

# NEW WORLD NEWS

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## ASIA, THE AMERICAS, EUROPE BUILDING A NUCLEUS OF TRUST

'HUMAN LOGIC HAS FAILED, let us turn to the logic of God,' said Sant Longowal, the Sikh leader who gave his life in the search for an agreement between his people and the Indian Government.

A similar conviction brought together people from Asia, Europe and the Americas from August 7 to 14 in Caux, the international Moral Re-Armament centre in Switzerland. It was not a meeting of experts—although there were experts present—but the chance for people from all walks of life to meet as people, to form bridges of the heart and to search together for their role in bringing the changes that are so needed in the world.

The 500 participants came from 19 Asian nations and 20 countries in Europe and the Americas. Diplomats from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Malaysia attended one of the sessions. A former Australian Cabinet Minister and Australia's Shadow Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs took part, underlining the importance of Australia's links with Asia.

The Swiss Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs inaugurated the conference and said, 'We need to re-establish our bonds with Asia on a new basis.'

International group welcomes delegates.

*contd page 2*



## CAUX 1985

Photos: Margaret Gray,  
Edward Howard,  
Christoph Spreng



Nuclear arms are an expensive, dangerous and insufficient means of preserving Europe's peace, Edouard Brunner, the Swiss Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, told the opening session of the conference. On the other hand, he continued, disarmament would not solve the main problem. 'Arms do not create the problems, but problems create the arms,' he said. 'We have to go to the heart of the matter—the things which divide us.' These included different concepts of human rights and of freedom. Personal contacts, like the forthcoming meeting between President Reagan and Chairman Gorbachov, could be useful in starting the peace process.



Speakers from Japan, Korea, the Philippines and Malaysia who lived through World War II, described the reconciliation between their countries in the 1950s, sparked by courageous personal initiatives of some of those present.

'The time has come for us from Japan to take responsibility for Asia with the rest of the world. I want Asia not to be known for poverty, division and wars,' said a Japanese woman known for her worldwide work with refugees.

Indo-Chinese refugees spoke of deep hurts, their hopes for the future and their determination to contribute to the life of the countries where they now live. A young Thai said that she would like to share in the suffering of her friends from Indo-China and asked some of them to stand with her on the platform.

A Cambodian told of his decision to change his attitude towards his younger brothers and how it transformed his family relationships. 'We blame Pol Pot for many things but we can be a Pol Pot also,' he added.

Indians and Sri Lankans told of their efforts to build bridges between communities in their countries. In the presence of ambassadors from Sri Lanka and India, the whole conference prayed for peace.



French Socialist MP, Marie-José Sublet, (2nd from right) took part in a round table discussion with community leaders from British cities and others from Britain, France, Germany and the Netherlands.

Cultures and histories mingled freely in the meeting halls, dining-rooms and kitchens. The conference was unusual in that people listened to rather than talked at each other as friendships were made for life. The setting, 400 metres above Lake Geneva, also added its own atmosphere.

There was the chance to live into each other's situations. A Lebanese said that before she and her husband left their house each morning they listened to the radio to see if it was safe. 'Here we have refound God and internal peace,' she said.

Asian participants met informally each afternoon to discuss national problems and the positive steps to be taken. Blocks to understanding were expressed and removed as fresh insights and initiatives were shared.

'A healing process has begun here at Caux between our continents,' was the evaluation of an Indian participant.

'I am not just interested in democracy continuing,' said a speaker from a country recently returned to parliamentary rule, 'but I will continue to fight so that our democracy will be a living one.'

An American summed up, 'We need each other. There are so many things we did not know before that we learn here. In discovering one another we have begun to build a nucleus of trust.'

