

Australia focuses in on the Sydney conference. Speaking, Kim Beazley, Federal Minister for Education, 1972-75.

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Photos: Dennis Mayor, Lynn Abel, Edward Howard, Mohan Bhagwandas.

WORLDS MEET IN SYDNEY

How will the gap between the rich and poor worlds be bridged? Or that between cultures and races? Many approaches are needed. But one essential is that all sides sit down together and talk honestly. At the MRA Assembly last month in Sydney, Australia, this happened. Front bench politicians of both parties, Aboriginal leaders, and people from the Pacific and Asia talked about the crucial issues the world faces in the 1980s. The theme of the conference was 'Bridges for the 1980s—the girders, nuts and bolts of human relationships.' Its aim, said Allan Griffith, foreign affairs adviser to the Australian Government, was the change in men which changes society. *In this issue we publish news and speeches from the conference.*

Keating warns on legacy of hate

Share natural wealth with Asia, he says

From the 'Sydney Morning Herald'

AUSTRALIA'S natural wealth in minerals, wheat and resources is stupefying the nation, the Opposition spokesman on minerals and energy, Mr Keating, said yesterday.

If the country does not share its natural wealth, it will become hated in Asia, he told about 300 people at the Moral Re-Armament international conference at Sydney University. Australia tended to rely on 'natural endowments' as a buffer against the '80s, Mr Keating said.

'Resource-rich countries tend to be lazy. Our mineral wealth makes us a selfish country and produces a well-off middle class with a callousness entering into public thinking.

'Australia,' he said, 'has become absolutely neglectful of Asian and Pacific Island countries and of Papua New Guinea.'

If it took the 'sleazy road', subsidising protected industries, protecting its mineral and agricultural wealth and freezing out ASEAN countries, Australia would become a hated nation in Asia.

Mr Keating urged Australians to create a future which would endure long after minerals run out. 'The perverse effects of minerals and selling our agricultural products are tending to sap our will to do other things,' he said. 'We are not very good at doing things which require some sacrifice, some challenge and ingenuity.'

The planning manager of the gas and oil division of Broken Hill Propriety, Tom Ramsay, prophesied a return to the Dark Ages 'unless we change our life-styles'.

Governments in Australia had to point the way in persuading people to use less private transport and more public transport, in developing solar energy and extending a high degree of co-operation between oil-producing and consuming nations.



Lifeline Australia

Mohan Bhagwandas Sri Lanka

IT IS MY FERVENT HOPE that the gap that exists between the rich and poor worlds can be bridged in this decade. This will not only be done by government legislation or generous aid programmes. It will come about through a mass movement of the people who can generate the change that is needed.

We live in a world where 70 per cent of the world's population commands no more than 12 per cent of the World Gross Product.

We need a sober examination of the way each of us is living. Our attitude to the things that really matter to us—housing, clothing, food, entertainment, cars, leisure, employment, social welfare and money. I have just come from a world where different issues feature in people's lives—drinking water, firewood for fuel, palm leaves to repair the broken roof of the one room house, milk to feed the infant, medicine for the sick.

In recent months Australia has welcomed the most destitute people of the world—the boat people and the refugees. Australia has been like a lifeline, a new hope for these people whose every hope was lost. At the UNCTAD Conference in Manila last year Australia was perhaps the only rich country that lent its support to the Third World proposals for a re-thinking of the way world trade is run.

With her proximity to Asia and the Pacific, with her migrant populations and her indigenous people, Australia is in the best position to pioneer the new life style, a change of attitude and motives that will be the basis of ending the rich/poor gap.

E F Schumacher, the guru of the 'new life style', wrote in *Small is Beautiful*, 'Wisdom can be found only inside oneself. To be able to find it one must liberate oneself from such masters as greed and envy. The stillness following liberation—even if only momentary—produces the insights of wisdom that are obtained in no other way.'

