

THE MAYOR'S MESSAGE

From: His Worship, the Mayor of Bombay, Shri Ganpatishanker Desai.

I have great pleasure in sending to the "Free Press Journal" this message of good wishes on the happy occasion of their issuing a special Supplement for the Moral Re-Armament Movement.

We Indians cannot but be in complete agreement with the ideal of this movement because it is something inborn in us and it teaches us the various ways of appreciation towards the self-same end.

As a devotee of Gandhiji for many years, I have had occasion to watch his untiring efforts and

the heartbreak which he used to feel in the heart of things and yet he never gave up, as a result of which almost the impossible was achieved.

The Moral Re-Armament Movement and its makers have set themselves a difficult task indeed, but there can be no doubt of its outcome in course of time.

IS IT A PRACTICAL PROPOSITION TO WORK ACCORDING TO M. R. A. PRINCIPLES?

WHY NOT TRY IT OUT?

I DOUBT very much my competence to write on the subject of M.R.A. It would be presumptuous on my part to claim that I know all about it, or that I have changed my slant on men, on things, and on the world generally, in the way indicated by the protagonists of M.R.A. It would be equally untrue to say that I have been left absolutely un-influenced by its impact on me.

It does not require a philosopher to appreciate that the way the world has been progressing, has not brought us anywhere near the realisation of the grand dreams that modern civilisation held out for us. We are going deeper and deeper into a mess and this is not confined to any one field.

The more generous the fruits of material civilisation, the larger the number of problems we are faced with and the more complex their character. Even a good many years before the war, some European philosophers had started thinking in terms of an actual decay of Western civilisation and although World War II did not actually bring this about, it certainly hastened that process.

WAR DANGER

There is little doubt that a World War III will seal its fate. Not all the sacrifices of World War II seem to have brought the solution a bit nearer and whether it is in the sphere of politics, industrial relations, race questions or social institutions, strife

and disharmony seem everywhere to rule the roost.

How do this strife and disharmony arise? The social philosophers of old, some of whom we call prophets, laid down rules of conduct to govern relations between individuals, between groups, between communities, between nations, between countries and between masses of people. Call them tenets of religion if you will.

However, the longer the time that elapses between their age and today, the more these tenets are forgotten. The more they are violated in the conduct of our day-to-day affairs, the further we seem to go from the millennium we seek. In a strife-torn world like this comes the M.R.A. message.

NO HARMONY

In very simple terms, it says that the harshness and strife which prevail are due primarily to the fact that relations between individuals, groups, communities, races and nations are not being conducted on the basis which can

bring about cordiality and harmony. That basis is grounded in absolute love, absolute purity, absolute unselfishness and absolute honesty. The M.R.A. enjoins on everybody everywhere to conduct their relationships on this footing and ensures in the result harmony, understanding and peace. It says further—do not go on the basis of who is right, but find what is right.

The question arises—is it a practicable proposition to work on these principles, and if it is, what are the results?

I think there may be easily about 1500 full-time M.R.A. workers in Europe and U.S.A. today—including those temporarily in India at present. Their backgrounds are rooted in varied races, nationalities, religions, ideologies and walks of life. Most of them have given up their all—careers, fortunes, homes—in the

By
Dr. F. Antia

cause of M.R.A., and live only for their work and their ideology. In their relationship inter se this large band of people who had nothing in common before, lead a life governed by these rules of conduct which results in a degree of cordiality and sweetness of relations it is difficult to find comparison for.

THE TASK

The task they have set to themselves is to propagate around them the same basis of human relationships. The proof of the pudding is in the eating and the success they have achieved is phenomenal. In several trouble spots in Europe, where industrial strife has been of the bitterest as in the north of Italy, in the coal and steel areas of Germany, in the textile regions of France and in the dock areas of Germany and England, they have brought about a measure of understanding and cordiality which had been undreamt of before. Nobody can claim that France and Germany are bosom friends today.

However M.R.A. can claim credit for the fact that these two countries have forgotten the intense bitterness in their hearts to such an extent as to be able to sit round a table and work together on projects of common good like the Schuman plan.

Says Adenauer in a cable to Frank Buchman:

"In recent months we have seen the conclusion after difficult negotiations of im-

portant international agreements. M.R.A. has played an invisible but effective part in bridging differences of opinion between the negotia-

ing parties." And Schuman said in a cable to Buchman:

"Governments are at grips with grave and difficult material problems of feeding, of production, of wages and prices. They see peace between nations endangered by the prejudice of race and by the rivalry of conflicting interests. Inside nations people are seeking the reconciliation of liberty with authority and an understanding between the classes. I salute in M.R.A. one of the animating forces at work for inspired democracy which must re-establish the supremacy of all the spiritual values at the heart of our tormented humanity."

