

# REARMEMENT MORAL · CAUX

## Centre de Rencontres Internationales

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MOUNTAIN HOUSE  
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Dear friends,

So, we've reached the end. The closing press story has gone out: 1,370 participants from 64 countries. It's the season of farewells and departures - not my favorite time. But as a good friend said, we should be thinking, 'Mission accomplished, now we are sent out into the world.' Very hot days, uncomfortably hot as soon as you left the heights of Caux, and then last night another of the spectacular storms that seem to have marked this summer: the storm warning lights flashing round the lake, violent gusts of wind, slamming doors, moaning through gaps, thunder claps, and brighter than photo-flash lightning, and refreshing, abundant rain. Now I cast a slightly anxious eye outside - I'm planning a picnic with three of the New Zealand support group. And we note again with gratitude that on the weighted scale of population and miles traveled, the New Zealanders and the Australians come out tops.

But so many thanks are due to so many. I'd like to say thank you for the encouraging feed-back from these letters, and thank you too to all those here and elsewhere who get them to you. Thank you for the thoughts and prayers, and the contributions towards the cost. We appropriately ended the summer yesterday with a service of thanksgiving and intercession - there is so much to thank God for, He has given so much in these weeks, so many suffering parts of the world have been present, become part of our thinking and caring. So many individuals have left with new life - I still finger in my pocket a short piece of green rope, from the 'int-glob session', symbolizing healing and transformation.

There has been a lot of music, including two piano concerts from a young Russian, Victor Rjabtchikov, one of the finest artists that Caux has ever welcomed. He created an intimate link with his audience through his quiet charm and his fiery playing. I would swear there were moments when his whole body was in the air, and his only touch with this world was his fingers on the keyboard! Then there has been a Croatian group, the Collegium Pro Musica Sacra, who gave their music on three occasions. Scottish dancing on the terrace - I'm touched at the way the Scots allow others to massacre their artistic heritage! And of course magic from Neville Cooper.

This is the 20th year of the Caux Industrial Conferences. The most striking thing to me is the vigour of the offshoots: the Caux Round Table, the International Communications Forum (the next meeting is set for Nizhny Novgorod in September), and the Dialogue on the Preservation of the Creation. At the meeting taken by the latter group, one wildlife preservation expert said, 'Preservation is my work and creation is my conviction. I first heard of MRA six months ago.' He went on to say that he felt that MRA would continue to play a role in his own future, and quote his father's comment on Caux, with whom he'd come, 'If this is what heaven is like, then I'm not worried!' Alan Channer reminded us that economy and ecology share a Greek root in the word for 'home'. He spoke of his recent research work in China, studying a complex system in a multi-disciplinary team (and on another occasion showed memorable slides) - and he drew parallels with the complex system that is this home.

The Caux Round Table brought with them their own hive of activity, but they seemed more relaxed and at home. Jackets and ties are going out of fashion. A

senior French first-time participant (a former Vice-President of the World Bank) said of the CRT, 'This group is unique. I admire it for its underlying values. Moral issues are highly important for economic life. Could we spell out the economic cost to the world of moral issues being disregarded? These are things we tend to forget. When you're here, you are aware of the depth of things and the special spirit. If you dig deep you find jems, the result of a long process of purification.'

The final session of 'Evaluation and perspectives' brought three final days of diminishing numbers, but without any drop in interest. We met in a more informal circle of chairs, with the scribes of the different MRA publications, and the 'press team'. It was a chance to share what has meant most to us, a chance for many of those whose work through the summer has made Caux possible, but who have not been to many meetings, to say what they've experienced, and to get a broader picture of what has gone on.

A young, recently-graduated Jordanian, a Muslim, said, 'Moral values exist in all our religions. We need the right forces to counter the evil forces. We need a movement like this that links all peoples. We need a new world of fair competition, cooperation and spiritual values. We must find the points where we can share, and not just those where we disagree. How can we build bridges?' In a 'café - surprise evening', he played and sang Arabic music, including 'a song from Palestine composed by a Jew'. Isn't this one of the threads we must follow for the future, the dialogue between faiths, and the fear in much of the West of militant Islam? He was followed by a Lebanese Christian who spoke of his hatred for the Syrian and Israeli occupiers, and his longing to bring healing, 'The world needs healing, like water in the desert.'

A Croatian, Catholic lady spoke of 'a deep experience of forgiveness' that she had found with the help of an Indian, a Hindu. 'There is non-Croat blood in me, and I have often tended to forget it,' she said. 'My mother had Serb blood, and I worked to forgive her for being her daughter. My Indian friend prayed, we prayed, and I found freedom. Bridges are built of little stones. I have to build bridges, and they are broken. We have to start in our own hearts. It is very difficult to do. It is easy to say, but it is hardest to fight in our own hearts. Let us weep if we must, but we must pray.' Several of us in the audience had tears in our eyes.

A Russian who first came to Caux in 1969 as a Communist found himself sitting next to a Czech on the 25th anniversary of the Warsaw Pact's brutal ending of the Prague Spring. And we asked everyone to turn to their neighbour and share one experience of healing, community or bridge-building. 'Now we can be friends,' the Russian said. The Czech had four experiences to share: the need to apologise to someone that had become clear; the work on the vegetable team, where he had seen someone else find real change; his gratitude for 'meeting Russians as brothers here'; and his gratitude on reading Garth Lean's biography of Buchman. A half-Russian, half-Japanese lady, born in China and living in America said, 'I didn't belong any place, but I feel at home here.' Another exercise we did together was to think out what we would like to say to those we meet who'll ask, 'How was your holiday in Switzerland?' We can always say, 'Great', and end the conversation there, or we can try to go a little further. One original suggestion was, 'I've been cleaning shelves and sorting spices from around the world.' I'm still working on my answer, but I'll have a some weeks holiday to do it! I don't think I've ever seen so many old and young, first-timers and habitués, leaving so happy after their time here. That can't be bad!

Grateful, satisfied greetings from a Caux where the spirit has blown,

*Andrew*

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