The forces of greed and envy that create the rich/poor gap also run through our own lives, whether we are rich or poor. So it is we who need to pioneer the new life style, the unselfish society, which will be the foundation of the new economic order. To do so we will need a power beyond our own. Mahatma Gandhi summed it up thus, 'There must be a recognition of... the existence of the soul apart from the body and of its permanent nature, and this recognition must amount to a living faith in God.'



L to r: Reg Blow, Victoria; Stephen Hagan, Queensland; Canon We Te Tau Huata, New Zealand; Ed Burnstick, Canada; Kenneth Colbung, Western Australia; Eric Kurdpingi, Northern Territory.

Fourth World speaks out

MAORI AND North American Indian participants came to the conference in response to a letter of invitation signed by 10 prominent Aborigines. 'We need the influence you will bring from outside to bridge the gap inside the country,' they had written.

These Aborigines spoke bluntly of their grievances and hopes. 'As we move into the 1980s we have to come to grips with the discriminatory attitude,' said Kenneth Colbung, the Director of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, '—which in some instances we have adopted ourselves.'

Mere injection of funds could not resolve the problems facing his people, said Hiram Ryan, who has lectured in Aboriginal Studies at Queensland University. The recognition that they were the original owners of the continent would preserve and advance their race. 'The aspirations of the Aboriginal

people,' he said, 'can be summed up by the saying, "Don't walk ahead of me, I may not follow; don't walk behind me, I may not lead; just walk beside me and be my friend".'

The gulf was not insuperable. That was the conviction of Aboriginal student teacher Victor Jose. He had been scared when he was sent to teach in an all-white primary school. But by the end of the term a deep friendship had formed between him and the children.

'This communication gap,' said Ed Burnstick, formerly a President of the militant American Indian Movement, 'is often a gap you create yourself. At this conference I have felt I could talk to people man to man, race to race.'

Tim Taylor, a Maori student at Auckland University, described the tensions between whites and Polynesians on the campus. 'I

have learned here that the death of my bitterness is the birth of my destiny. Impatience, prejudice and intolerance can be overcome by obeying the inner voice in my heart. I intend to do something about the campus.'

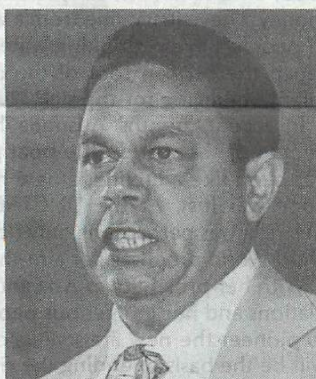
White Australians looked at their part in bridging the gap. Helen Stacey, who is on the Advisory Committee for Tribal Aborigine teacher training, said, 'I now know that the most important thing is to listen to what the Aborigines want for their people.'

'We white Australians need forgiveness from the Aborigines,' said Lorna White, from Victoria. 'We also need their sensitivity, their values, and their understanding of the indigenous peoples of the countries around Australia. I have come to realise that the Aboriginal race is unique in the world, and God has a particular plan and purpose for it.'

Bill Bird

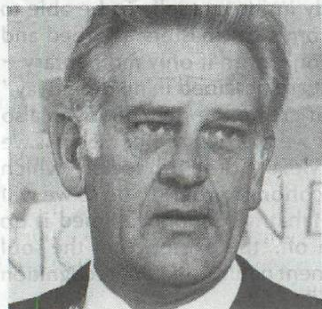
Chairman of the Council for Aboriginal Development and member of the National Aboriginal Conference

WELCOMING delegates, Mr Bird spoke of the basis for bridges between black and white Australians. 'If you don't really and truly know God,' he said, 'you cannot show the right attitude and tolerance towards other people.'



Senator Ken Wriedt

Australian Labor party spokesman on Foreign Affairs
MAN's destructive capacity today was so horrendous, said Senator Wriedt, that the prejudices of the past had to be laid aside. 'If change is to come about, then the change will begin with you and me. It will come from within, not from without,' he said.



