

REARMEMENT MORAL · CAUX

Centre de Rencontres Internationales

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TÉLÉGRAMME CAUXVAUD

MOUNTAIN HOUSE
RUE DU PANORAMA
CH-1824 CAUX

20th August, 1990

Dear friends,

Well, hello. We're getting to the end of the last reel of the 43rd sequel of 'The Caux summer conference story'. Incredibly, some of the original cast are still playing, but many of this year's cast were new. It feels and looks as if this may be one of the best-loved and appreciated versions. And in the way of successful sequels, we're already planning another one! So we've taken some time in the last week to review ideas for next year's invitation, and for the different sessions and possible dates. I'll try to get some of it into next week's final letter. We've likewise tried to review the human resources needed to run the house, and look at the workings of each department. There too, we hope to include you further (perhaps with the report of the forthcoming world consultation, which will be largely on Caux).

Autumn is touching the air at last. We've had some glorious clear sunny days, but now starting with just a touch of the brisk freshness that betokens this my favourite of seasons: the Dents du Midi are crystal clear as you step out of the front door and look down to the post office. But I do not think I've ever seen so little snow up there. We have been blessed with the weather. I think you could count on the fingers of one hand the number of days when we've been unable to eat or have tea outside; and most of those days have fallen between sessions! But the drought has broken, and we have had some long, soaking rain at last, as well as some spectacular thunder storms.

Now at last the numbers are coming down below 500, as Asia, Africa, the Pacific and Latin America, the countries that make up some 80% of the world's population, host 'A partnership of purpose' - a gentle irony. For the large and varied group at the heart of the session, it has been a rich partnership, and a real growing together in friendship, respect and understanding. Mandarin and Japanese have joined Czech and the other languages on the translation board. It has not been at all easy for those responsible to prepare and coordinate their session over so much of the globe, with the difficulties of communications. And the teamwork has not always been easy even in Caux, across the language and cultural disparities, but head and heart are in harmony. This session goes on till Wednesday, but as so often before this summer, there have been other wheels turning within the bigger wheels, this time a dialogue of scientists on "The Preservation of Creation" and a meeting of Cambodians.

A Filipino civil servant spoke in the evening opening session about the never-lost longing for the values of liberty in this vast swathe of the world, and the yearning to restore the dignity of people. 'For democracy to survive and grow', she said, 'we need a strong moral infrastructure.' In the presence of diplomats, Vijayalakshmi introduced a magic moment, so unusual, and yet almost typical: the lights dimmed, and in the dark, people came up to light a candle in prayer and communion with a suffering part of the world: Burma, Liberia, Ireland, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Lebanon, South Africa, Eritrea, Sri Lanka, Central America, China 'and a quarter of humanity that is hungry for freedom', 'the Middle East and all occupied territories', 'may the children not starve', Hungary and Romania, 'God bless Caux that has brought us all together', from a young girl, 'May we Americans learn to listen to all these voices'... Some spoke for their country, their people, but many more were thinking for others.

We have seen the launching of another new book, 'Beyond violence', recounting the profound story of Agnes Hofmeyr - another example of redeemed experience if ever there was one. There has been a time of inter-faith prayer before breakfast, with all the different religions represented in the house, and two times for a hardy few out on the terrace at 7am of 'soul nurturing', tuning in with nature, with the creation and the Creator. We heard the amazing story of recent events in Papua New Guinea, of God's leading and healing through some of our friends in that part of the world. Trudi Trüssel, one of the original 'cast' of the Caux saga told a spellbound audience, 'I thought God only speaks to the good and the rich. The rest have to look after themselves.' But then her employer had asked her if she wanted to listen, and she'd had a first clear thought to give two months' salary. Then, 'it was deep in me that God had called me for life. We don't have to be special, just be in our own shoes.'

Last night saw another of these unusual (and usual) variety evenings, a rich reflection of the diversity and originality in the house: a little Chinese opera (in Chinese of course), a young English scientist on the flute, accompanied by African drums, a Palestinian song, a Bangladeshi poem about South Africa, a sketch by young Japanese of Americans buying and dressing up in a Kimono, a Swiss jodel from a Swiss businessman who has been made an African chief, Sam Pono on the saxophone with a jazz quintet, a Welsh lament/love song, colour slides of fluorescent plant cells enthusiastically explained by an Australian scientist... The usual Caux mix, what!

The third annual dialogue on "The Preservation of Creation" brought again some top scientists from East and West, and is helping a group of younger scientists integrate their faith and ethical values into their work. And as never before, the rest of the conference have benefited from their presence. We've had seminars on bio-technology and gene-technology, on 'The significance of traditional African religions for ecology', 'The future of the tropical forests', and 'Energy' - the latter an

exchange between inventors, industrialists and scientists drawing on some of the experiences shown in the new Gandhi documentary film. In yesterday's morning meeting, two senior professors and several other dialogue participants spoke with great simplicity (we could all follow), and with humility and brevity. 'It will be a hard struggle, but these ideas will win in the end', said Professor Weisskopf, one of those who worked on the first atomic bomb, the Manhattan Project.

