

NEW PRESIDENT FOR SWISS FOUNDATION

Cornelio Sommaruga, until last year the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, has been elected President of the Swiss Foundation for Moral Re-Armament. He replaces Marcel Grandy who has retired after ten years.

In recent years Mr Sommaruga has taken part in a number of Caux conferences, particularly the *Agenda for Reconciliation* sessions. In accepting his new responsibility he said, 'Our society cannot afford to neglect ethical values in human relations. The Caux movement has worked for decades to encourage the individual's responsibility for the rest of humanity. I am happy to be able to contribute to the globalisation of this kind of responsibility.'

Christoph Spreng

'THE BEGINNING OF THE BEGINNING'

Earlier this month the *Phnom Penh Post* featured a reconciliation forum initiated by Chea Vannath and supported by Lao Mong Hay, both of whom participated in last year's *Agenda for Reconciliation at Caux*. Here are extracts from the 1300-word article:

'Last week, Vannath and her Centre for Social Development conducted the first of three public forums on "National Reconciliation and the Khmer Rouge". The forum, in Battambang, was the first time former KR cadres stood face-to-face with their victims to openly debate how to deal with the horrific Democratic Kampuchea legacy of at least 1.7 million deaths. Among the 120 participants was a large contingent of former KR cadres, including a number of mid-ranking intellectuals and one general.

'Although the forum progressed without much drama, some participants seized the opportunity to confront their old tormentors. "Now, you speak such polite words. If you had spoken like that before, maybe so many of our people would not have been killed," said a local human rights organization representative.

'Even without the streams of tears, the forum clearly proved that Cambodia has a long way to go to heal the wounds of its atrocious past. With the law for the KR tribunal soon to be debated in the National Assembly, the issue remains extremely sensitive.

'For Vannath, the process of national reconciliation begins with dialogue. "A trial will only solve the problem on the surface. We Cambodians need to sit down and talk about this issue. That includes hearing the opinion of the minority – in this case the KR," she said. "I had many worries in connection with this forum. It is a relief to me that it went so well. This is only the beginning of the beginning, but I think that today we have made a big contribution to the process of national reconciliation."

'Some former KR at the forum and officials in Pailin

say they favor a public ceremony, at which former leaders admit and apologize for the atrocities – an idea initially brought forward by Dr Lao Mong Hay of the Khmer Institute for Democracy.

'On Feb 24 in Phnom Penh and March 30 in Sihanoukville, the CSD organizes the next forums. "I told them I wanted them to come to Phnom Penh too. But I told them to prepare, because it will be ten times harder than in Battambang," said Vannath, who is searching for a venue in the capital suitable for a public debate on national reconciliation and the KR.'

DANES AND ROMANIANS CO-OPERATE

Last month officials from Romania's Public Ministry, with responsibility for combating economic crime, went to Copenhagen for a seminar on the moral foundations of democracy. The seminar, at the MRA centre, was financed by the Danish Government's Democracy Fund.

The 14 participants also met colleagues from the Danish office for the prosecution of economic crime, and were welcomed to the Parliament by the Chairman of the Foreign Policy Committee, Helle Degn, who spoke to them on the lessons of European development. 'If we are to avoid the misuse of power,' she said, 'we need the participation of ordinary people. That calls for a change, which has to start with oneself and in the family'.

The visit followed a lecture tour in Romania by Torsten Hvidt and Keld Jørgensen, who were invited by the Public Ministry to speak on 'Moral principles for democracy'. This tour was also financed by the Danish Democracy Fund. They lectured at the Public Ministry, the Prison Department and the University of Alba Julia. The Rector of the university, Professor Iuliu Paul, a leading historian, said after the lecture: 'A fascinating talk. It was not only history, but also the basis of history: morality and faith. It is a new way of thinking. How can we make this way practical today?' Augustin Lazar, head of the Department for Economic Crime said: 'We understand that democracy can be created only through taking moral principles seriously.' A young prosecutor said: 'A meeting like this, dealing with right and wrong, may change our lives.'

The Danish-Romanian partnership grew from a visit to Romania by a group of Danish farmers, who asked MRA's help in arranging seminars for the Romanians they had met. So far, Romanians have attended five seminars at the MRA centre, and more are scheduled. Participants come from a wide variety of backgrounds. A frequent comment has been: 'This gives us a real understanding of democracy as a way of life.'