Beth Hansen, the West Australian Aborigine who was chosen 'Citizen of the Year' in 1976 for her work in depressed areas, and Maori women's leader Maraea Te Kawa.

L Rengfelt



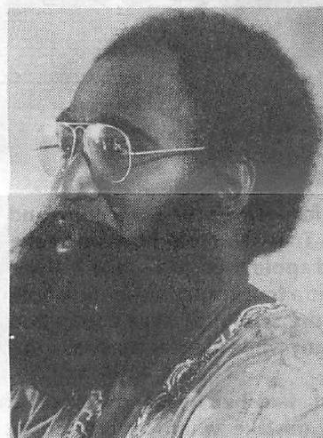
Rothay Abhay Laos

AUSTRALIA has had many knocks at her door. Her heart has been stretched wider and wider as knockings multiply.

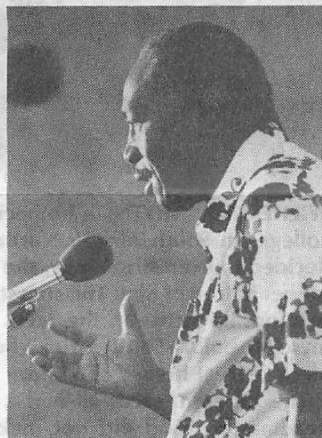
People come here to make a better life or to escape from peril and persecution. In my first year of settlement I was hurt and bitter because of the prejudice I experienced. Such hatred makes people small and there is too much of

it already between communities, races and nations. I have to start breaking the chain of hate myself.

We feel Australia has a great destiny because for us she is like a bridge.



Billy Wapetro, headmaster,
New Caledonia.



Fred Small, International Longshoremen's Association, New York

Malcolm Ramsay student,

Melbourne University

BEFORE I LEFT Australia I hadn't really appreciated what the gaps between rich and poor nations meant. But in India the hungry pictures I'd seen on the television became hungry people pleading at my feet. I realised that in many different ways we are living at the expense of the poorer peoples of the world. A change of life-style now, before we are made to do it, is a vital factor in narrowing the gap.



MARGARET TUCKER, Aboriginal author and crusader for her people, with **Michael MacKellar**, Federal Minister for Health. Mr MacKellar asked for the help of Aborigines at the conference in assessing the priorities in Aboriginal health care.

On Australia Day, Mrs Tucker called on Australians to accept more refugees.

'As we congratulate ourselves on Australia's God-given resources, could we work together to give something in return?' she asked.

'God has given us this great homeland for the benefit of the world. Are Australians big enough to create a homeland for some of the less fortunate people of the world? We must give to the world as one people, black and white together, equal Australians.'



Traditional Aboriginal music from Kenneth Colbung (left) and Eric Kurdpingi

Caught in midstream

John Farquharson

Assistant Editor, *The Canberra Times*

ON A RECENT VISIT to six Asian countries, to look at aspects of development, my most moving experience was in *Dacca*. After navigating the tortuously narrow streets jammed with gaily-decorated tricycle rickshaws and people, we came to the river-boat station.

I stood on the wharf where passenger ferries were tied up gunwale to gunwale, bells clanging and boatmen shouting their stopping places. The people rushing to get on and off swirled around me and my companions—a never-ending floodtide of humanity flowing ceaselessly in a compact mass like the river itself.

What expectancy in life had any of these people compared to my children or those of any Australian in the humblest occupation?

I wondered if there was any answer at all—not only to Bangladesh's problems, but to those of any of those countries around the rim of South and South-East Asia.

For in all these countries as the vast stream of humanity washes around you and you see wealth and architectural grandeur rubbing shoulders with abject poverty and rickety, degrading shanties, you find yourself at a loss to see how the irrigation scheme or the improved railway system or port facilities are going to make any impact at all.