OUR HERITAGE

We, in India have flaunted our alleged "spiritual heritage" day and in and day out from the house tops. We take pride in trying to impress the world that we have in our make up something very high and lofty which the other western countries either never had, or if they had, have lost on the way in their march towards the life which gives them a plenitude of material comfort. The fact that our religious life—or call it spiritual if you will,—has degenerated into mere observation of a few forms, rituals and superstitions, we conveniently shut our eyes at. It is not even four years since the death of the great world acclaimed leader Mahatma Gandhi, and yet to the majority of his countrymen, he is already in the limbo of the forgotten past.

At a time, and in circumstances like this, the M.R.A. team have come to India—at the invitation of some of our most respected leaders—with their simple faith and straightforward message. I do not see why several people in public life are so cynical in their attitude towards them.

In any case until these latter have something better to suggest, their sneer and contempt would hardly seem to be justified. I can understand if they feel diffident about the possibility of the M.R.A. method producing results in every case. However, as to the purity of their objective and the sincerity of their purpose there cannot be any doubt. The M.R.A. challenge always is, if you do not believe it will work, why not try it out?

PLANTING PADDY



Dr. Buchman takes part in a mass paddy transplanting demonstration in Ceylon at the invitation of the Minister of Food. Speaking later to 1,000 paddy workers he praised Asian efforts to increase food production and said, "There is enough in the world for everyone's need but not for everyone's greed. If everybody cared enough and everybody shared enough, wouldn't everybody have enough?"

THE CHIEF MINISTER

The Hon'ble Shri Morarji Desai, Chief Minister of Bombay.

I am very glad to learn that the 'Free Press Journal' is bringing out a Supplement on Moral Re-Armament.

What the Moral Re-Armament Movement is endeavouring to achieve today is scarcely different from what Mahatma Gandhi practised and preached for years and so we naturally feel drawn towards a movement which strives for the peaceful solution of all human problems.

We are living in a difficult world where materialism is in the ascendancy; and where greed of material gain exists the thought for the welfare of others finds no room in the minds of men. No having the spiritual stature of Mahatma Gandhi, we have found

ourselves after his death unable to live up entirely to the great principles he enunciated.

This failure has not arisen from a lack of appreciation of the results he achieved by the pursuit of his methods. We find that however much the spirit is willing, the flesh is indeed weak.

Yet it is not a losing battle neither in this country and Continent of Asia, nor in the West, for, as long as there are people who believe in such noble ideals of life and appreciate their significance, their efforts, even though balked for the moment, will eventually help a new world to be born, based on the love of truth, righteousness, tolerance, and above all, implicit faith in God.



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asking myself "What new and higher life has it got for me?"

I have since seen M.R.A. at work on a large scale in Burma during the 3 years I was on deputation with the Government of Burma, and again in the lives of many young Britishers who came out to India during the war years.

I have seen for myself in the different spheres of work in which I have been placed—whether in war-time Assam or partitioned Punjab—that M.R.A. is the only answer. I know when I slip out of it, and am never happy until I am again willing to change. It is not that M.R.A. is yet another way. M.R.A. stands for change, and change is the only answer.

C. T. VENUGOPAL.

Deputy General Manager (Senior),
Western Railway.

SHRI MODY SAYS...

Shri H. P. Mody, in a message says: During the last few days, thousands of people in Bombay have heard the message of M.R.A. though the conferences and meetings they have been holding from morning till night and through the instrumentality of the fine Plays which they have been staging to the delight and instruction of all who have had an opportunity of witnessing them.

For all that, it is idle to deny there is a deal of misconception about the movement in certain quarters. That may be because the four Absolutes it inculcates are not readily understood nor easy of attainment, but it is not realised that these do no more than represent the great truths which are the fundamentals of every religion. The trouble really lies with ourselves; many of us practise the observances of our religion in a somewhat mechanical sort of way. M. R. A. seeks to make them a living article of faith.

To me, the basic concept of the movement lies in its effort to change society by effecting a change in the individual. This it does by exhorting everyone to do a searching of his own heart, and through such knowledge of himself, to try and appreciate the other man's point of view.

M. R. A. says, if you want to see the world change, the best place to start is with yourself. Gandhiji had the same conception when he bade everyone turn the searchlight inwards. Wherever this sort of introspection has been carried out earnestly and sincerely, remarkable results have been achieved, both amongst individuals and groups, particularly in the field of management-labour relations. That is why, year after year, the World Assemblies at Caux have been attracting delegates from over a hundred nations.

I am sure the visit has been well worthwhile from our point of view, and I hope Dr. Buchman and his friends will carry away abiding impressions of the sincerity and warmth with which the people of Bombay have received