

SPIRITUAL BATTERIES RECHARGED

Last month's 'Encuentro de las Americas' was a true learning community. People from Argentina, Paraguay, Colombia, Peru, Costa Rica, Brazil, USA and the First Nations of Canada met at Sitio Sao Luiz in Petropolis. We analysed the situation in our different countries, sought the roots of spiritual growth and examined case studies linking the moral and spiritual dimension with effective action.

Dra Heyde Duran, a well known Colombian lawyer, outlined the action she and her MRA colleagues are taking amidst critical national issues. On her return home she faxed us: 'To be with you all helped me to confront the way we have been working, individually and collectively. We must work for REPENTANCE as much as for forgiveness.'

A Paraguayan journalist, Cecilio Melgarejo Gomez, representing the Mayor of the country's second city, Ciudad del Este, asked to have an MRA seminar in the city in the coming months. Ed Burnstick of the Cree Nation, from Alberta, Canada, spoke of the contribution of indigenous peoples to the spiritual rebirth the world needs, and this started discussion about a meeting of indigenous leaders on this theme.

Ann Jackson, school principal from Minneapolis, USA, described what she is doing to make community life a source of dignity, respect and well being.

On the last day of the Encuentro, the delegates were joined by community leaders from Rio. Jones Santos Neves Filho, formerly Federal Congressman and Vice-President of the Brazilian Confederation of Industry, spoke about the recent MRA-inspired 'clean election campaign' and of the fight against corruption in Brazilian business. A code of ethics for small businesses is now being distributed in every state, he said.

Other speakers were Luizant Mata Roma, President of the 150,000 strong Commercial Workers Union of Rio, Lucia Maria Nazareth of the Rio Federation of Women's Associations and Tibor Sulik, member of the Vatican Commission for Justice and Peace.

Luiz Pereira and others led discussion on improving the situation in the favelas (shanty towns). Several favela leaders spoke. 'Our contact with MRA has changed our lives,' said Raymundo, President of the Agricola Community Residents' Association. 'If you are able to forgive, you can go through any barrier, including corruption and drugs.' During the following days some of us were invited to visit favela

communities which the local government is transforming into liveable neighbourhoods, with the full cooperation of the inhabitants. In areas where there had been open-air sewers we saw clean, newly-paved streets; where there had been floods, we saw the human touch in flower pots and small parks. 'I was always sure God had a plan for us,' said one of the leaders.

Antonia Galliccio, an educator from Buenos Aires, summed up the Encuentro. 'We have problems in our country,' he said. 'Here we have found a new vision and recharged our "spiritual batteries" to do what is needed.'

Tom Jones Luis Puig

GANDHIJI REMAINS 'A MIRROR TO INDIA'

Last month Rajmohan Gandhi was interviewed on BBC Radio 4's leading religious affairs programme, *Sunday*, about the scattering of the remaining ashes of the Mahatma in the River Ganges. Asked how much of a living symbol Gandhi is today in India, Rajmohan replied that while much of what Gandhi believed has been rejected, 'Gandhi remains very much part of the Indian conscience. He was like a mirror to India and he still remains a mirror, even though Indians sometimes want to run away from what they see.'

Asked what Gandhiji would make of Indian society today, Rajmohan replied: 'He would be glad that the Indian Constitution, and Indian laws, ensure that the poorest Indian has some rights; and that every Indian is equal in rights and opportunities to every other Indian, no matter what his or her religion or gender. These are two wonderful things that Indian society honours and sometimes practises.'

Mike Smith

THANK YOU

Thank you to Ruth and David Hume. I was most grateful to be given the chance to share in their insight on what is happening in Northern Ireland. I could of course write letters to the Humes and others, but a few pages of insight based on knowledge and compassion is a precious thing. I have a list of areas in the world, and subjects, where I would love to have the insight in the same way so as better to carry things on my mind and heart.

Gunnar Söderlund

EUROPEAN ECUMENICAL ASSEMBLY

The second European Ecumenical Assembly, organised by the European churches, will be held in Graz, Austria, 23-29 June 1997 on the theme: 'Reconciliation – gift of God and source of new life'. Many people have asked if MRA experiences will be given. It seems that several friends are planning to attend. It would be good to know who is going and in what capacity. Should we unite our efforts and book a space on the Agora to display books, show videos etc.? We could also ask for a room for a presentation. Reservations for these spaces must be made before 28 February. Unless somebody is already doing it, I am happy to collect information and, if suitable, coordinate with those going. I can be contacted at: Tel: +33 3 88 60 21 84; Fax: c/- Husain +33 3 88 75 76 40

Michel Koechlin

E-MAIL/INTERNET COMMUNICATIONS

A growing number of people active in MRA have electronic mail. Edward Howard has been keeping a list of e-mail addresses and is now working with a team to develop a mailing list system. This will enable announcements of universal relevance to be distributed quickly. Membership of the list is by approval to ensure privacy, and messages are checked before being sent to the list to avoid junk mail. If you wish to join (for which there is no charge), please could you apply, introducing yourself, to Edward Howard at <edwardh@mra.org.uk> and information about how to join the mailing list will then be sent.