Linda Pierce



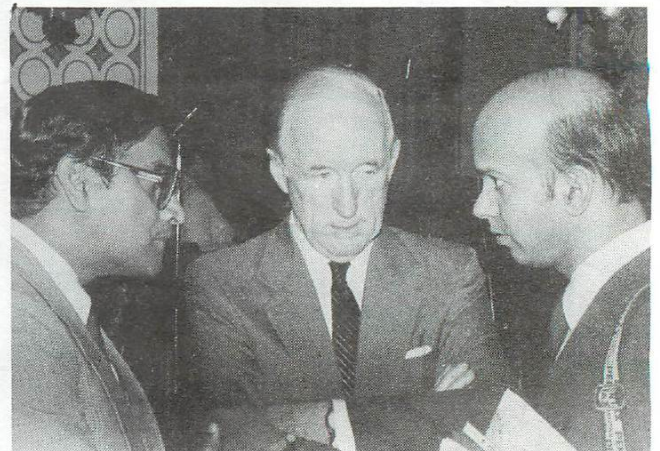
Professor Fadhel Jamali (left), former Prime Minister of Iraq, talks with Pakistan's Ambassador to Switzerland, Saidulla Khan Dehlavi, and Mrs Dehlavi.

## Towards resolution of conflicts

ON THE EVE of the second round of Sri Lankan talks in Bhutan, the President of Sri Lanka's National Council for Youth and Child Welfare, Sita Seneviratne, led the conference in prayer for the talks' success. Among those present at Caux that morning were the Sri Lankan Ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, Jayantha Dhanapala, and the Indian Ambassador to Bern, Thomas Abraham.

'This is an important phase in Sri Lanka's history,' Ambassador Dhanapala told the conference. 'It is not a question of political expediency or of taking the road the demagogues want us to take.' The recent summit meeting between President Junius Jayawardene of Sri Lanka and Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi of India held 'great hope for the future'. They had pointed to a 'path of reconciliation, where both countries dedicate themselves to their common unity, their integrity and to the pursuit of democracy'.

'I view the function of diplomats, in a primary sense, as the resolution of conflicts,' said Ambassador Abraham. He had had a lifelong interest in Sri Lanka, and spoke in an unofficial capacity about the relationship between the two countries. Two misconceptions in particular had divided



The Sri Lankan Ambassador to Switzerland, Jayantha Dhanapala (left), talks to retired British Ambassador ARK Mackenzie (centre), and Mohan Bhagwandas, a Sri Lankan now living in Australia.



India and Sri Lanka, he said—the fear of Sri Lankans that India might invade on behalf of the Tamils, and the belief that India had ‘some sort of inalienable right as to what should be done in Sri Lanka’. ‘We do not have that right,’ he stated. ‘My own personal interest and to a large extent official interest in India is in a united and stable Sri Lanka.’ ■

## Breaking the chains

Sushobha Barve, India

THROUGH MUCH PAINFUL, national and personal trauma some of us are learning—and I speak as a Hindu belonging to the majority community—that if our minorities have a sense of grievance, we must face what in our attitude has caused it—indifference, arrogance, self-righteousness, distrust, not wanting to share political power? In every conflict, as a majority community we have a great responsibility to deal with causes of deep injuries and grievance in others.

At the moment on the Indian sub-continent some political settlements have been reached at which we rejoice and others are in the process of being worked out. But to undergird them we are going to need men and women who will have the courage to break the chain of blame and bitterness and show compassion and understanding that will create trust and produce lasting solutions. ■



Agia Kaur Sahney from India said, ‘It is time that we should forget the past and who did what, and think of the future; think what we are going to leave for our children and grandchildren to build a world full of hope and life and not of bitterness.’

## MALAYSIANS DEMONSTRATE UNITY

DATUK PADUKA HAJJAH SALEHA led a group of Malays, Chinese and Indians from Malaysia to the conference. Datuk Saleha, who is Head of the Muslim Women’s Welfare Association of Malaysia and a member of the Prime Minister’s advisory board on national unity, said, ‘I participate in the programme of MRA because I believe in it. It is important for mankind to find areas of consensus, which can lead to understanding and trust.’ She had first attended a Caux conference in 1949 ‘timid and confused’ and had



‘Coming to a place like this makes one feel that the things one is thinking about are too small,’ said Yoshiteru Sumitomo, standing auditor of Sumitomo Electric Industries (above), with his wife Yoshiko. The visit of Japanese to Caux in the 1950s had created the basis of the prosperity Japan now enjoyed, he said. His wife added, ‘The suffering that the people of Asia have experienced has been teaching us Japanese to open our hearts to people in need.’

