

Initiatives of Change

---

Caux, Monday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2003

Dear friends,

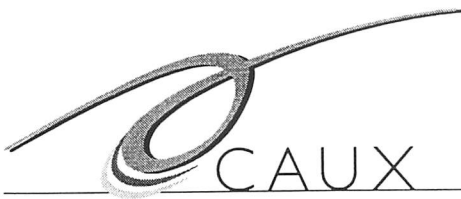
The balloons in the entrance hall were a first, very visible sign of the change-over from industry to families, with dozens of small children running everywhere. One of us was sitting in the front hall yesterday when a five-year-old came up and offered a sweet – the day's theme was gratitude, and he did a round of everyone there, sharing something that was rather precious to him. A large and largely Norwegian team of friends who have been planning this time. From globalization and ethical standards in industry to dealing with conflict in the home, it's quite a switch. There's been so much originality and creativity in both conferences, but it is amazing how the 'feel' of the whole house can change so completely within a few hours. *From conflict to community at home* started with the front of the stage in the Great Hall decorated with a mountain of coloured scrap-books, and we were all invited to come up and collect one, in which we can collect names and addresses, pressed flowers, drawings, quiet-time notes...anything!

The first part of each morning meeting has been for all ages, before the children went off for their own programme, and the adults had a further time together before going into their community groups for discussions on very specific questions. Different families have made and presented cardboard models of the homes where they live, and then talked about themselves. Then there are workshops in the afternoons, music, theatre, origami, kite making... and also seminars for those who want some more meetings! We're both sad to have missed the seminars on 'Getting older, getting wiser', and 'Quiet time and the traditions of Russian spirituality' with Professor Sergei Podbolotov, who came specially from St. Petersburg for the family conference. The daily themes have taken us from 'Quiet reflection and creative conversations in a hectic life', through founding life-values and 'gratitude as a source of energy' to today's theme of 'Conflicts are an inevitable part of life; how do we deal with them?'

Yesterday was a picnic day, with young and old streaming out of the house in every direction, on foot, by car and train after a well-attended and amazingly well-behaved church service for many. The weather has stayed fine and hot all week, up to a massive thunderstorm last night. And the thunder is still rumbling as we write. But the rain has not really arrived, and the drought continues, though fortunately for us, the six springs on which Caux depends are all still running.

The local paper has done us proud in its coverage, with three articles before the conferences started (on the Burundi seminars) and then two major articles in the Caux Conference for Business and Industry, including, we think, our first 'billboard' on the newsstands announcing 'Globalization at the heart of the Caux conferences'.

Trudi Trüssel, was one of those Swiss who started Caux in 1946. She worked here for many years, running the internal post-office, and is now living in sight of Mountain House in an old people's home. She used to knit dolls clothes for innumerable children who became her friends. One of those children, now grown up and with children of her own, got Trüdi to come up for the day. A friend found Trudi sitting alone out on the terrace, smiling to herself. She said, 'You know it's just so wonderful, all those young people, in their neat green aprons, serving with such enthusiasm and wanting to serve the world just as we did. And all those families making this programme, really with the same spirit as we had in the very beginning. I would so much love to be able to be young again and to come up and start all over again.' Holding her walking stick, she looked as if she was ready to run off and start! She went on, 'Everything is so nicely kept, and all the new things, the new furniture in the dining room, the new menus, the self-service area, the new rooms upstairs, they're beautiful. I am just so grateful.'



*Initiatives of Change*

---

Dr. Astrid Heiberg, a professor of psychiatry at the University of Oslo and a former Cabinet Minister in Norway gave the third Caux Lecture on her experience of mediating in Sri Lanka. She really related to her audience and to the theme of this conference. In Sri Lanka, a sub-committee on gender issues had been created, and she described in detail this unique experiment. Normally, 'in important questions of peace and war, of course, women were excluded,' she said. She told how she had discerned five qualities of 'real women' that tended to come in women-only groups: non-competition; promoting of others; sharing; reading of non-verbal signals; and availability. 'We must use the whole spectrum of humanity in conflict resolution,' she concluded. There was too much domination by masculine ideas and ideals. She deplored the double standards on gender in politics, which meant that a bad-tempered woman was considered 'bitchy' where a man was considered 'strong and virile'; a woman politician who had family problems provoked a judgmental 'well what can you expect?' while a man provoked compassion and the question 'what was his wife up to?'

Giving the vote of thanks, Cornelio Sommaruga saluted 'the extraordinary generosity' of the Norwegian people in development aid, which was a challenge to the Swiss. He also expressed the hope that he could be part of this exclusive club of real women: 'Men should be able to live these qualities too,' he said, to laughter!

The Caux Scholars Program is under way again, with 21 scholars from 15 countries. Kirgizstan and Burma were represented for the first time by an Uzbek student and a Karen refugee. They're integrating into the life and work of the house, after an introduction to Switzerland, IC and Caux, and a presentation from Michelle Le baron on cultural differences and the impact of culture on conflict. Barry Hart is again leading the programme, with support from 3 former Caux Scholars – and it's striking, looking around the house, to see so many other former Caux Scholars in key roles.

The two writers of your Monday letter have been taking part in two full and rich days of discussions on communications, internal and external, the Extranet, the new global Web site, our periodicals and magazines, books, internal newsletters, so we've missed even more than usual. You can see a report in the next World Bulletin. A demonstration of the extranet was given to a sizeable group, and other demonstrations are planned to help IC team-members to 'connect' with these valuable new tools.

A two-day *Hope in the Cities* workshop that took place during the CCBI. Nearly fifty people – community activists, police, people from local government, the media, business, young and old – took part in an honest dialogue on 'creating sustainable communities'. A remarkable degree of trust was generated. One Columbian woman, coming from a situation of violence, and who had had a bad experience herself with the police, entered into dialogue with the police officers present. She later said, 'I did not think that I could do anything, until I came here. I go away feeling that I can make a difference.' A police officer said, 'This has changed my life.'

We've also enjoyed some remarkable evening programmes. In one evening we enjoyed magical magic with Owen Lean (grandson of Garth Lean) who is working his way through college giving street performances and classical music from Anna and Sally Wigan, on flute and piano, with support from Dad, Jim Wigan, opening and closing the grand piano. An evening of, Latvian, Moldovan, Greek, Australian, American and the more traditional Scottish dancing out on the terrace, involving all ages, from those scarcely able to walk to 80-year-olds. Edie Campbell and her husband Jack Lynch have given us another great performance of their play *Emily Dickinson and I*.

Will Jenkins (USA) and Andrew Stallybrass (CH/UK)