

## MOUNTAIN HOUSE · CAUX

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

NEWSLETTER 8

31st August 1987

Dear friends,

The Caux World Service is closing down for a few months - this is the final broadcast. I see that the last two years, I've talked in my last letter about the 'end-of-school' atmosphere. I can't say that there is an end-of-holiday spirit this time round, because Caux is never quite a holiday, but it has been more relaxed this summer, and we all come out of it weary rather than exhausted, and very grateful. We've been a mere 1,605 or so people, and yet, looking back, there seems to have been a disproportionate ratio of miracles in the lives of those who came.

One miracle that did not take place was the resuscitation of the skeleton from the play of the same name. He (or is it a she?) ended the summer dressed as a cook in one of the vast soup cookers in the kitchen!

Pierre Spoerri looked back on the summer here yesterday, in the last meeting of the conference, and thought of three groups of people: those who've already left and are trying to apply the decisions they took here in their home situations; the silent minority (or are they a majority) who work selflessly behind the scenes to make Caux possible, who rarely speak in meetings, but whose experience of God and life is one of the most precious resources in the house; and finally, those who've left with new insights or convictions for the future, thanks to an openness of mind they found here. He spoke of the growth of networks of friendships of committed people which are open to all.

Certainly this element has been one of the marks of the summer - how many of us have become less 'friendly colleagues' and more 'friends who work together'. This is a very important part of Caux. Then I think with especial gratitude of those who come from further afield to help through the summer, and of the less-seen areas of service. For example, the retired French widower who came here for the first time a year ago, and has spent the entire summer preparing vegetables at an early hour of the morning, with a Swiss widow, a retired shop-keeper. And the housekeepers, ever gracious and good-humoured in the face of the unexpected.

The Industrial Round Table (which was rectangular last year) is making progress towards the circular - this year it was oval! The twenty top executives from Japan, Europe and the United States who met, did so 'in a spirit of partnership and common search', in the words of their own summary. A spirit markedly different from last year, when there had been an element of 'Japan bashing', because 'greater understanding and friendship had evolved', and some of the Europeans and Americans had meanwhile experienced a very warm welcome in Japan.

This group is becoming a network of friends, which in no way seeks to duplicate other groups. The Japanese participants told how they had met again three times during the year, and had written to their Prime Minister, giving him their convictions on the need for changes in trade policy. Another participant noted, 'Progress comes from innovation; innovation comes from inspiration; and inspiration has a lot to do with spiritual values.'

Olivier Giscard d'Estaing, one of the organisers of the Round Table, said at the end, 'I believe that Moral Re-Armament is there to help us love the works of man, even with their imperfections, and to bring about an improvement in their functioning so that they reach out to their final aim. I hope that this Round Table will stimulate us not to reject industry - it has become an inescapable part of society and its development - but to make the best spiritual and human use of it.'

As so often in Caux, you plan one thing, and then there are all the unforeseen and unexpected elements that come in. The Thai delegation referred to in my last letter should have been here for the Afro-Asian session, but here they were. And they gave us a fascinating presentation on 'war without weapons through strategic development and a new quality of life'. Then there was a real meeting of hearts and minds between them and the Cambodians, several of them refugees from the Thai-Cambodian border. They sang (with some brave non-Thai friends) a song with actions about the four standards, and performed a scene in a variety evening about meditation. A group of three Jordanian students were here, and at a moving afternoon on their country, were able to tell us about their part of the world.

But of course, the focus of this week has firmly been on industry, on health and safety, on the balance between professional and private life (an absolutely brilliant talk, with much food for thought), on all that it means to 'change corporate culture'. The Professor of Organizational Behaviour, Paul Evans, who spoke on the private-professional balance, stated, 'We find that it takes 20-25 years of adulthood to create the foundations for life.' Which leaves hope for some of us, that we're on the threshold of real living!

I confess that I didn't really know what this title meant, until an Indian participant simply explained that the way we live at home is our domestic culture, the way we live in our nations is our national culture, and the way we live in businesses is (you've guessed it) corporate culture. And already in the opening meeting, Gottfried Anliker gave a complete and convincing picture of what change can mean in business.

A highlight was the focus on 'International debt and its social implications', with Francis Blanchard, the Director-General of the ILO, a senior Brazilian industrialist, and the Papal Nuncio from Geneva, a Spaniard, Mgr. Mullor Garcia (see the enclosed press story - and the next issue of 'For a Change'). What meant most to me was to hear a white westerner, in such a senior position, talking with such passion and compassion of the need for a development for the poor of the world, such development being our only hope of solving the problems of the debt and of our unemployment.

The 9.30 meetings each day were brimming with the personal experiences and decisions that are the foundation for change in a wider

sphere, and on two occasions young businessmen filled the platform. 'Money seems to have become the aim of most of my generation,' said one of them, 'and greed has become less and less tempered by other values.' Yet his commitment was to serve other people and the world; he wanted to take up the challenge that Blanchard had launched to the younger generation, and be part of creating a network of people who would commit themselves to solving the human problems of development.

Some of us will be staying on for a couple of days, to try to get clearer on the programme and the invitation for next summer, and certain projected operations between now and then - we'll keep you posted, and this may turn out not to be the last letter from Caux after all. One thing is already clear: there will be a New Year session here from 27th December 1987 - 3rd January 1988, and you are all most warmly welcome from the 24th already, to spend Christmas here. We'll work on an invitation later, but we wanted to get the word out already.

Thank you for all the kind letters that I've received - I'm afraid I won't be able to answer them all. But we have all appreciated the feeling of support from many who have not been able to be here in person. We'll think of you as we eat our end-of-conference fondue tonight!

With love and gratitude from all of us still in Caux,

Andrew Stallybrass