

# REARMEMENT MORAL · CAUX

## Centre de Rencontres Internationales

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TÉLÉGRAMME CAUXVAUD

MOUNTAIN HOUSE  
RUE DU PANORAMA  
CH-1824 CAUX

Monday, 5th July 1993

Dear friends,

Well, here we go again. I confess that when the alarm clock went off this morning, part of me wanted to turn over and go to sleep again, using the entirely valid excuse that the Caux summer conferences opened only yesterday, so how can there possibly be enough to say in a first letter this Monday? And part of me further said, 'It would be so nice to have a nice summer holiday, beside the sea, perhaps.' But then, I look out over this magic view, the sky already bright, with light fast seeping into the day, at the ever-changing patterns on the lake, the mountains, old friends by now, and above all, when I think of the people who have come, of those who are on their way, then I say to myself am I not one of the luckiest men around to be part of this great adventure?

And what an adventure it is. It has struck me afresh in the last few days how amazing it is to have such a major operation without one boss. There has been the odd creak and wheeze, getting the old machine up and running, and I've been tempted to say, 'Someone should have.... They ought to have....' And then I've stopped to ask, 'Who is this they?' There's a tiny handful of people who live here the year round, but they can't carry it all, think of everything, maintain every sector ready for a fresh flood of people. The most amazing thing is that so much works, and only because of this extraordinarily varied army of those who come uncalled, unordered, inner-prompted, who come knowing what they are responsible for, not asking 'Where can I help?' but 'I'm ready to be at the heart of a team.' So we again express our thanks, to India, to Africa, to Australia and New Zealand, as well as all our European friends for whom this sometimes seems more normally abnormal.

On Saturday, as participants arrived, and preparations went on, we had a special lunch party in the big dining room. My wife Eliane had lied, and said that she was celebrating her birthday, in order to get the principal guest there, unsuspecting. We celebrated Lucie Perrenoud's 80th birthday with her MRA family, with some of those who were with her at the start of Caux. And it worked, she didn't suspect a thing (what humility!). Two young old friends from Spain had made the journey. The special table under the mural was laid with place mats, cutlery, plates and glasses from Mountain House's forerunner, the Caux Palace Hotel.

René Thonney, now retired after most of a lifetime working on the finances of Caux, pulled out of his pocket his diary for 1946, and with the magnifying glass read his entry for Saturday 1st June, the first group of some 34 who came to take possession of the house and start cleaning it for the first conference that was to open six weeks later. It was cold and cloudy, depressing. They danced a jig in the entrance hall to warm themselves up, and give themselves the courage to start!

Christoph Spreng, one of those responsible for this first, European, session, at the last planning meeting before the start, likened the house to a plane accelerating down the runway, with the odd bump and shake and rattle. Well, now we're in the air. The house is not yet over-crowded with people - we're just 200 - but it is brimming with lovely flower arrangements; this is a vintage year for the roses. The meeting hall is dominated by a vast scroll-style map of our European continent, complete with a sun, a galleon and a sea-serpent. The enclosed press story will give you some idea of the opening meeting. A great day.

'Europe in the making' is an important theme, and our non-European friends have helped us to look realistically at where we are. 'The Economist' of this week has a special survey of the European Community, entitled 'A rude awakening'. It says, 'While European leaders dreamt, the world around them changed. They should wake up to the need for a rethink.' Well, we are trying. After yesterday's lunch here, Ambassadors Ennaceur from Tunisia and Mendoza from El Salvador, gave us an evaluation of the recent United Nations Human Rights Conference that both had attended in Vienna. A sombre picture of human suffering - and some efforts to do something about it. It is clear that there is much in this continent to heal. I found myself at lunch with a quiet, youngish man from Kosovo, up for the day from Geneva. When asked about his own history, he spoke of being arrested days before his final exams at university, followed by seven and a half years in prison, before escape and exile.

Please keep us in your thoughts and prayers, that through all the hard work something of God's healing grace may touch such hearts, each one of us, that His spirit will lead and protect, that this summer will be used, we may be instruments of His peace.

With expectant greetings from Caux,

Andrew Stallybrass