You can also join other mailing lists for discussions on specific issues. One list brings together all who are interested in the *Global Express* initiatives. Another list is for those who wish to discuss the technical aspects of improving MRA's

communications through e-mail, and yet another provides updates on e-mail addresses, mailing list developments and on new pages on MRA's web sites such as <http://www.mra.org.uk/>

Another mailing list is pursuing the discussion on 'Moral Re-Armament' as a name for our work. John Bond, whose address is now <jbond@hubble.dialix.com.au>, is hosting this discussion, and would welcome all who wish to join, if only to read the many, thoughtful contributions.

He welcomes all contributions, in whatever form they reach him. All of them are incorporated into the discussion; and those contributors without access to e-mail receive regular updates by post.

Edward Howard John Bond Roger Spooner

THINKING AHEAD FOR 1998

An outstanding element of the summer 1996 was the profound exchanges between leaders of different faiths on the needs of the world of tomorrow. The Dalai Lama made some concrete suggestions in his talk, including a proposal for a further event in Caux. One idea which was also discussed in Panchgani in January was that in the summer of 1998 an event would take place which would, as in July 1996, include a day which brought together leaders of different faiths. Again the aim would not be a theological discussion but a chance to think together for the needs of the present and the future.

We would be glad to hear from friends across the world whether you think that his idea should be pursued and whether you would like to help coordinate it. We will be glad to receive any suggestions and would let you know in the WB if any progress is being made.

Pierre Spoerri Andrew Stallybrass

CONSULTATION UPDATE

With the consultation on 'Participation and the Development of People' just two months away (April 19-26), teams of people in various parts of the world are busily preparing background thought and concrete proposals on each of the five major themes. The working groups (see letter with December WB) are eager to hear from all those with ideas to feed in.

Please gather friends in your region, where possible, and submit the suggestions and perspectives you would like to have considered in Melbourne in April.

A number of discussion papers will be available in due course, for those interested. Two are immediately available from Edward in Oxford:

- (1) A discussion paper on 'the challenge of postmodernism', attempting to develop our understanding of the new ways in which the younger generation think today – and the implications for MRA.
- (2) Preliminary proposals on the possible establishment of 'co-workers programmes' in different parts of the world.

The March WB will carry more information on the preparation process.

John Mills Edward Peters

Caux 1997.....

CAUX 1997 PREPARATION MEETING

The preparation meeting for the summer in Caux will take place in the MRA home in Paris (22, avenue Robert Schuman, F 92100 BOULOGNE-BILLANCOURT) from Thursday May 8 at lunch time to Sunday May 11 after lunch. Session organisers representing each of the 6 sessions (Industry, Life of Faith, ATD reunion, 'Creativity', Round Table and 'Healing the past') should be represented plus those responsible for the main departments in Mountain House. Please inform Philippe and Lisbeth Lasserre and/or Frédéric Chavanne of your intentions.

Philippe Lasserre

ARTISTIC/NONVERBAL INPUT CAUX '97

At the moment we do not know of many ideas or productions for this summer, apart from the week entitled Pssst! We hope this will be an inspiring opportunity for fresh ideas and initiatives. All is open and we look forward to your thoughts and suggestions, as well as offers.

Gunnar Söderlund Hugh Williams

PSSST!....BEGINS TO FIZZ!

'...for all those who long to discover the creative sparkle within' – Caux, Aug 5 -12.

We began to rise to this challenge when a group of us from Britain, USA, Finland, Sweden and Austria met to prepare in London, February 7-10. We come at the task from different angles, but at heart we all have the longing that each one who comes this summer will find new, honest and creative ways to look at themselves and their part in God's creation.

It is not a time for those who are 'gifted' to develop their skills, but it is for anybody who wants to explore new sides of his or her human nature.

The session will centre on creative workshops in fields as varied as contemplative movement, story telling, clowning, puppet theatre, flower arrangements, 'sports and the creative factor', creative living, etc.

As an integral part of the day everyone will do 'creative community work', i.e. serve, cook, wash-up, prepare beds, etc.

There will also be place for meditation, a Caux Lecture and prepared performances, including a concert by the Fitzwilliam Quartet. We hope that

there will be a chance to watch people who are skilled in a particular craft at work.

Our greatest challenge, we feel, is the half hour in the morning when the whole house will gather in one place. We have thought to call it 'The open space...'

An invitation is being drafted as well as a letter with more details. It will be sent out early March. Anybody wanting to be put on the list can be in touch with Gunnar Söderlund in Stockholm. Invitations will also be available from MRA centres.

We feel excited about the possibilities ahead, but also a great sense of need for ideas, support, help and finance.