Two Ghanaians, a nuclear scientist and an expert on tropical forests, gave first-hand evidence of the cost of erosion and the destruction of forests, but also of the increasing burden of the North-South debt issue. A Polish nuclear physicist, a psychologist researcher from the University of Moscow and a lady from the Czech Academy of Science described in stark terms 'the ecological catastrophe' in Eastern and Central Europe. 'The richer European countries must see that without political and economic help for what were until recently called the communist countries, there is no way to a united Europe, or to a stable, and thus a safe Europe', said one of them. Professor Weisskopf, the first Director of the CERN European particle research centre near Geneva, introduced this dialogue by speaking of the new role of science and the scientist. He spoke of the 'spiritual pollution' which leads to passivity, the lowering of religious and moral standards, and a loss of aim in life.

26 Cambodians have been meeting privately here, representing the two non-communist movements in the four-part equation. Son Sann, the Prime Minister of the National Government, and President of one of the movements, spoke to us all during a full and moving afternoon seminar. His links with MRA go back to 1954, and his friendship with a young French civil servant (now President of the official MRA body in France). Son Sann told how moved he had been by the candle-lighting at the opening meeting of the session. He listed all the suffering nations he is praying for daily, and said that, in that spirit, he was ready to meet as men people of the adverse parties. 'This time with you has helped me regenerate my spiritual battery', he said before leaving Caux. He appealed to Moral Re-Armament to welcome and train all Cambodians, whatever their political affiliation, and also to help change a misinformed world public opinion concerning the Cambodian situation.

Three ten-minute radio programmes have gone out about Caux on the Czech radio, plus a further interview, made in Caux, with King Mikhael of Romania. We also heard of the production of a Welsh-language version of 'For the love of tomorrow', made with the help of a former television presenter now in Caux.

So, farewell until next week, and the last letter,

Andrew Stallybrass

CAUX'S ALPHABET SOUP

I did a small survey and listed each group
To toss in the pot of Caux's alphabet soup

- A - Allocation, that marvellous crew
Who find us a bed and a room-mate or two.
- B - is the Bookshop, which has on its shelves
The weapons to help change the world - and ourselves.
- C - stands for Cookshifts: from oven and pan
They produce what restores and sustains inner man.
- C's also for Choruses, both large and small,
Who enliven the meetings within the Great Hall.
- D - for the Diningroom service teams (eight),
Who get the food somehow from kitchen to plate.
- D - Diet cooks, too, who provide for the good
Of those who can't stomach the regular food.
- E - represents the Economat team
Ensuring supplies of all kinds are on stream.
- F - is the folk who keep track of Finances -
A vital requirement in Caux's circumstances.
- F - also features the Flower team gallant,
Who light up this house with their blooms and their talent.
- G - is the Garden, where flowers and herbs sprout,
And the group who look after them, week in, week out.
- H - heralds Housekeepers, heroes indeed,
Preparing rooms with astonishing speed.
- I's the Infirmary, doctors and nurse,
Who're available always, whatever occurs.
- J - is the Juice team, who quench the great thirst
Of crowds that from meeting and theatre burst.
- K - Kindergarten, where children find care
And a programme, so parents can do things elsewhere.
- L - is the Laundry - they serve with a smile -
Clean aprons, clean towels and sheets, pile after pile.
- M - is for Maintenance, crisis or query,
And the man whose response to the BIP is aye cheery!
- N - is the Nightwatch, who soundlessly keep
A guard on the house while the rest of us sleep.

- O - Operators who answer your call
Auf deutsch, français, English ou bien espanol.
- P - the Pâtisserie, each day they bake
Some mouth-watering pastry or biscuit or cake.
- P's also Post Office, where daily one tramps
For Trudi's home truths with our letters and stamps.
- Photographers, too, join the list under P,
As they capture a picture for posterity.
- Q - is the quiet time, which keeps each team sane
And, when we stray off, shows the right road again.
- R - the Reception desk, manned through the day,
Where all must sign in and where most of us pay.
- S - for the Secretaries - letters, press, fax
And a myriad details descend on their backs.
- S - also stands for Stagecrew, who see
That each evening's production is right to a T.
- S - signifies Sound: the technical clan who'll
Ensure that we hear what is said on each channel.
- T - the Translators, whose skill is immense,
Transmitting the spirit as well as the sense.
- U - the Urn-servers, who pour out the tea -
It's not just the British who drink it, you'll see!
- V - is the Veg team, which cleans, cuts and peels
What is needed each morning to cook the day's meals.
- V's also for Video team, who can show
Almost any film anywhere round about Caux.
- W - the Welcomers in the front hall
Receiving whoever should happen to call.
- X - are the experts who, armed with their chart,
Help us all find some work in which to take part.
- Y and Z represent those who, without intention
Or malice, I've simply omitted to mention.

Janet Paine
A graduate of Diningroom, Secretariat,
Chorus, Cookshift and Telephone
- thus far.