Keld Jørgensen

TO 'FULL-TIME COMMITTED': AN INVITATION

Dear Friends,

I have long had a feeling that those of us who are in jobs need to prepare a paper articulating our roles in the MRA of 21st Century. For the sake of simplicity, I shall term ourselves as "Full Time Committed" (FTC) and denote full-time workers as FTW.

- I propose that we start a dialogue on the various aspect of FTC on e-mail, fax or direct mail. I would be happy to host this dialogue from Nairobi. If you wish to join, please send contributions to me at BOTH the following addresses: Aswin@Form-net.com (office) AND Pavitra@Form-net.com OR by fax : +254 2 444615 OR by mail: PO Box 14208, Nairobi, Kenya.
- This is not a comparative analysis of FTW vs FTC
- No FTW shall participate in the discussion. A discussion forum with FTW may be opened up later, once we have some initial common points.
- I will not reply individual e-mails, but will simply collect and forward your views to all addresses by e-mail loop if you are on e-mail.
- Please keep your representation to points, don't write "wordy" paragraphs. Keep it simple.

Here are some initial points to discuss:

1. How does living on "faith and prayer" manifest itself in our lives as FTC, and what is the uniqueness of FTC to MRA work?
2. How does a commitment to the world work of MRA find expression in our daily lives?
3. Are we in jobs by default or as a calling? If the latter, how is our calling expressed on a daily basis?
4. Do we leave FTW to plan important things as they have a calling to "fulltime", whereas our time is not fully available due to job commitments?
5. What should giving for MRA mean to us and what is our attitude to our "wealth"? How do we become accountable? Do we carry the financing of MRA work as our own?
6. Do we recognise the sacrifice and uniqueness of FTW and not take it as a given factor?
7. Do we feel marginalised in core decision-making processes? Should we be consulted more?
8. Are our "faith and commitment" on test all the time as we deal with daily situations and people? Do we use our experiences effectively?
9. Do we live less than our full calling as we do not operate within a fraternity?
10. How can we shift from our present massive dependency on FTW to equal partnership?
11. What if there are no FTW in 10 years? How do you see us all carrying MRA's work forward?
12. How can we help those in FTW who are under pressure, sometimes burnt out?
13. Does our thinking and care for FTW match theirs for us?

Are we ready to answer a 'call' to full-time ourselves when our commitments permit?

I shall appreciate some initial responses and encourage many of you to participate.

Regards,

Ashwin Patel

FARMERS' DIALOGUE IN DRESDEN

For those of us from five nations who took part in a Farmers' Dialogue regional meeting last weekend in Germany, a highlight was to stand in the Dresden Cathedral Square with thousands of others as a 7.6 metre gold-plated Orb and Cross, a gift from the British people, was raised above the Cathedral. It replaces the original, destroyed exactly 55 years ago in a bombing raid when over 30,000 Germans perished. The Duke of Kent, speaking in German, presented the Cross as a lasting symbol of healing and reconciliation.

During our meetings our German hosts shared with us the trauma of forced collectivisation after the war, followed by re-privatisation and EU membership in the wake of reunification in 1989, and the adverse impact of conversion to the West German Mark.

These events were of vital interest to the 25 delegates from Poland, now contemplating EU membership.

One of the interpreters found the Dresden Dialogue so interesting that he has volunteered his services for the next international meeting, scheduled for February 2001 at Asia Plateau, India.

John Bocock

'PROMOTING CITIZENSHIP'

The UK Schools Programme has been joined by a young Sri Lankan, Roshan Dodanwela, who has just finished his university degree, and Munatsi Manyande who has just left school in Zimbabwe and is on his way to university in the USA. Both have fitted well into our teams.

In the past five weeks we have given programmes in 30 schools in London and Nottingham. Responses have been very appreciative. One session, for 110 students, was led by Olesya from Ukraine. I was not there, but the next day an e-mail came from the teacher: 'Very many thanks for helping us arrange the visit from the young people serving MRA. They

spoke exceedingly well and were a real credit to themselves and the organisation. Many students spoke to me about them during the day and the event clearly sent deep messages into the students. We will continue to follow this up in pastoral time with tutors too.'