Edie Campbell, Jack Lynch, Eva Lindroos, John Nowell, Elisabeth Tooms, Timothy Firth, Kathleen & Dickie Dodds, Nik Dahlström, Ian Kiaer, Chris Channer, Hugh & Dell Williams, Elina Gundersen, Philip Tyndale-Biscoe, Gunnar Söderlund, Allison Kenny, Charlotte Geissler

CAUX COMMUNITIES AND TRAINING

About 20 of us met in Oxted near London to talk about the training of community facilitators for Caux and how to cover this through the summer.

We all felt that the creation of the Communities has enriched our life in Caux. We much appreciated the professional training which most of us had received in Britain and decided that this should continue to be offered. We felt that conference initiators for each session should be responsible for finding and training the community facilitators. Though some present in Oxted are prepared to make the support of these facilitators a priority when they are in Caux, we feel a great need for international input. If you are considering offering yourself for this support role, Thomas Bräcke would be glad to hear from you so we can coordinate our efforts.

It became clear that those present felt that more training in various fields would enhance our effectiveness, not least in the area of counselling.

We made a number of recommendations for the Consultation in Australia, particularly on training.

A more detailed letter has gone to those who were invited to the Oxted days. If you would like this and/or the ideas that were prepared for Australia, please let Joy Weeks know.

*Thomas Bräcke Claire Leggat Ann Rignall
David Locke Joy Weeks*

FACTS ON FAXES, PHONES AND ADDRESSES

Finland: Marketta Waroma's address (January WB) should have read: Lääkärinkatu 4 A 15, FIN-00250, Helsinki. Tel: +358 9 241 7035 (not Lddkdrinkatu...)

United Kingdom: Joy Weeks now has a tel/fax: +44 1962 852298

Correction: in the MRA world address list, Peter

Riddell's office phone should be +44 1865 511800 (not 516558). His e-mail address is now:

<P.Riddell@mra.org.uk>

Taiwan: the correct address of the MRA office is: 11F-4, No.5, Sec.2, Tun Hua S. Road, Taipei. (The 4 is missing from the World Address List.)

Australia: Erik Parsons' new address is: 44 Ruthven St, Macleod West, VIC 3085; Tel :+613 9459 9583

Calendar of Events

FEB '97	<u>London, Britain</u>	Planning for Caux session 'Creativity, Freedom, Service'	Feb	7	-	10
	<u>Armagh Melbourne Australia</u>	'Life Matters', nine-day course for young adults	Feb	7	-	16
	<u>Britain</u>	'Making Democracy Work', 12-day prog. for young Ukrainian MPs	Feb	21	-	Mar 3
MAR '97	<u>Crimea Ukraine</u>	FFF Visiting Course	Mar	3	-	15
	<u>Sydney Australia</u>	International Communications Forum	Mar	15	-	16
	<u>Tirley Garth Britain</u>	FFF Students Initiative Course	Mar	16	-	22
APR '97	<u>Kano Nigeria</u>	Conference: Africa - pattern of peace and unity	Apr	19	-	25
	<u>Victoria Australia</u>	Global Consultation on enlistment and training	Apr	19	-	26
MAY '97	<u>Boulogne Paris, France</u>	Preparation for Caux 1997	May	8	-	11
	<u>Moldova</u>	'The Search for Freedom', FFF Seminar	May	23	-	25
JUN '97	<u>Minneapolis USA</u>	International Conference at University of Minnesota	Jun	24	-	29
JUL '97	<u>Armagh Melbourne Australia</u>	'Life Matters', nine-day course for young adults	Jul	4	-	13
	<u>Caux Switzerland</u>	The World of Tomorrow - A Dynamic Learning Community	Jul	12	-	Aug 24
	<u>Odawara Japan</u>	Asia Pacific Youth Conference (APYC)	Jul	20	-	29
SEP '97	<u>Tirley Garth Britain</u>	FFF International Course	Sep	4	-	23
OCT '97	<u>Kobe Japan</u>	Asia: Dialogue with neighbours	Oct	4	-	5

The deadline for the next Bulletin is Saturday, March 15, 1997

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Those named below have been asked to distribute this in their area: Asia: South - C Irulu; Malaysia - Santa Maria; Philippines - Calma; Japan, Rest - Nagano; Australia - A Lancaster; Pacific - Annette Porteous; Africa: East - Patel; South - Euvard; Zimbabwe - Sibare; Nigeria, Rest - Agbi; N. America: Canada - Weeks; USA - Ruffin; Latin America: Brazil, Rest - Puig/Vogel; Caribbean - Fiona Edwards; Europe: France - Lasserre; Germany - Bräcke; Denmark - Jørgensen; Finland - Koponen; Norway - Eskeland; Sweden - Söderlund; Switzerland - Mottu; UK - C Evans; Austria - Vock; Netherlands, Rest - J de Pous; Middle East: - Christodoulides