

REARMEMENT MORAL · CAUX

Centre de Rencontres Internationales

TÉL. 021/9634821
TÉLÉFAX 021/9635260
TÉLÉGRAMME CAUXVAUD

MOUNTAIN HOUSE
RUE DU PANORAMA
CH-1824 CAUX

PRIVATE

12th August, 1991

Dear friends,

Five letters down, three to go, including this one. How is it possible to cram so much into these long-short weeks? We've just reached the end of another week, another most remarkable session, and I am suffering from an indigestion of the spirit. There is so much to be grateful for. I realize that there haven't been much by way of weather reports thus far: perhaps some of you miss them? I guess there's been less time for walks and runs, more to absorb and carry and care for. The inner environment has been so rich this summer, the inner and the outer weather, to steal a phrase from Robert Frost, one of my favorite poets. Yet the outer has also impinged - the first fore-runners of autumn, premature gold, red and brown leaves, some already falling, fast-ripening raspberries winking seductively from their green hiding places. The faded orchids have hidden themselves away for another year, the dog-rose has lost its petals and is preparing for the bright blush of rose-hips. We've been out on the terrace for tea and meals, but there seem to be regular thunder storms that send us scurrying to turn off computers, close windows and head for cover.

As I remember, I left you wondering whether the new forms of the 'international conference created by young people for all generations' would work. Rarely has that old cynic Brass been so pleasantly surprised, and so gloriously wrong in his doubts. The before-breakfast time of 'input' followed by 45 minutes quiet reflection on a list of questions has been a great success, attended by most if not all. It was deeply satisfying and moving to see a horde, dozens literally, head out onto the terrace, occupying chairs and benches, writing busily, reflecting, praying, just after 8am. The young team's aim to place a listening silence at the heart of their session worked and was most inspired. Mind you, the long lists of embarrassingly direct questions - on relationships, values and priorities, control and letting go, democracy, and adventure - will keep many of us thinking and reflecting for months to come. 'Do I worry about the image others have of me? What can I learn about myself from a difficult relationship? Who or what controls my life? Do I feel superior to any group of people? Am I looking forward to the rest of my life?'

Different national groups prepared the list of questions and the 'input' and programme of 'their' day. After the 9 o'clock breakfast, we hurried up to the great hall again for a lively series of 'open forums' - the best of the summer so far, I think - ably led by Philippe Odier and Jeroen Gunning, an inspired mixture of light and serious, deep and practical, our two compères, sometimes supported by one of the young BTA blacks from Atlanta, circulating round the hall with their microphones drawing people out on what the previous day had brought, feelings, ideas. For example, Franz Hunziker, the Swiss fruit-farmer who gives Caux all the apples it needs was introduced and applauded on his 80th birthday, the team of retired British who assure the nightwatch through the summer likewise was thanked. Another morning, one of the Moscow

Arts Theatre group presented a magnificent card model of St. Basil's cathedral on Red Square. All the Russians had worked on it, he said, and had learnt something more about the need for unity and team spirit in the doing of it. An undercover agent for 'Freeway', the youth magazine, kept cropping up in different disguises, slipping in a sales pitch.

Then 11 o'clock community discussion groups, and a chance to share and discuss around the questions on the sheets. My group consisted of one youthful leader, myself as translator, and the senior body of the vegetable team, with three Muslims, two Buddhists, two Sikhs, a Hindu, Catholics and Protestants, and an extraordinary depth of sharing - a surfeit of rich food. A question about a hypothetical year on a desert island led an Algerian lawyer to share about his faith-testing seven months of solitary confinement, talking to the ants as company. The other groups were all a good mix of ages and generations, and at the end of the week, several stressed that this mix, teamwork and sharing between the generations had for them been a highlight.

There's been some modest time to evaluate the flood of life thus far. One of the African organizers of the 'women's initiative' commented on her deep sense of gratitude for these five days in a three-year process. It had been a breakthrough in the carrying of Caux, in our ways of doing things. She noted that African history meant that it was hard for Africans to think for themselves, to be initiators alongside people of other races: 'We tend to step back and let the whites do it.' This positive experience would make a real difference on the African continent, she felt. The Caux Scholars Program has likewise come to an end, and it will take time to evaluate it. One young American, from 'an MRA family' said she'd come to find out what had shaped her parents' life so dramatically, and to see whether it might be valid for herself. She had been cynical, but she was working on the four standards. 'This time has changed my life,' she said, a sentiment echoed by several. 'I've become more American,' said another, 'I've heard a lot about American problems, but it doesn't make me love my country less, it makes me want to go back to change it.' Another girl student told her friends how she had hidden her deep feeling of pain, hurt and anger behind a facade of jokes and outgoing cheerfulness. She too left with these standards, and a determination to work to find freedom from her hatred.