Uichi Noda, former Cabinet Minister and now adviser to the ruling party, was also among the 30 or so Japanese present.



Datuk Paduka Hajjah Saleha

returned home ‘a changed woman’ to take up a lifelong career in social welfare.

‘Individuals must move beyond spectatorship to being participants,’ Datuk Saleha went on. ‘We cannot just look at what is going on in the world.’ She had been touched by the gratitude expressed by Indo-Chinese at the conference for Malaysia’s reception of refugees. ‘I feel we have not done enough to justify all this gratitude,’ she said. ‘I will take the conviction back to my country that we must do more.’

‘Our ethnic differences can be our growth points if our motives are generous enough,’ said Charles Ooi, a Chinese Malaysian who had recently returned to his country ‘to build links of trust and unity between the communities’. He described his change of attitude towards the Malays and his apology to a Malay friend for harbouring a personal grudge. Another Chinese Malaysian, Julie Tan, added, ‘Malaysia could give countries beyond our shores a demonstration of a multiracial society which works.’

‘I was born in Sri Lanka, grew up in Malaysia and finished my university education in India,’ said Thaya Nesadurai, a speech therapist from Kuala Lumpur. ‘As a student I travelled widely in India and Sri Lanka and was convinced that my roots were in these two countries. Today, however, I am aware of my identity as a Malaysian and of my loyalty and role.’ ■



Ramphay and Chanthanith Chittasy

## INDO-CHINESE LINKS WAR TO FAMILY

Chanthanith Chittasy

IN 1975 MY COUNTRY LAOS was overrun by North Vietnam. My father was forced into a re-education camp which was really a concentration camp. I was told that he would be there for three months. It is now 10 years.

I was fearful that I would be next so I decided to flee my beloved country. Very sad, I made it to the Thai border. But after three months I heard that my mother was sick so I went back secretly to see her. She did not recognise me. After meditation, my uncle said that I ought to leave. So I escaped for a second time. I was almost 19.

After I was accepted by Australia I began to work in a factory. I found it difficult as it seemed that I had no future. I decided to learn electronics. When I finished my studies I heard the great news that my mother and sister and her family had escaped to Thailand. They joined us in Australia. It was good to see my mother well and alive again. I believe it was a miracle.

Australia was a totally new life for my mother. She was afraid of growing old because she had heard that old people there were put away in homes. She cried at the thought that one day we would do the same. We told her we wanted to keep our traditions and that she would always be with us. So she is happy now.

### Escaped

When I escaped I thought that the war was over. But it started again in our family, in our own hearts. War follows us wherever we go if we don't change. I began to understand how war in the family is linked to war in the nation. That is how our country fell. I once blamed the government's jealousy and corruption, but now I know that I am equally to blame because I did not take responsibility.

When Ramphay and I got married we decided to get together with our families once a week to share what we were learning. It helps us to be more united. We hope to learn how to give as well as to receive in our new free world.

## REFUGEES GIVE TO THEIR NEW HOMELAND

*TIANETHONE CHANTHARASY, former Laotian Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, told 'New World News':*

MORE THAN ANY OTHER PEOPLE we Laotians are attached to our land, village homes and pagodas. It was therefore tragic when 400,000 out of a population of three million fled the country. Laos being landlocked, we have been unused to travel. A lack of communications has meant that Laotians in the North never knew the South.

Those who left feared arrest and the concentration camps. They were mostly farmers, intellectuals, officials, the skilled or semi-skilled. Now there is nobody left in Laos to build up the economy. Experts are brought in from Cuba and East Germany.

Lao refugees go to Thailand, where they share almost the same language, and where many have relatives. There are 130,000 in Thai refugee camps or staying with friends and relatives there.

It was hard for our family to leave Laos. Nobody wants to be a refugee. In my personal case it is a privilege to be one. I had little idea about refugees. It was something which happened to other people. Now I can feel the sufferings of others more. The experience has served to strengthen our family's character and we are united. We know we have to work hard, be responsible and help others. We do not have much but we share whatever we have.

Much depends on the attitude of the refugees themselves and whether they want to serve the country where they are accepted.

