

## MOUNTAIN HOUSE • CAUX

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Monday, 29th July 1985.

Dear friends,

I cannot say, like the dinner-jacket clad newsreader of BBC legend from the 20s, 'There is no news tonight.' But we have had a quieter spell, up until Thursday night, when the family session started. The accent on youth has remained - the many young have been joined by a good many younger still, though our numbers have not yet gone over 400. A nice number - not too few and not too many; a feeling of being able to get to know and care for individuals.

I've just brought back from their mountain camp with Jean Carrard and Peter Shambrook a group of 15 young men and boys - I could almost say they went as boys and came back as young men. They, and we, have enjoyed a week of glorious weather, with clear skies, long views, lingering technicolour sunsets, and stars twinkling like the lights round the lake. On Friday night there was a progressive table tennis tournament on the terrace after supper, the cheers from which should have reached Montreux. Today, Monday, the weather looks like breaking, just when we are all meant to be going out for a picnic at the Col de Jaman.

A visit of 36 hours in-between sessions can open many unexpected doors. This was shown again when a senior member of the German Bundestag, Peter Petersen, phoned from somewhere in Southern Germany to say that he was on his way to Caux with the Jamaican Minister of Education, Dr. Mavis Gilmour. Dr. Gilmour had led her country's delegation to the U.N. women's conference in Nairobi, and had left frustrated because of the political in-fighting amongst the 17,000 women participants. (Rumour has it that there were 2 men!).

Dr. Gilmour and Peter Petersen both appreciated the opportunity to put their concerns and problems to a group of trusted and knowledgable people from all parts of the world - away from all publicity. For obvious reasons, details of these conversations must remain confidential, but they touched on some of the most sensitive political issues in both Germany and the Carribbean. The unexpected is one of the great joys of Caux!

The family session burst into life with the now usual dazzle of originality and a rich mix of all ages, with grand-parents also well represented. Puppets stressed some of the simple points that help to make living together a joy rather than a strain. A strong Colombian contingent enlivened the place with the Latin rhythms of their singing.

We heard of families re-made since last years session, and moving experiences from young and old of healing the hurts of the past.

David and Kirstin Channer are here, and David is in the process of recording the final commentary, and the French voices for dubbing, for the Irene Laure film. It has deeply moved all those who have seen it. Irene's life and experience of forgiveness and reconciliation will speak with fresh force to many.

Andrew Stallybrass and Pierre Spoerri

P.S. Digna Hintzen is in hospital in Montreux with a badly broken ankle after a fall at tea yesterday.