

MOUNTAIN HOUSE • CAUX

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Monday, 2nd September 1985.

Dear friends,

So, for the last time - this summer at least - here I am, up before breakfast, sitting before a blank screen, and wondering how to capture this final week of the conference. It's rather melancholy, a bit like the end-of-the-school-year, made up of farewells and departures, and an emptying house. But the end here marks many new beginnings, known and unknown.

A highlight of the week has been what David Channer described as a pre- pre-view of the French version of a new film 'about war and peace, about how to create peace in the world, and peace in ourselves'. People came out of theatre on Saturday afternoon deeply stirred. Many were moved to tears - and not just those who know Irene Laure and her story. 'For love of tomorrow' opens with Irene in her garden, saying, 'Hatred is a thing that can absolutely destroy the world. And if you are healed of that, you are part of the healing instead of part of the disease.' It closes with this great-grandmother concluding, 'And I've never, never, regretted the way I've gone. Never. And the further I go, the more I realise that this question of reconciliation between peoples, or in the family, springs from forgiveness.'

'You can't leave after seeing a film like that without making a commitment,' said a lady from Eastern Europe, whose home is there. An Italian added, 'This film calls forth forgiveness rather than revenge. It has a serenity.' For years to come, Irene is going to travel to the ends of the earth through this film, giving the heart of her message with a limpid simplicity and directness, reaching out to those who hate and turn to violence and to those whose complacency provokes the hate.

The French version of the book of the same name, by Jacqueline Piguet, was also launched at the same occasion. English and German versions of both book and film are in preparation. 'When will the English version be ready?' asked an Asian, who was keen to send a copy to the President of her strife-torn land.

The week has had a strong French flavour to it, with Olivier Giscard d'Estaing speaking on 'How the needs of the world's poor can be met', a play-reading of an extract from a French best-seller, a spy story, where a KGB agent confesses to a priest his call to be a Christian. Giscard d'Estaing said, 'If we ally competence and generosity, we can change the world. Caux exists for that. That is its calling, since Caux can help to direct this crusade against misery,

which must spring from hope, love, clear-sightedness and the will.' Michel Orphelin also gave 'an evening with St. Francis', extracts from 'Poor man, Rich man', with the full musical backing from the video in preparation on tape. He plans to offer this programme in France and the French-speaking world in the months ahead, and this simplified version can even be put on in a large drawing-room.

I enclose a text of what French M.P. Jean-Marie Daillet said at the opening of the industrial session. Fritz Hochmair, an Austrian M.P. and trades unionist came for 24 hours before hurrying home for a parliamentary debate on the wine tampering scandal. 'This theme (of hope in a world of tension) is so important,' he said. 'We all tend to talk about our own problems. But we have to learn to go to the root of them. Otherwise the world is like a shunting yard for problems. But where do we begin? With the rich North or the poor South? Only the individual, each one of us here, can start.'

His first visit to Caux had helped him to get rid of the idea of being the representative of a group all the time. 'It is never a mistake to make the first step towards the other,' he said, and he had himself taken that first step with some employers and political enemies. He concluded, 'Caux is like a moral fuel pump for me, where I fill up with the fuel to deal with national problems.'

Gottfried Anliker noted that the tensions in the world are the logical consequence of our living and actions. 'Absolute standards go with greater efficiency in business life,' he affirmed. 'You never go wrong if you give your best, and dishonesty makes everything so much more complicated.'

While 10.45 main sessions tackled more specialised problems such as youth unemployment, stimulating the creation of work and wealth, and helping everyone to find a suitable occupation, the 9.30 meetings dealt with motives, the home, freedom from pressure, and how to handle successes and failures. These were some of the best meetings I can remember in Caux - and indeed there have been some memorable times in the hall this summer. The final meeting of the session included a son telling of a completely honest talk with his father, and the decision to 'share together and to care for the world together'. Honesty would, he felt, help him get clear on his life's calling.

We want to include you on the thinking for next summer. None of us are keen on a retrospective revel - but it is a chance to reach Switzerland in a way we have not done for many years - the media, authorities, churches, and the people! In one of preparatory meetings we had a show of hands of those who had been here in 1946 to welcome Buchman and his group. Daniel Mottu told how he had gone to Vallorbe to meet the party at the frontier. The international chorus on the station platform had given him 'a punch in the stomach and a vision of a new world'.