Our community in Australia, where we now live, tries to preserve and enhance our cultural heritage. We have classes in Lao classical dancing. The Australian Government has given a grant to some schools for teaching Lao, so that the younger generation will keep their own identity and not be lost.

At the same time we refugees should not blindly keep to our traditions without seeing where we should change and

Once when I went to buy milk the milkman swept the coins from my hand. This troubled me and a feeling of hate came into my mind. I thought perhaps he didn't like refugees and Asians. I was restless and unhappy and couldn't do my job. The next day when an Australian complained about the same milkman I felt relieved that he treated everyone the same way. Then I thought of the war in Laos and I didn't want to start another one in Australia.

So the next morning I said 'Good morning' to the milkman. And he replied, 'Humph'. I tried again. 'My name is Nith. What is yours?' 'My name is Bill,' he said. I told him that I was working next door and gave him a handshake. His smile was a sign of welcome.

Weeks later when there was a milk strike Bill had saved a bottle for us in his fridge. Our hearts were open and we became very good friends. I even got some business from him.



**Tianethone Chantharasy**

improve. This attitude could lead to something beneficial to all. Refugees can do much for others if their aim is more than just satisfying their material needs.

There are many temptations for refugees when they come across things which have been inaccessible in their own countries. So often the attitude is 'Let's earn money and enjoy life.' Much depends on the values the older generation inculcate in their children. We have to try and build unity among our people and be well informed about what is happening in our own country and in the world at large.

Our colonial power was France and in recent history Laos was invaded by Japan. I don't have any resentment against the French or the Japanese. Here at Caux I learnt how to forgive and love.

Division among Cambodians, Vietnamese and Laotians was one of the reasons why we were invaded and destroyed. We have to start all over again. We want Europeans, Americans and Japanese to return to our area with a new spirit, not with the idea of gain and profit, but with the spirit of humility and service because we need their hearts as well as their technology.

Caux has an important role to play in forging unity between the responsible people concerned with the problems in the area and in building up these countries on a new basis. In this process, my own family is committed to work in faith for the restoration of peace, dignity and freedom. ■

### **Ramphay Chittasy**

WHEN WE DECIDED TO COME to the conference in Caux our families contributed with real sacrifice. A four-year-old gave us \$30 out of his savings. When we talked to one of our nieces, who is 16, about MRA and Caux, she said, 'Life is more important than just studying and getting a job. There is something more we have to live for: people.'

While in Switzerland, we met the Dalai Lama of Tibet. He said, 'Your enemy can teach you tolerance, which your own teacher and your parents cannot.'

As refugees we should learn from our past mistakes to forgive but not to forget. Blaming stops us from change or from going forward. There are evil forces who want to use people, and our weaknesses: hate, bitterness, jealousy, ambition, fear and division. I have decided to live differently so that we will have a better future. ■

## **The first step**

*A Cambodian spoke:*

WE CAMBODIANS TEND TO believe that what happened to our country has external causes. We forget that what happened in the Seventies, the suffering, destruction and invasion of the Vietnamese forces, are due to our own mistakes: corruption, selfishness and disunity. We blame Pol Pot for many things, but we can be a Pol Pot also.

Before I met the ideas of MRA I used to think my relationship with my younger brothers was perfect because I influenced and dominated them. I found this relationship quite satisfactory. When I realised that I acted as a sort of master towards my brothers, I decided to write a letter and tell them what I thought.

In 1979 after the Vietnamese invasion we were privileged to serve our people in Cambodia. We were full of ideals and thought that we were going to rebuild a new society. But then I remembered that I had a bad dispute with my brother and couldn't even talk with him. It is very difficult as an elder brother to make the first step. During my morning meditation, I got the clear thought to write and apologise. If I do not put things right in my own family how can I pretend to help my countrymen and build a new Cambodia. To change perspective and renew oneself is a kind of biological process. Unless we do so we will die. ■