Anything—however small—that is for people will ultimately have a worthwhile reverberation. But it is also important to find the best way of working so that the benefit of the development project, both during the construction stage and afterwards, extends to the maximum number of people.

One project of the Asian Development Bank in Bangladesh is an example of what can be done. They are providing loan funds

to rehabilitate the national railway system, which was largely destroyed in the war of liberation in 1971. Instead of using the latest mechanical means the Bangladesh Railway Board and the ADB have decided on labour intensive methods. Hundreds are being employed, using hand tools to reballast the track, lay the new rails and make new sleepers.

On the threshold of the '80s I believe that Australia's destiny, its security and stability as a peaceful and progressive society lie in great part in forging stronger links with the countries of Asia.

The trip gave me a new understanding of Frank Buchman's words, 'There is enough in the world for everyone's need, but not for everyone's greed.' For unless we answer the greed in the West both on an individual and national scale we will not solve the problem of feeding the hungry. That is the point where everyone can have a part by starting with themselves.

Cathy Rumint
Papua New Guinea

MY HUSBAND is a politician in the Highlands. Recently we were offered a big house to serve our guests. My husband and I sought God's guidance about this. We decided that we were meant to accept the village style of life, like the majority of our people, not the town way of life. I think we have bridged a big gap between us and the subsistence farmer in the village.



Ruth van der Sluis (left) and Arerina Harawira, New Zealand.



WILHEMINA MIYEN, a homecraft inspectress for 328 schools and colleges in South Africa's Northern Transvaal, told how when she decided to live Christ's way, she had apologised to a white teacher for her hatred of him. This step started a transformation in the whole relationship between the races in the school. 'I have committed myself to build a South Africa where any white man feels safe and the black feels at home,' she said.

The different races all had a part, said her husband Patrick, a headmaster. 'God did not make a mistake when he created us different.'

His school was destroyed by fire, and his pupils lost most of their books. At the conference an Australian teacher decided to raise money to help re-equip the school.

Birds that can fly



Kumulau Tawali
Poet and writer, Director of the Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies

THE WORLD AS IT IS is a product of Western men's minds. It has evolved so far as a result of Western thinking—and after 300 years of colonisation, we have come to worship that kind of thinking.

But the reality is that because of present ideas of industry and economics, millions all over the world go to bed hungry and moment by moment people are dying in the streets. It is now up to us in Africa, Asia and

the Pacific region to rise, worshipping God's kind of thinking, and to create for ourselves the kind of society that puts humanity and dignity above all else. Let's take industry for men, not men for industry, as our new concept—industry not for the benefit of a few rich but for the collective welfare of the whole.

In one of the eight plans for the development of my country, there is the idea of 'self-reliance'. It means that you help yourself, you dig your own garden and plant sweet potatoes; you cast your net and catch your own fish and do not wait for tinned fish from other countries.

Exports

I am afraid that this self-reliance—as far as many of our leaders are concerned—has become a myth. We are worshipping foreign investment and millions of kina (PNG currency) are pouring in. When you visit Port Moresby you see the signs of that, in the growth of tall buildings, expensive cars and luxurious hotels. But does this kind of development touch the roots of the poverty and misery of the people who make up

Papua New Guinea? Not very much. Every year the gap between the privileged elite, of which I am one, and the rest of my people widens.

I believe there are enough resources and money in Papua New Guinea to feed everyone, house everyone and give the dignity of work to all and there will be enough to share with other islands of the Pacific and Asia. But unless a new kind of thinking develops, we will find ourselves in the same situation as African and Asian countries have gone through.

So the question is, 'Is there any hope?' My experience has been that man's extremity is the greatest opportunity for God to work. When our villagers and leaders together listen to God, self-reliance will become a reality and so will food production. Political debates will become a consensus for solutions and not just a fight for political power. There will be enough to give everyone something to eat and the dignity of using their hands, and something big enough to satisfy their spirits, making them feel like birds that can fly. I believe that the Pacific people will export peace, unity and humanity to the world.

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