council. The Opposition could do all they wanted, but 'as long as I did not tell lies I was invulnerable. That made me strong and confident.'

Democracy demands of its leaders first honesty and next ability to take action and make decisions which deliver the goods. Both are necessary. Dr Skulberg related how problems that confront Ministers are 'so immense that they cannot be solved without God's help. We must, however, give God a chance by listening to the still, small voice inside us.'

'As Education Minister I was confronted by a dozen severe problems or more every day. My duty was to find practical solutions and make decisions. When the problems occurred I had to be very alert and to pray a short, silent prayer. It was quite rare that I was given the solution myself. In many cases the people who came to see me found the solution when they explained their difficulties to me. God's solutions are generally very



Mr and Mrs TA Pai, and Pierre Spoerri from Switzerland, with members of the cast of *The Forgotten Factor*. Mr Pai, former Minister of Industries, told the conference that rapid economic progress would be possible as more attention was paid to the national attitude to work. India could import the capital and machinery for an economic miracle, but it could not import the national character which had been key to the German and Japanese economic miracles. 'If we want to succeed in India,' he said, 'we have to decide what our character is.'

simple. If we really want God to act through us, we will have to cut out our own pride and prestige. And it is essential to have clean hands to reach out for God's lead.'

Dr Skulberg was supported by West German MP Peter Petersen, who observed that 'there is a new awareness among leaders that more than human wisdom is needed if we are going to avoid casualty to mankind.'

India is a democratic country but not a democratic society. This distinction was made by its Defence Minister, Jagjivan Ram. A leader of the hundred million Harijans, Mr Ram upbraided those who gave lip service to democracy but practised caste distinction. 'Caste and democracy are incompatible.'

In his view, the danger to Indian democracy was not from its external source, but from the social and economic ills prevailing within the country. 'If Communism invades India, it will not permeate frontiers. It will germinate in society itself.' It would feed on the appalling poverty, caste discrimination and the gap between those who starve and those who over-eat. He called for a renewed vigour from the Janata Government to which he belongs and wanted the removal of inequalities, even if it meant the displeasure of some sections of society.

'Twin pillars of freedom'

What part does law have in changing society?

Law Minister Shanti Bhushan, addressing the delegates, stated, 'Law as an instrument of social change can be no better than the men who make and administer it, and it is in this direction that social institutions like the movement of MRA, which in diverse ways seeks to propagate the standards of absolute honesty, absolute purity, absolute unselfishness and absolute love, have a role to play which in many ways is greater than that of law itself.'

Another legal luminary who spoke was Justice HR Khanna, Chairman of the Law Commission and former Supreme Court Judge who gave a memorable decision at the height of the Emergency sustaining the rights

of the individual against the State. For his efforts Justice Khanna was superseded by his junior as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. He resigned in protest. Justice Khanna maintained that the twin pillars of freedom were courage and discipline on the part of the people.

'When fear stalks the land, its attendants are servile sycophancy, rank opportunism and nauseating charlatanism. Where fear is, freedom cannot be; where fear is, justice cannot be; where fear is, happiness cannot be.'

'The ramparts of defence'

Justice Khanna warned, when people, denied freedom for long, suddenly acquire it again, the risk of over-reaction could not be ruled out. The danger in such situations was of the people going to the other extreme. 'There is no modern instance, it is said, in which any judiciary has saved a whole people from the grave currents of intolerance, passion and tyranny. The ramparts of defence against tyranny are ultimately in the hearts of the people.'

Rajmohan Gandhi, the main organiser of the conference, observed that it was rightly said that many during the Emergency chose their career and comfort above conscience. 'Are we choosing conscience over career and comfort today?' he asked.