## **Renewed apology**

**Alain Tate, France**

MY WIFE AND I SPENT SEVERAL MONTHS in South-East Asia in the Seventies, mostly in South Vietnam. We realised then the mistakes made by my country and were led to express apologies on many occasions. We felt that if France had honoured the legitimate desire for independence of the Indo-Chinese people after World War II they would have been spared much of their suffering and the situation would be different today. I would like to renew that apology in the presence of those here from Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. I ask them for their forgiveness on my own behalf and on behalf of all my compatriots at the conference. ■

## **A new destiny**

*A Vietnamese participant spoke:*

I'VE HEARD THAT there are 150,000 Vietnamese troops in Cambodia and 60,000 more in Laos, and of the suffering that they have inflicted on the people. Although I am an ordinary person I feel responsible for what has happened in Laos and Cambodia. Unless I have the conviction of sin before God for what my country has done and is doing to other nations, things will not change. I would like to apologise to my friends here from Laos and Cambodia for the sufferings that the Vietnamese troops have caused.

We from Indo-China have found a new friendship here and a new destiny. ■



# NORTHERN VIEW

SOUTH TALKED TO SOUTH at Caux, as people from different Asian countries as well as Latin America and Africa exchanged experiences and perspectives. But there was also an interchange between South and North. People from Europe and North America came to Caux expressly for this purpose.

The Europeans attending the conference were particularly moved by the open hearts of the Asians towards their countries, in spite of past domination. 'Many of the people of Asia and Africa have known suffering and war because of us,' said Michel Koechlin of France, chairing a European contribution to the dialogue. 'We ask for your help to become what we should be.'

## Bluff

'Going around the world you begin to see the colossal arrogance in our welfare states,' said a Finnish businessman, Paul Gundersen. 'We say, "Yes we are ready to help," as long as we do not jeopardise our living standards and our wealth. Talk of partnership with the developing world is a bluff if we feel we *don't need anything* from them except cheap raw materials and export orders. The whole issue of aid, famine and trade relations is fundamentally a spiritual and moral one.'

The same arrogance often featured in Western Europe's dealings with the countries of Eastern Europe, Mr Gundersen continued. 'It makes me sick to hear Western businessmen visiting the East boasting about our cars, industry, welfare and financial status as if we had achieved them by our own personal virtue.' Western businessmen often tended to feel that corruption was OK in dealings with Eastern nations and with the Third World. He quoted a leading Finnish industrialist as saying that you could only win long-term contracts with the Soviet Union on the basis of complete honesty. Although you might pull off one dishonest deal, it could easily be the last. 'We also need to be ready to learn from what the East has to give,' Mr Gundersen concluded.

## Reunification

Americans no longer felt confident that they understood Asian countries, said Richard Ruffin from Washington. 'We have made many mistakes in Asia, we are still making some and we will continue to make them,' he said. 'We are beginning to face the fact that events are going so quickly in that part of the world that there is no possibility of our acquiring sufficient knowledge to make rational decisions about all the issues we must face. We have to find some new dimension, that will enable us to respond in the midst of crises more appropriately than we have been doing up till now.' This conviction had lain behind the international Moral Re-Armament conference in Washington in June which had aimed to open the hearts of Americans to the world and 'to bridge the gaps between the rhetoric we use and the reality of how we live, the faith we profess to have and the fears that govern our lives'.

Asian and white British; native, French and English Canadians; Americans concerned about community relations and family life; and French and Germans who had contributed to Europe's post-war reunification all spoke.



Asian participants prepare puris for an Indian meal for 500

A Pole living in Britain described the bitterness he had felt towards Germany because of the suffering of his countrymen during World War II. 'I have a growing conviction that bitterness has to be left aside so that we may have a stable Europe.' At Caux he had heard 'a devastatingly honest speech' from a German war veteran and had talked with him afterwards. 'We decided to do all in our power to heal the wounds between our nations,' he said.

'I've learnt here that people are more important than things,' said a young European. 'I've rediscovered myself and my family.' A young British Asian described how failing an exam had made her 'a second-class person'. Caux had helped her to refind her self-confidence, she said. She had joined other delegates on one of the conference cook shifts. There 'I began to think less about myself and more about others'.