There has been a growing consensus that next summer's conference should be more of a whole, and less of a series of special sessions. Could some of the groups who have taken on sessions in previous years host a week or ten days? Could the French and Germans together host a session, which would create greater teamwork, develop relationships, but without making unity the aim? Someone noted that this year people had come from his country throughout the summer to different sessions,

but they rarely meet at home, and it was a pity if they don't meet here either. That said, it is important that the teams that have been built up over the last years eg. behind the industrial and the family sessions, do not now demobilise. Another idea, perhaps complimentary, is to aim for certain named world leaders of thought, politics or the church etc., and to build several high points in the summer round them. One element we have to bear in mind is that we now have only 540 beds - so we need to try to spread out the crowds!

Tentative dates run from 5th July - 31st August, and a suggested theme is 'A new world in the making'. There was agreement that we should try to re-express the great challenge Buchman summed up in the phrase 'remaking the world'.

Yesterday, the little Protestant chapel was full to bursting for a service of thanksgiving for the summer. One senior man in industry said afterwards how struck he'd been through the week by the constant challenge to apply your faith in every detail of daily life. He had been impelled to surrender his life to God afresh during the service.

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Andrew Stallybrass

Jean-Marie Daillet, French M.P., speaking at the opening of the Industrial Session, 27th August 1985.

I'm especially glad to be here in Caux, because here I experience a kind of face to face, with the whole world, with myself, and with God. Contrary to what many believe, the world of public life is not necessarily a world of violence, corruption, personal ambition and selfishness - it should not be that at all. Political responsibility is not just for the pleasure of exercising power. It should first of all be for the joy of service. At least that is how I was first thrown into public life - someone said to me, 'You don't have the right to abandon politics to the incompetent, the violent and the cheats.'

I believe that this house of Caux is at the heart of the hope. Here you find a great will to listen. You meet to listen to the other person. So, this morning, I was able to listen to the entirely legitimate complaints that some New Zealand friends addressed to me, as a Frenchman, saying, 'What has your secret service been getting up to in our country, sinking this Greenpeace ship, and killing this fellow who was on board? Aren't you ashamed?'

They were too polite to put it quite like that, but I saw that was what they thought and felt. I apologised to them in the name of my country, because even though I am in the opposition to the present government in France, I naturally feel responsible for the bad as well as for the good that my country may do. Even if there is no proof - and there may never be - that the French Government gave orders that it should not have given.

Here, I think we learn to respect the other, because we learn to

listen; we learn to understand, because we listen. I come here to listen rather than to speak - but I was asked to say something. And what I want to say is that I need to come here regularly. I need to come and immerse myself in something other than parliament. I care about parliament a lot. I'm in it. It interests me. I feel fulfilled there in my calling of public service. But I need to get away from it, and not just to be with my electors or the family.

I need to be here, and to listen to another world than the world of politics. And yet I have the duty to bring here my experiences of what politics can be, for good or ill, and to ask you to help the politicians not to make too many mistakes. Contrary to what some believe, they are sometimes very isolated, their responsibilities are heavy, and their diaries horribly full. It's hard for us to free our spirits.

The great French writer, Stendhal, in one of his novels, has a father saying to a son about to start a job in the office of a government minister, 'Son, always speak to a minister as you would to an idiot, because a minister never has the time to think.' Members of Parliament don't have much time to think either! So, I come to Caux to think, to contemplate in this extraordinary place on the mountain, which inspires you to reflect about yourself and your relationships with others.

There are miracles here in Caux. There is the miracle of personal encounters that change you, which lead you to see more clearly what you are meant to do in your private and your public life - the two are inseparable. And I'd like to say that I always come here with the hope of learning something. Perhaps I can also help others to find their role in life, but also in public life, because we are all involved in public life, and we are all responsible. I don't say that to get out of my responsibilities. But it is as we all show solidarity, as much as we can, that we may, perhaps, be able to solve the big problems. I know that here in Caux dialogues have been started that led to the solution of major problems.

One comes here to give of one's time, to give idea's, to receive something from others, with the will for peace, without weakness or surrender, and then a will for commitment. It's a difficult word, but I use it just the same: commitment. We must commit ourselves, if only out of self-respect. I come to Caux not to renounce my calling, but to deepen it, and I hope that all of you can really breathe here, as I do.