Another teacher wrote: 'The Government is keen to promote citizenship; your talks are already offering education which promotes citizenship in the widest and best sense.' The new MRA centre in London is proving to be an excellent base for this programme.

Howard Grace

'WITNESS TO HOPE'

Preparation meetings are not often very reportable, but the one held last month in Stockholm to prepare the Caux session of 'Agenda for Reconciliation' might be an exception.

Billy Stainsby, President of the Newman Institute, Ireland, had met the Pope last year, who told him to 'Witness to hope, because that's what people need'. The need for 'hope' stood out from people's reports from many situations, and the phrase 'Witnessing to hope' became the overall theme for the session.

Yehezkel Landau from Israel sparked off another train of thought which led to the idea of workshops on the 'historic triangle of relationships' between the Europeans, the Jews and the Arabs. And we hope that a public panel of Christian, Jewish and Muslim scholars will speak on 'Healing history and reconciling adversaries: a multi-faith conversation'.

Several from the Horn of Africa were present, insistent that MRA's message is vital for their region. A group from several countries in the Horn has been invited to meet policy makers in European capitals in May.

The theme of reconciliation resonates deeply in the Swedish spirit. It has been expressed recently in the Swedish government publication, 'Action plan for preventing violent conflict'. The head of the secretariat which produced it briefed a group of us.

A report of the preparation meeting and the 'Agenda for Reconciliation' supplement are available from me at afr@mra.org.uk, fax: +44 1865 311950

Peter Riddell

SERVING RUSSIA AND HER NEIGHBOURS

Last month 21 of us from seven countries, including four from Russia and the Ukraine, met in London to review MRA's work in Russia and Eastern Europe.

We felt the need to replace cynicism with vision and strategy; and to find a greater appreciation of Russia, the sacrifices of its people, and respect for its own essential character.

We overviewed MRA's work in these countries, including a look at what areas of life and professions had most responded. This review gave us a list of needs and questions to be met. How best to assist friends in different cities and to respond to their requests? We made certain decisions on the production of books, pamphlets and videos in

Russian. We also intend to make available in English some of the fresh and inspiring writing coming from this region.

We made decisions to meet requests for visits to certain cities, including for FFF Visiting Courses; and considered how this year's Caux conferences might best serve the region. We felt grateful to God that in the past 11 years many deep friendships have developed across this region, and that in the throes of economic and political difficulties so many gifted people are giving moral and spiritual leadership. A fuller report is available from any of us.

Bryan Hamlin, Mike Lowe and Igor Smerdov

ACTION 2000 – A YEAR-LONG LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

In less than nine months, Action 2000 will be launched. It will bring together from around the world a group of 20-35 who have had some exposure to /training with MRA. The one-year program aims to deepen and broaden the experience of those taking part, and to develop a sense of global responsibility and 'connectedness'.

Indian friends will host the first six months of Action 2000 and we hope that the next six will be spent supporting initiatives in South East and East Asia and elsewhere.

Please could you think seriously as to who from your country might be suitable candidates. Also, who – including yourself – might be part of the resident faculty during the first three months at Asia Plateau? If you have ideas, will you please be in touch with me? This is a chance to do something big together. I believe it will profoundly affect all involved and the situations that we reach.

Invitations and application forms for Action 2000 are available from your national MRA office.

Ren-Jou Liu, Co-ordinator (rjliu@ms9.hinet.net)

UGANDA CONFERENCE INVITATION

The invitation for the All Africa conference in Uganda, May 30 – June 4, is now available from the Conference Secretary: PO Box 11502 Kampala; Tel/Fax: +256 41 285 912.

The theme of the conference, which will be held at the Mukono District Farm Institute, is 'Transforming Africa from a bleeding to a renewed continent'.

SPECIAL ADVANCE NOTICE – from a decision at the Panchgani Global Consultation:

A world congress called a 'Global Hoho'[#]: a coming together of those called to take responsibility for MRA, 4 December 2001 to 4 January 2002, at Asia Plateau, Panchgani, India.

A deepening, bonding, searching, creative and decisive time to:

* Unite and develop the experience and capacities of all those, particularly in their 20s to 50s, who feel called to help create the MRA of the future

* Build a global MRA community where each culture has its full place

* Increase the sense of ownership of MRA and the sharing of responsibility

The final 12 days will be the peak period to enable the effective participation of those in paid employment who are unable to come for the full period. We hope however that as many as possible will attend for the full period.

