

How MRA changed Beazley

KIM BEAZLEY, senior, now 76 and a Labor MP from 1949 to 1977, recalls his introduction to Moral Re-armament by way of a play staged by the movement, called *The Forgotten Factor* in 1951, and through it was introduced to a number of people.

Among them was an Englishman called Roland Wilson with whom Mr Beazley joked that he would never forget his name because it was on every Australian banknote (Sir Roland Wilson then being Secretary of the Treasury.) As it turned out, both Roland Wilsons had been at Oxford together and constantly had their mail confused.

In 1953, Mr Beazley was elected as one of 10 MPs to attend the Coronation in London of Queen Elizabeth II, and not knowing anyone there, he decided to look up Roland Wilson who invited him to lunch.

Over lunch, Mr Beazley was invited to a conference at Caux, Switzerland, in what he said was "an extremely fascinating time" during which efforts were being made to bring about a reconciliation between France and Germany.

At Caux, among others, were the French Foreign Minister, Robert Schuman, and the German Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, who agreed to put their differences — differences that had twice led the world into the hell of world war — behind them.

To the young MP, this left a profound impression — "a far greater achievement than anything ever done by either the Australian Labor Party or the Liberals in Australia".



Kim Beazley, senior: MRA influenced his push for Aboriginal rights.

On further investigation, Mr Beazley discovered how Moral Re-armament had played a decisive part in securing bloodless independence from France for

Morocco. A prominent French settler came under MRA influence and decided to mend his relations with the Arab populace. He went to the local district agri-

cultural inspector and personally thanked him for ridding the region of locusts.

The inspector was amazed: no Frenchman had ever thanked him for anything before. He made inquiries of the settler's Arab servants and learned how the settler had ordered the contents of his extensive wine cellar poured down the drain because its presence gave offence to Muslims.

Now, the agricultural inspector was also the leader of a pro-independence guerrilla group that was planning to drive out the French and kill Moroccans opposed to independence.

Impressed by his contact with the settler, he eventually went to Caux where he was persuaded to make peace with his bitter foe, the Pasha of Marrakesh, whom he had been planning to kill.

The Pasha, a formidable warlord, was impressed and admitted that he himself had planned to kill the Sultan, living in Paris. He vowed to go to Paris and make peace with the Sultan which he did, and power was soon after handed over to the Moroccans.

While in Caux, Mr Beazley was urged by a Moral Re-armament activist: "If you want to have the guidance of God, sit down quietly with nothing to prove, nothing to justify and nothing to gain for yourself".

On returning home, Mr Beazley did just that and immediately thought about the Aborigines who had no votes and no land which meant they could never negotiate from a position of strength.

He moved immediately to have

Aboriginal land rights included on the ALP platform in 1954, and in 1972 when he was in Government, saw it enacted — a process subsequently furthered by the Fraser Liberal Government and the Labor Government in South Australia "beyond anything I had ever estimated".

He says now: "So it became bipartisan, and I think it has played a part in the beginning of Aboriginal dignity."

How did MRA affect him as a politician?

"I realised I was a liar," he says with disarming frankness.

"By that, I don't mean I concocted lies but I tended to make a case; I suppressed anything inconvenient to my position.

"Such a process, I realised, detaches the mind from reality, and ultimately the same process can lead to insanity."

Mr Beazley says politics as practised in Australian and British parliaments is all about "case-making".

At a dinner in Canberra in 1988 to mark MRA's 50th anniversary, Mr Beazley said it had been little appreciated how much a role Moral Re-armament had played in the evolving relationship between Australia and Japan.

He told how he and his wife had attended a luncheon in Tokyo given by the first Japanese Ambassador to Australia after the war. Mr Suzuki, who in a speech of welcome said, "No-one can understand the new relationship between Australia and Japan who does not understand the work of MRA."

— NORMAN ABJORENSEN