A distinctive mark of the conference was the concern of delegates for those nations which were under brutally tyrannical regimes. Details were presented of the grave violation of human rights in Ethiopia and Cambodia. Cambodian exile Sam Rainsy, Editor of the paper *Sereika* published from Paris, spoke with anguish about the ideological genocide of his people. He estimated that one to two million of Cambodia's population of seven million was slaughtered or starved to death, and there was a campaign to liquidate all those who had studied beyond the primary stage of education. 'For the right to life of our people I am imploring you for help.' India, he said, which had its human rights restored dramatically last year, could now take on to work ceaselessly for the restoration of human rights in all her Asian neighbours.

SAID AT THE CONFERENCE

‘Positive people’s participation is the first prerequisite of progress. It guarantees dynamism, it reflects reality, it will generate growth and makes for the involvement of many in the shaping of their own lives.’

LEILA KABIR FERNANDES

‘As we fight for the human rights of others, our own will be preserved.’

NEERJA CHOWDHURY

‘If, at the top, men don’t agree, then within 24 hours even the doorman knows.’

FREDERIK PHILIPS

‘Morality is the central issue if we want to have democracy at all.’

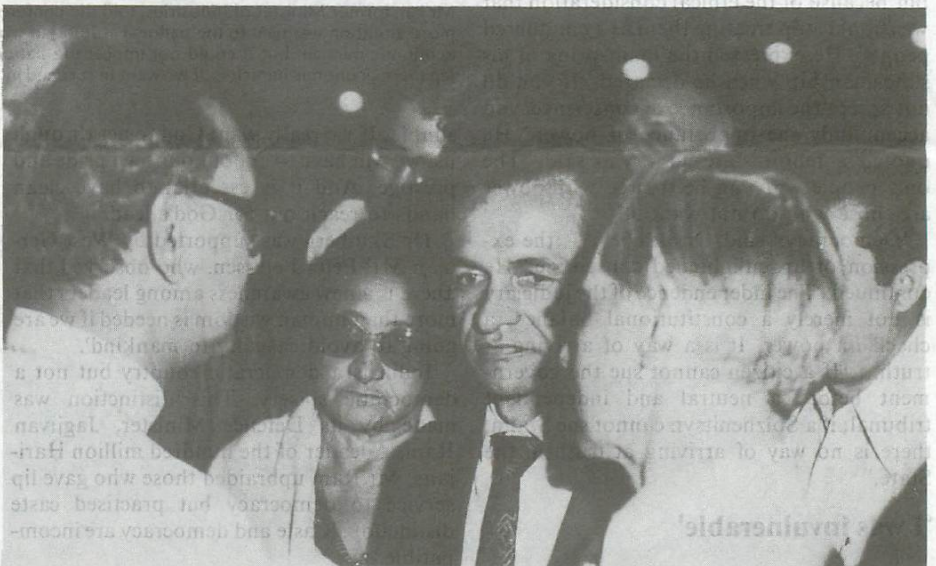
VM TARKUNDE

‘Ultimately if the moral conscience of the community doesn’t exert itself, there is no effective check (on the abuse of power).’

VK NARASIMHAN



The Most Reverend Eric Nasir, Bishop of Delhi and Moderator of the Church of North India, talks with Philip Tyndale-Biscoe, one of the cast of *The Forgotten Factor*.



The Most Reverend Angelo Fernandes, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Delhi, meets Mr and Mrs Luis Pereira from Brazil after a performance of one of the MRA plays. Mr Pereira, who was a leader of the slumdweller of Rio de Janeiro, described to the conference how he and other slumdweller had taken initiatives which led to thousands for the first time getting decent houses to live in.



Prime Minister Morarji Desai received 70 people for 50 minutes at his residence at the end of the conference. Here an international chorus sings for him. ‘The best of luck in your efforts,’ he told the delegates. ‘They are common efforts of us all. The task requires persistence and patience by all who believe in moral values.’

To be published shortly in Britain

EXPERIMENT WITH UNTRUTH
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 by Michael Henderson

‘The one single book that offers a complete and total picture of the period, thoroughly researched and properly documented’

TIMES OF INDIA

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