Meanwhile, we will need many people to help prepare this marking event. If you feel led to that, please write to us at : Global Hoho, GPO Box 12418, Suva, FIJI. E-mail: slkhatri@is.com.fj

#'Hoho' : A Northeast India tribal term for a peoples' gathering.

Steven Greisdorf, K Haridas, Yeon-Yuk Jeong, Joseph Karanja, Nombulelo Khanyile, Suresh Khatri, Terttu Laaksonen, Brian Lightowler, Viral Mazumdar, Keisuke Nakayama, Vijayalakshmi Subrahmanyam

NEW BOOK PUBLISHED IN IRELAND

Creating a climate of confidence in the media is edited by William Stainsby, and published by the Newman Institute in Ireland. It comprises the papers presented at last year's launch of the Institute's Mayo Centre for Media and Communications, and an account of last summer's ICF conference at Caux. Contributors include Peter and Lady Fiona Hannon, Bill Porter, Hugh Nowell, Mike Smith, Chris Channer, Ann Buckles-Orteig, Stan Hazell, Bernard Margueritte, Jan Pieklo, Senad Kamenica, Martyn Lewis and Mary Kenny.

Copies are available from the Newman Institute,

e-mail: info@newmanii.com, Fax: +44 00353 96 73448, at £8.99 each.

ESSENTIAL READING

No Future Without Forgiveness, Archbishop Tutu's memoir of chairing South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, in my view is essential reading for those who take MRA seriously. He sees the Commission as much a spiritual as a judicial undertaking, and shows that reconciliation after conflict is the only way forward, politically and personally. The book is published by Random House.

Paul Rogoff

FACTS ON FAXES, PHONES AND ADDRESSES

France: Frédéric Chavanne has a new e-mail address: FrChavanne@aol.com

Germany: Heinz and Gisela Krieg have moved to a new address: Bernstorffstrasse 145, App.2a, 22767 Hamburg. Tel: +49 40 43282254.

Norway: Jens Wilhelmsen's address in the MRA List should be: jens-jonathan.wilhelmsen@c2i.net

Taiwan: Ren-jou and Grace Lui's address has changed to: 4F-6, No 1, Lane 38, Ming-Chun 1st St. 711 Kuei-Ren Village, Tainan County. Their phone and fax numbers remain the same.

United Kingdom: Edward Peters' e-mail address has changed to <edward@oxford.mra.org.uk>.

All MRA email addresses in Oxford now use the standard convention:

"firstname"@oxford.mra.org.uk>. Please change any addresses using <@mraoxon.demon.co.uk> as this address will no longer work from March 1st.

Calendar of Events

FEB 2000	<u>Asia Plateau India</u>	MRA Global Consultation	Feb 4 - 11
	<u>Melbourne Australia</u>	Effective Living Course	Feb 6 - Apr 8
APR 2000	<u>Crimea</u>	FFF Visiting Course	TBA
	<u>Novosibirsk Russia</u>	Foundations for Freedom stage 2 course	Apr 28 - May 5
MAY 2000	<u>Novosibirsk Russia</u>	Public programme of MRA events	May 6 - 13
	<u>Tirley Garth</u>	Preparing the Caux conferences	May 10 - 15
	<u>Asia Plateau India</u>	Conference: A new century - A fresh start	May 18 - 22
	<u>Kampala Uganda</u>	All Africa conference for Moral Re-Armament	May 30 - Jun 4
JUN 2000	<u>Cameroon</u>	Family Forum	Jun 1 - 4
JUL 2000	<u>Novosibirsk Russia</u>	FFF Visiting Course for lecturers at Transport University	TBA
	<u>Caux Switzerland</u>	Summer conference	Jul 8 - Aug 20
SEP 2000	<u>Asia Plateau India</u>	'Action 2000' begins	
	<u>Nizhny Novgorod Russia</u>	FFF Visiting Course, NizhnyNovgorod	TBA
NOV 2000	<u>Cartigny Switzerland</u>	Caux planning meeting	Nov 22 - 27

The deadline for the next Bulletin is Wednesday, March 15, 2000

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