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SPOTLIGHT ON M. R. A.

By A. STUART McNAIRN

A GREAT industrialist, Sir Frederick James, from India, expressed exactly my own first impressions when he said publicly that as he stepped across the threshold he felt almost a physical wave of friendliness, welcome and homecoming.

It followed him to his bedroom as he noted all the little touches of loving thoughtfulness that made him feel he was among real friends.

This is not something passing to fade with closer contacts, but something that grows deeper and more intense as one lives with and becomes one of that cross-section of the human race that meets and mingles from the ends of the earth at Caux.

For this is what Caux is ; its very name, Mountain House, recalls the promise of the prophets that "the Mountain-of-the-Lord's House should be established on the top of the mountains, and all nations shall flow into it."

When I was there I met men from every continent, and many of the Islands of the Sea. I think every country of Europe was represented save Russia, from Britain to Turkey and from Lapland to Italy and Greece. And the classes were as diverse as the races. I sat with the Premier of Eastern Pakistan, and chatted with a one-time Communist hooligan from Dundee, now a prominent Trade Union leader in Birmingham.

MISUNDERSTANDING

I listened to another Communist, London dock strike leader, now a "peacemaker" and a solver of trade disputes; and, a little later discussed things with one of the helpers in the kitchen, a granddaughter of the Duke of Argyle.

There are no class distinctions in Caux, nor racial antipathies. I saw prince, peer and peasant, Protestant and Catholic, Hindu and Moslem, Buddhist and Brahmin, Communist, Socialist, Evangelist.

All united in a war against materialism—the ideology that threatens the freedom of the human race—under the banner of the ideology of Christ.

And at the heart of the whole movement, in spite of denials and calumnies, stands the Cross of Christ.

I confess I went to Caux with a certain amount of prejudice and many of the preconceived antagonisms common to the evangelical world to which I belong, though not with the abysmal ignorance

that inspires its most zealous critics.

Soon after I returned, a very dear friend to whom I was trying to give some impression of what I had seen and felt, said, "Yes, but the trouble is, it is all localised, self contained ; it has no contacts with Africa, India, China, the world." I laughed aloud!

Could misunderstanding have gone further? I told him there was probably no movement anywhere in the world today with such living, immediate, intimate contacts with all 'nations, tribes, peoples and tongues,' as the movement based on Caux.

Why, even in the beautiful grand hall where the gatherings are held, when someone speaks from the platform in English, half the audience, speaking the diverse languages of Europe, and knowing no other, hear the message in their own tongue, Pentecost is repeated in Caux, thanks to modern science and magnificent organisation.

ANSWER TO PROBLEMS

The great majority of the visitors to Caux, though the most humble are welcome, are outstanding men in their respective countries, or in the political, economic, industrial, or social circles in which they move. The Japanese government sends 70 of its most influential statesmen or leaders of industry to learn the secret of Caux.

The Australian government sends a group representing both government and opposition to learn how the ideology of Christ can be applied to modern world problems. Industrial magnates and heads of big business, together with trade union secretaries and labour representatives, Moscow-trained communistic agitators and I.L.P. representatives from Geneva, together with leaders of student movements and youth organisations from India, the middle and far East, all meet at Caux and learn how Moral Rearmament, as crystallised in the teachings of Christ, is the answer to all and every human problem, individual, social or national.

And they go back to their various spheres with changed hearts, changed outlooks, and a determination to apply the new "ideology" as they like to call

t, to the problems of their various spheres of influence. And who can tell what this means for the world in its present turmoil, strife and misery?

Another thing that impressed me beyond words—an impression shared by all with whom I spoke who had come to Caux for the first time—was the radiant happiness and sense of utter peace that seemed to infuse all the permanent personnel. When the choir sings (and the members come and go, it is not a closed shop)—their faces express far more than the words of their songs.

They sing in many tongues, and welcome delegations from the ends of the earth in songs in their own languages, composed and set to music by a few poetic and musical geniuses, and studied and rehearsed by the choir.

But whatever the language, it is the joy and light in their eyes that goes to the hearts of everyone; and “hankies” are much in evidence among the hard-bitten groups to whom their welcome is sung. Tears are never far away in this mountain house, even from eyes that have not known them from childhood.

