

# REARMEMENT MORAL · CAUX

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## Centre de Rencontres Internationales

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TÉLÉGRAMME CAUXVAUD

MOUNTAIN HOUSE  
RUE DU PANOPAMA  
CH - 1824 CAUX

Monday, 1st August, 1994

Dear friends,

I'm breaking with tradition, and sitting down to write this on Monday evening. What is the world coming to? But then the Swiss have decided to break with tradition, and to make the 1st of August, their national day, a holiday, for the first time ever. I decided to celebrate with a Swiss and a Scot, and we left on Sunday afternoon for a cabin in the mountains, and early this morning, we were on our way to the summit of the 'Grande Dent de Morcles', through mist and rain and a few minutes sunshine. We saw an eagle and a family of chamoix. Luckily I don't yet have a lap-top computer or a satellite modem link! So here I am, in front of the familiar screen, while others are up at Hauts de Caux for the traditional bonfire - the weather has started to clear again!

The house is in another of those change-over periods. I heard African singing in the front hall, went to see what was going on, and arrived in time to hear a Maori prayer in reply to the African welcome for a New Zealand party arriving for the 'women's initiative' session. This last session has been quite a full one, but the house is going to be even fuller for the two sessions in August. The 'Unity in Diversity' 'consultation on Europe, a continent in need' started with a Polish song about the Tower of Babel, and humanity's dreams of unity - it seemed appropriate. 'People come with the pain of conflict, of exclusion, of unemployment. We need a power to heal wounds and transcend differences,' said one of the organizers at the opening session.

A young European told how since last year's session, a group of 18, from different generations and 11 countries had exchanged a monthly letter, sharing their hopes and dreams for their continent. A ballot was held to see which of the themes of the session attracted most interest - and whether there were other themes that should be added to the list. The needs of the world - and the need for change in the West - were present in the session. The theme covered the widest geographical stretch of Europe, since among the 460 participants were many from Eastern and Central Europe, especially from Belarus, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, and Ukraine. It is easy to take for granted the amazing changes that have swept across Europe - so aware are we of today's problems and dangers. These people from Central and Eastern Europe have become normal, unremarkable. One Russian spoke of the danger of a new iron curtain and a new cold war - this time from the West. It was vitally important to build bridges, not just between the different parts of the continent, but also 'with our values, culture and traditions that have been trampled on'.

Bella Gribkova, a Russian university professor and translator spoke of the pride she felt for her country, and her pain on meeting people who had reasons to hate it. 'I am torn between pride and shame for what went wrong,' she said, in tears. She recalled the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. As an adolescent at the time, she had sincerely believed that the Soviet tanks were saving the country. These memories had been brought back by a play, 'Letter to Wollongong', that she had

translated in Caux, written by the former Czech ambassador to Australia, describing the dilemmas and compromises of an ordinary woman under the communist regime.

The author, Dr. Jaroslavá Moserová, spoke in a meeting of the necessity of spiritual values in the building of new democracies: 'Perhaps we can give to Europe a new model for politicians, giving a fresh inspiration and make politics more transparent, more honest. Such was the aim of our President, Vaclav Havel.' After a presentation of the play, many of the audience stayed for a long discussion with the author on the issues raised in her play - how and when to forget and forgive. She spoke of the 'screening law' that had been passed, banning those too involved in the communist regime from high posts in their new democracy. 'What should we do in Russia?' a senior Russian lawyer asked. She tactfully hesitated to give advice, but noted the difference between 70 and 40 years of communism. The issue is also a very live one in the new South Africa for example.

The days and nights have been full with many other meetings: there has also been a 'cities consultation', and a 'dialogue on the preservation of creation'. An evening that brought much fun and emotion to some of us was "Anything to Declare?" 23 years on, at the Caux café, unplugged' - which meant some 15 of us from that ancient MRA show singing without any rehearsal for some 40 minutes. I must confess that we were warmly received! Another evening offered an opportunity to 'meet Winnie the Pooh, Alice in Wonderland, Churchill and Dickens'. Others came to hear dramatic readings from Jacques Henri's autobiography, completed just before he died of cancer - he was one of the pioneers of Caux.

'In Caux, yesterday's enemies become tomorrow's friends,' said Heinz Krieg, from Berlin. Speaking after Poles and Russians, he reminded his audience of the interwoven histories of their countries. He spoke with emotion of a recent visit to Russia, on the invitation of Russian friends, 52 years after he had last been there wearing the uniform of the German Wehrmacht.

Experiences from ex-Yugoslavia had a powerful impact on participants. A Jewish woman, married to a Muslim, told of the 13 refugees who had passed through her flat in Croatia in the last year. 'We have to accept to be fully what we are,' she said, 'but we must also remain open to others who are different.' Another woman, from Zagreb, told how following a bombardment, she had decided to commit herself to peace and non-violence. As one of the editors of a magazine for peace, she had visited a Serb Orthodox community not far from Zagreb with her colleagues, despite pressures to persuade her not to go. 'Man cannot be an enemy to man,' she said. 'We have only one common enemy, and that is in the heart of each one of us.'

Daniel Mottu, a former President of the Swiss Foundation for Moral Re-Armament, concluded the session 'Unity in diversity' by linking it with the Swiss National Day, 1st August. 'We Swiss can illustrate a successful and fruitful coexistence between different cultures and languages,' he said. 'But a majority have decided to stay outside the new Europe that is taking shape. Fortunately, Caux is a place where the Swiss can take initiatives, with others, to help in the building of a better world.'

Slightly stiff greetings,

Andrew Stallybrass