Political platforms have been compared to the front step of a bus—not for standing on, but for getting in by, Philip Ruddock, MP, Australian Shadow Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, told the conference. 'In Australia politicians are viewed as people who respond to their audience,' he went on. 'It has troubled me greatly that there are many areas in which we ought to be giving a lead, where the pressures are for us to follow.'

Race relations was one area where Mr Ruddock felt 'politicians can lead from the front'. Referring to a recent controversy over immigration, he said, 'Racial prejudice may be more widespread than I would wish in Australia. But I hope that together with a government which is equally desirous of ensuring a non-racial approach, we will be able to lead Australians to a far more healthy approach on this question.'

Discussions at the conference had shown that there was 'a demand in the community for people, no matter what their station, to change public attitudes for good', Mr Ruddock concluded. Here people involved in Moral Re-Armament had a role.



# CAMPAIGN TO END WASTE

*NELLY DE CEDIEL from Colombia, President of the Latin American Confederation of Clinical Chemistry, spoke in a meeting on the Americas:*

HEALTH AND EDUCATION are the main problems in Latin American development. Because they are not productive in the short term, they are particularly badly hit by our present economic difficulties. Our external debts mean that we have to import less—and this affects necessary laboratory equipment, chemicals and materials.

When I talked with members of the international organisations like the World Health Organisation, and the International Federation of Clinical Chemistry, I found that a distinction was being made between 'underdeveloped' and 'developing' countries. When I asked what the difference was, I was told that the 'underdeveloped' countries are those which have no money at all, whereas the 'developing' are those which have money but misuse it.

I discussed this with my colleagues and with people in industry and commerce. We concluded that dishonesty was the main reason that the health institutions waste money. Unnecessary things are bought because of the commission; articles are more expensive than they should be, because of bribes. Administration becomes so costly that countries have to raise loans to pay for it, rather than for development. Government salaries are much higher than salaries of people working independently.

We came to the conclusion that we in Latin America must



**The Uruguayan Ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, Julio Lacarte Muro, with Oscar Alaniz, until recently Deputy Director-General in Uruguay's Ministry of Education.**

stop blaming lending countries and organisations for the poor administration of our resources. Of course, it is important that these countries do not exploit our poverty, but we have to accept our own responsibility for solving the problem.

As a result we have started a media campaign in Colombia to make people think about honesty. We broadcast slogans on the radio such as: 'Have you done something of which you will be ashamed tomorrow?' 'Real revolution begins in the individual' and 'Did you do something dishonest today?' We have also made an audiovisual programme for schools, presenting dishonesty as a factor that causes poverty, mistrust and insecurity. It ends with a song expressing this. We have offered a prize to the school which gives the best interpretation of the song. Now we plan to do something similar for industry and farmers. ■

## APOSTLES OF UNITY

*A Lebanese lawyer said:*

I AM DEEPLY INTERESTED in the reconstruction of my country.

Frank Buchman, the initiator of MRA, once said: 'An unhurried time of quiet every morning is the indispensable basis for building a new world.'

So, it was with a certain reluctance that I started practising that and moving according to God's guidance. That was a long and painful road.

God has sown in me the desire for unity and peace in my country. This has led me to initiatives—sometimes risky and dangerous—together with other friends for the sake of reconciliation in Lebanon. The last one was a meeting that took place a month ago in Cyprus which brought together 20 Lebanese of all communities. The desire for unity was such that, at the end of that five-day meeting, we spontaneously prayed together.

More difficult is living out our calling in the daily routine tasks of life. This year I had to handle a simple formality in one of our Government offices. The officer was not carrying out his work because he expected extra money for his pocket. As I couldn't give him that, I had to come to his

office 52 times to see that this formality was done. I wrote a letter to the President of the Republic about that. He rang me up a week later and invited me to meet him. Because I paid the price, I had the authority to talk to him.

My office in Beirut is situated right at the demarcation line. When I stand there and look at the few fearful women or men who dare cross from one side to the other, I wonder: Who has separated our people, who is feeding the enmity among us? A minority, a small committed minority, has succeeded in doing that. What my country needs, what the world needs today, is a minority of men or women who will be apostles of unity. It is perhaps the most difficult human task. It is an illusion to think that it is up to our politicians to solve our problems. Often, as experience shows, they will not be able to do it. We who are here have to learn the art of opening new paths that will bring the answer to problems in our nations. But these paths have to pass through our own personal lives. This is the challenge we face at Caux. And this is why I am here with six compatriots.