You ask, of course, how is all this related to the Gospel of Christ? What place does the Cross hold? What about Christ Himself? True, there is little or almost none of what one might call Evangelical terminology. Christianity is frequently referred to but rarely stressed.

WHAT HAPPENS AT CAUX

Christ, the Kingdom of God, the Cross, occur frequently according to the speaker, but the general atmosphere and level of speaking is not “religious.” A prominent American visitor said he had come with certain prejudices against the whole movement because of what he had heard of this apparent avoidance of Christian terminology.

“But,” said he, “I realise that if an artist paints a picture of a horse, he does not append a label—“This is a horse!” I may not have heard Christianity preached here : I certainly saw it *lived*.”

Moslems, Buddhists, Hindus, anti-God Communists, and professed atheists, as well as Christians of all creeds are welcome at Caux. Directly to preach Christ and His Gospel would effectively bar the door to most of these, or alienate any who might have been prevailed upon to enter.

But all find themselves immediately in a Christian atmosphere; they see Christ in the life, conduct, and conversation of people like themselves—people who profess to have found the answer to all their problems by accepting the challenge of Christ’s teaching.

They hear from men of all nations how this “ideology” based on the Sermon on the Mount, contains the answer to every human problem, irrespective of race, colour, or creed ; and in the

acceptance of the four absolutes of Honesty, Purity, Unselfishness, and Love, they accept Christ’s Word, which is what He again and again stressed as what He wanted men to accept.

And that Word is living and powerful and has still its ancient power; and many are the not only changed lives, but born again ones, who have come to know Christ as Saviour and Lord by accepting the challenge of His word.

Just before I visited Caux, a young Moslem and a young Buddhist had accepted Christ and had been baptized into the Christian faith in the local church.

There are many whose lives have been changed and who are on fire with, and fighting for, the “ideology” of M.R.A., who do not yet even know Christ though obeying and ordering their lives by His word. (Remember Cyrus whom God called and used, and to whom He gave great promises, “*Though thou hast not known Me.*”) This is what is happening at Caux.

CONFESSION

M.R.A. is undoubtedly one manifestation of the Kingdom of God, manifest, as in the early chapters of the Acts, and touching the ends of the earth.

I wish there were space to tell even a few of the miracles of grace I saw during these two weeks at Caux. I saw the leader of India’s student movement, a million strong, whose two passions in life since childhood were a deep and deadly hatred of the British, and of the Muslim. He had dedicated his life to the fomenting of hatred of both, and their extermination throughout India—a fanatic.

I saw him with his arm round the shoulder of the son of a well-known religious leader of Pakistan; both of them, with all animosities forgotten, working hand in hand with their one-time British foes.

I saw a shop steward, a one-time bitter Communist, who, pointing to another man, obviously of another class, said, “For twenty years I have hated that man and all he stands for; I have used all means, fair and foul, to foment strife between him, representing management, and the men I lead—labour; and I now see the folly and evil of such an attitude, and the hopelessness of ever building a stable society on such foundations of bitterness and hatred.

I have confessed my wrong to him; he has confessed where he too has been wrong; and we are going back from Caux to work hand in hand for the best and highest interests of the great industry in which we are both engaged. We have adopted the ideology of M.R.A. instead of the ideology of Communism, hatred and class war.”

So I could go on. I only wish that the ideology of Caux, or M.R.A. or whatever it be called, could

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permeate our church life and all our so-called Christian relationships. Here in our church life there is often a sad tale of strife, bitterness, misunderstanding, jealousies, backbiting and evil-speaking, with consequent powerlessness, for how can the Holy Spirit use such unclean vessels?

We are proud of our orthodoxy, our correct doctrine, our fundamentalism; we preach the Gospel; do we live it? We preach Christ; do we follow Him, carrying His cross, and seeking to measure up to His standards of perfection and His example of absolute love?

There, they preach nothing, but seek to *live* Christ, and relate all their human relationships to His four absolutes, Honesty, Purity, Unselfishness and Love. And as He said, “I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men, (*all sorts and conditions of men*) unto Me.” You see it in Caux.