

MOUNTAIN HOUSE · CAUX

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

29th August, 1988

Dear Friends,

The captains and the kings (of industry) depart...the season of farewells and fresh touches of snow on the Dents du Midi has come again. And what a rich summer it has been, what a privilege for those of us who have been able to be here. We have been stretched, but stretched closer to God as rarely or never before. One friend the other day said that memories in Caux were like drops of rain on the windscreen of a car - constantly wiped away by the sweep of the windscreen-wipers, and the flow of new experiences and people. Day gives way to day, week to week, and fades into a blur, but though weary, we thank God with full hearts for all that He has given, joy and pain, the life and the taking of life.

Participants in this year's Round Table described it as a turning point. For the Japanese like Mr. Kaku, head of Canon, here for the second time, there was an increasing involvement in world issues: the future of China, the development of the Third World. Trust, understanding of the complex trade and financial issues, and a readiness to take up full global responsibilities all grew. But what stood out was their recognition that what made this gathering unique was 'the spirit of Caux', defined as the search for what is right, not who is right. Several of the participants stayed on for the week of the industrial session, and one couple have offered to stay on for a day or two to help clear up the house after the conferences! We are again led to re-evaluate this place, and that nebulous but precious quality, made up in part of a care that money alone cannot buy, which affects and infects so many of those who come here.

Last year, Cardinal Etchegaray, the President of the Vatican's Justice and Peace Commission visited Caux for a few hours. This year, Monseigneur Jorge Mejia, the Argentine Vice-President of the Commission was one of the guest speakers on the theme of 'Men, money and morality'. He also took part in an on-going informal dialogue on the problem of the Third World debt, which included economists and bankers. Arnold Smith, Canadian former Secretary-General of the Commonwealth was another distinguished participant. M. Jean-Loup Dherse, a consultant director to the group building the Channel tunnel and a leading catholic layman, spoke movingly of the way we all secrete our own shells, like lobsters, to protect ourselves. But growth demands that we break out of the shell, and realise that we have no backbone, we need God to stand up straight.

Serge Borel must have thrilled above to the jazz evening in the great hall supplied by the 'Schorndorfer All Stars'. Many were dancing in the spaces between the chairs and tables. Hugh Steadman Williams' new play 'Liberation' was given a final performance of the summer to a full and appreciative house in the theatre. There was an evening of magic,

music and some new songs in the theatre, with the group from the Toshiba company calling on volunteers to join them on stage for a Japanese folk dance. It was hard to imagine a western delegation of union men and managers doing something like this together.

There was much for the non-expert on 'Economic and human development' and 'Aspects of employment creation', with the constant input of experiences on the ground, not just theory. Humour was not absent: the Chinese say that forecasts are difficult, especially when they concern the future; the plaque in an office saying 'Judgement comes from experience. Experience comes from bad judgement'; the story of the East European businessman who said, 'Thirty years ago, we were standing on the edge of the abyss. Today we've taken a major step forward.'

On the final day, yesterday, we launched the French edition of a book by Paul Gundersen on the world economy and the North-South divide, with the title 'Your burden is mine'. The local paper ran a one-column, page-high report of the industrial session and an interview Gundersen on his book the previous day. We also welcomed a senior Soviet diplomat with his wife and daughter for a short visit - he had been here nearly twenty years ago as a journalist.

We have been meeting several times to look ahead, to Caux next year of course, but also questing for better ways of consulting and co-ordinating our work around the world, searching for God's priorities. How do we resolve the pressures on our time and resources, the dilemmas of unlimited needs and finite means? Is there some more regular consultation mechanism that we are meant to set up, and try out? There are already informal groups who do meet and co-ordinate for different parts of the world, but how do we decide on the issues that are so wide that they go beyond the scope of these groups?

For example, we asked ourselves whether we were failing to give the ideal support to the Korean conference next month, because those involved had not known who else to consult and include, or how to do it. One suggestion made by several people - quite independently of each other - has been for a long enough time together (three weeks?) somewhere (Caux perhaps?) for enough of our world force to meet unhurriedly with an open agenda. But if there is something in this idea, who decides, and how?

So we come to the end with a strong sense that we are at a beginning. That new life is in reach, is being given, will be given. That we must go forward open to new ways, and trusting that God will give the new people, resources and power. The Yatra in India at the end of next month is one important next phase. Then there is the meeting and campaign in Britain at the end of October, to mark the 50 years of MRA there. That will give a chance for some to meet and carry this search further. Thank you for your thoughts and prayers in support of us here, and thank you too for the embarrassing flow of gratitude for these letters. I, in turn, thank the selfless secretaries who do the send-out.

Yours ever,

Andrew Stallybrass