The many different communities were taken by surprise one evening, and all had to prepare sketches in a few minutes, on a given theme, and in a given style: 'a cook shift in operatic style', 'unselfishness, military style'. Another evening together in the hall singing songs together from Taizé, the oecumenical centre in Burgundy, also helped to deepen this sense of community together. After a mysterious series of apparitions at breakfast of cave people, Romans, a group from the middle ages, and finally some belle époque tourists, we went into a final 'Space Party' set in the year 3001, at an inter-galactic peace conference in the Caux dining room. The numbers were more manageable than last year's hordes; we were all a year older, and perhaps a little wiser, and much thought had gone on as to how better to pass on the essentials on MRA. And a large, united and creative team of young people had planned in detail and with great care for the whole. Eleven of the young Scandinavians who had taken part in the Nordic revue of some years back were here, carrying the session.

The final meetings saw an inspiring flow of new life. A young Norwegian shared his decision to stop smoking: 'I don't want to do this for the rest of my life. Today is as good as any day, so I've stopped.' A ten-year-old Armenian English girl read a poem she had written about 'Caux, where many people come and go'. A young Egyptian said what it meant for him to learn to serve others, when at home he did nothing to help anyone. A Polish grandmother, one of the pioneers of Solidarity, told how she was going home to rebuild her relationship

with one of the national leaders from whom she was divided. 'There has been so much evil in my environment,' she said, 'I wanted to show people that they could overcome fear. I felt I had to apply truth, or conscience becomes mouldy. Today trust is destroyed, so we have to start from the very beginning.' 'I want to live to serve God because I love him,' said a young Scandinavian, 'but the questions have helped me to work out the down-to-earth points that help me towards this aim.'

'I'm getting to know who I am,' said a Latin American, 'It's real scary. People talk so easily about God here, but I couldn't because I'd left him out of my life. Now I'm trying to let him back in so that he can help me from now on to love and serve people.' A grandfather talked of the suffering of a son in prison and another who had taken his own life, and of the fresh hope he had found. A young French woman talked of Caux as a runway, a take-off point, a place to reflect, think and seek out greater simplicity in silence. She had learnt that poverty meant not clinging to things, and being ready to share. 'I've been doing a lot of thinking this week,' said a young Dutch person, 'I've realized some things - and it's hard to unrealize things once you've seen them!' 'I thought that no-one else had pain and guilt, no-one had been through what I've been through,' said another, 'I cried from right inside my heart, and I'm so glad that I did. I want to change my life, and thanks for helping me to open up.' Our prayers leave with the many who are on their different ways down the hill back to their different worlds.

The Swiss news agency ATS has sent out a good background story on Caux, in French and German, following the visit of two journalists, and the local media are giving the summer here a good coverage. Now we head into 'The moral foundations of the market economy' session on Wednesday, and the house will again overflow as numbers rise up past the 600 mark. Spare a thought and a prayer for all the different departments stretched to the limit - the housekeepers, cooks, service teams, front desk, vegetable team and all the rest.

With heart-stretched thanks for all that we have been given,

Andrew Stallybrass

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Service de presse du Réarmement moral

"L'Afrique du Sud est à un croisement: elle essaie de trouver la paix à l'intérieur et une bonne entente avec les autres nations à l'extérieur", a déclaré M. Rocky Malebana-Metsing, récemment élu membre du Comité exécutif national de l'ANC (African National Congress) en Afrique du Sud, qui s'exprimait au cours d'un séminaire au centre du Réarmement moral à Caux, en Suisse.

M. Malebana-Metsing, qui a passé vingt-deux ans dans les affaires et dans la politique en Afrique du Sud, vient de revenir dans son pays après cinq années d'exil. "Depuis l'an passé, a-t-il affirmé, un processus de normalisation s'est mis en route qui mène vers la disparition de l'apartheid". Il a souligné qu'il n'avait jamais connu la paix et qu'il avait vécu sous le "pire système raciste qui existe au monde", un "système où le racisme est inscrit dans la Constitution comme dans les lois". "Aux yeux de la loi sud-africaine, je n'ai jamais été considéré comme un Sud-africain", a-t-il dit. "De toute sa vie, Nelson Mandela n'a jamais pu participer à un scrutin électoral. Mais en tant que Sud-Africains, nous sommes remplis d'espoir. Mandela est sorti de prison sans haine et sans violence."

"Nous ne voulons pas que les conflits et la violence continuent", a poursuivi M. Malebana-Metsing. "Nous voulons apporter notre contribution à la paix et à la stabilité en Afrique du Sud." Il a salué le courage des Sud-Africains blancs "qui, parce qu'ils ont écouté leur conscience, ont pris fait et cause pour la justice et ont renoncé aux privilèges offerts par l'apartheid". Estimant que les changements qui sont intervenus ne sont pas encore irréversibles, il a parlé du risque de "guerre civile générale, si l'on ne se dirigeait pas rapidement vers un accord." "La confiance doit sans cesse être construite et reconstruite", a-t-il enfin affirmé. Nous avons refusé que les négociations ne déraillent. Il n'y a pas de temps à perdre pour mettre en place une Afrique du Sud démocratique."