As I belong to the Christian community which is a minority in the Middle East, I share their great sense of fear. But lately I had the thought: 'Unless you abandon your fears you cannot see the truth, nor can you serve the truth.' This thought has given me a sense of liberty which enables me to take part efficiently in efforts towards agreement and reconciliation. ■



# Bush beans and the moral component

KHAO KOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT lies in the mountains of North-East Thailand, in an area ravaged and depopulated by anti-government guerrilla warfare in the Seventies. Seven years ago those who had not fled to the cities were living in holes in the ground, in conditions of great poverty. Today the project supports 9,000 villagers, who send 10 tons of vegetables to market in Bangkok every day.

The person mainly responsible for Khao Kor's rows of flourishing cabbages, snow peas and asparagus is a 29-year-old agriculturalist, Rosukon Poompanvong, who took part in the conference at Caux. When she first visited the Khao Kor area as an agricultural student she was horrified by the conditions she saw. After graduating six years ago, she persuaded the army to take her on to organise a rural development project there. Today it is a showpiece for the country, with a message of hope to all countries facing food shortages. The King or other members of the Thai royal family visit the project every year.

As the army gained control of the area in the late Seventies, they called for settlers from other parts of the country. Khao Kor's farmers include former slum-dwellers from the cities and army veterans—a kaleidoscope of cultures and backgrounds. Many of the settlers had no experience of farming.

For their first year, the settlers lived together in temporary homes, while they built their villages. Then the houses were allocated by lot, and six acres of land was given to each family. This can be passed on down the generations, but not sold.

The project's land—125,000 acres of cleared forest—is mountainous and heavily eroded. They have 60 days of rain a year, spread over six months. With irrigation, the land is very fertile. The villagers can raise four crops of bush-beans and cabbage a year—the bush-beans taking only 45 days from seed to harvest. The project's villages have small dams to conserve the precious rainfall. Rosukon Poompanvong and her 10 assistants have taught the villagers to terrace the

land, plant trees and mix and rotate their crops to prevent erosion and conserve the soil's fertility. They keep a careful watch on the produce for dangerous pesticide residues, and are experimenting with biological means of pest control which are safer for farmers and consumers.

One key to the project's success is market research. The project leaders gear the villagers' output to the fluctuations of demand in Bangkok. They are experimenting with winter asparagus, for instance, so as to catch prices at their highest. Twice a week they visit each family, distributing seeds, fertilizer and pesticides on credit. When the farmer makes a profit, he pays 30 per cent to the co-operative for these raw materials. This also applies to equipment and livestock.

## Key to success

Another key to success is the founder's determination. 'My mother came from a rich family,' says Rosukon Poompanvong, 'but her partner ran away with all the money. So we had to work very hard. When I went to university I kept thinking about the poor and how I could help them.' On one of her first visits to Khao Kor her driver warned her, 'No one comes here except the army, it's too dangerous.' Since then her hearing has been affected by the sound of gunfire, she has lost friends in the fighting and had several close calls herself.

She has had to convince the villagers about the project. She tells the story of one farmer with a drink problem, which made him mistreat his family. 'For two months we got him up at 6.00 every morning to go to the fields. When he received his profits after 60 days' work, he was very surprised and pleased. He told everyone, "Look how much money I made by stopping drinking!" Everyone gave up drink when the news got through!'

The profit motive alone, however, is not enough. In fact she is afraid that it will lead to competition and corruption among the villagers. She feels there is a moral component to development. Without it, how can the project get the people to work together, or ensure good quality in their products? It was this concern which brought her to Caux, for, she says, 'Technological development is not so hard, but moral development is difficult and just as important.'

Mary Lean



THE DALAI LAMA OF TIBET will open a Dialogue on Development, the sixth in a series of annual conferences convened at the Moral

Re-Armament centre at Asia Plateau, Panchgani, Western India, from January 4 to 11, 1986.

**NEW  
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