

## WORLD BULLETIN No 3, March, 1993

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### CONFERENCE ON THE MOVE: A LATIN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

A group from 15 countries arrived in Montevideo on 21 February and moved on to Buenos Aires a week later. They were taking part in the Argentinian and Uruguayan stages of a conference called 'Change - to build bridges, new lives, relationships between nations'. It was organised by MRA teams in Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina.

In Buenos Aires three public meetings were co-chaired by Nora Saraco (24), Alejandra Cimato (26) and Marta Castelli (23). Over 100 people attended each meeting, and were visibly moved, particularly at the consecutive contributions of Horacio Benitez, a veteran from the Malvinas war, and Tom Jones, an Englishman who had visited Argentina after the conflict. A half-page article about the conference appeared in the *Buenos Aires Herald* (the English daily); and the German newspaper also carried a story. The challenge now is to keep up the contacts and to go deep into the Argentinian spirit.

Earlier in February, 150 people crowded into the MRA Petrópolis Centre for a meeting led by Mércio de Souza, who comes from a favela where the wooden shacks have been transformed into decent brick homes. The gathering brought together elected leaders of Rio's favela communities, taxi cooperatives and unions, with businessmen and politicians.

Paulo Manoel Protásio, President of the Commercial Association of Rio de Janeiro State and one of Brazil's foremost employers, addressed the meeting. 'To develop our country we must bring together the opposites of society - as has been done here,' he said.

Luis & Evelyn Puig, Daniely Assis, Marta Castelli

### VISIT TO BELGRADE

Bill Porter and I visited Belgrade recently at the suggestion of the Djilas family, who want Serbs to experience Caux. They helped greatly, as did the relatives of Bill's late wife Sonja, who came from Yugoslavia.

The mood in Belgrade is reminiscent of Rhodesia under Ian Smith: defensive, nationalistic and convinced that there is a conspiracy against Serbia, especially in the Western media. Yet everywhere we were received with friendship, meeting about 70 people - editors, academics, politicians (both for and against the Government), businessmen and bankers. There are good prospects that six or seven may get to Caux, provided the obstacle of sanctions and run-away inflation (200% in February alone) can be overcome. The greatest help we can give at this stage may be to help them out of their isolation.

Archie Mackenzie

### WHEELING INTO LVOV

After meeting the disabled people at the MRA conference in Lvov last year, we decided to raise support for such people. Thanks to the help of our Polish friends, a first load of nine wheelchairs and other equipment arrived in Lvov this month. It was delivered by our son Jan-Willem, together with Wanda Tarnawska, Marzena Kecik, and Mike and Karyn Lowe. We plan another delivery in May/June.

Kees and Marina Scheijgrond

### COLOMBIAN INITIATIVES

In Colombia, war is being waged against the Medellin drug cartel. A new constitution has empowered a special prosecutor to tackle corruption. A former mayor and 13 councillors of Bogota are in prison. Everybody discusses moral values.

During our visit there we took part in two MRA conferences. At the first, on 'values in the state and nation', a panel of two presidential candidates and four ex-cabinet ministers answered questions from an audience of 40. The second was a day-long conference on family values, attended by 70 people.

Peter and Digna Hintzen

### CAMBODIAN SEMINAR UPDATE

Alain Tate and David Channer are in Phnom Penh, preparing for this month's MRA seminar. Mr Yasushi Akashi, the head of UNTAC, writes: 'I am very much encouraged with the objective and approach in the programme of the seminar, which seems to be timely and pertinent to today's Cambodia. Advocating a non-violent approach in the peace process is particularly important at this juncture. It would be a great benefit for Cambodian people to share the precious and valuable experience your organisation and spiritual leadership has achieved so far all over the world, to bring about peace and reconciliation among the people in war devastated areas.'

World Vision International has contributed \$5,000 towards the costs of the seminar. Other generous donations have included \$5,000 from MRA in the USA. May we ask your prayers for the rest of the expenses, and for the whole venture?

Yukihisa Fujita

### EXPRESSIONS OF CALLING

In April 1991, after almost five years of research work, I wrote a letter to the Secretary of the Oxford Group setting out what I sense is my calling. I said I hoped it would prove possible to interweave periods of full-time work with periods of research relevant to agriculture in tropical countries - and that the one could enhance the other. I then joined the 'MRA Productions' and *For A Change* programmes, which I greatly enjoyed.

I conclude that two elements may be important for any full-time worker: (a) a programme which gives your life a minimum amount of structure, and an obvious direction; (b) a group of people with whom you have a natural affinity outside the MRA circle, and to whom you can offer friendship.

I see (b) - personal work - as the heart of MRA, and define it simply as the offering of a quality of friendship which leads to spiritual growth, and so to healing and change. Applying (b) in a job may, for many individuals, be an essential preparation for full-time work.

I am grateful to have a calling which allows the alternation of full-time work with spells of activity that take me into another domain of operation. It makes it possible to bring individuals, and also fresh perspectives, from one scene to the other. I believe it is a valid, complementary and hopefully viable alternative to a totally full-time or totally job-oriented calling.

Alan Channer

### 'A NEW CONSCIOUSNESS'

One of Australia's best-known provocative church ministers has just visited Canberra at the invitation of MRA. John Smith came to Caux last year, and it gave him 'a whole new consciousness of many issues', he says. TV, radio and the press carried news of his visit to Canberra, and 400 people came to hear him speak at two different occasions.

John Bond

#### SLOVAK DOCTORS

When we talked in Caux last summer with Dr Joseph Glasa from Slovakia, we began to see that we in the West can help Eastern Europe achieve stable development by getting to know our counterparts in those countries, and working with those who are concerned about ethical issues.

Dr Glasa is active in establishing medical ethics courses in Slovakia. We invited him and his colleague, Dr Miroslav Mikolasik, to Britain for two weeks last month. At receptions and meetings in Glasgow, Edinburgh, St Andrews, London and Birmingham, they talked with people senior in medicine, diplomacy, and academia, and others from MRA. As one result, the Director of a respected medical ethics centre and two senior colleagues will speak at an international course on medical ethics in Bratislava. A full report is available on request.

Sheila & Eric Andren

#### FOR A CHANGE - THE NEXT FIVE YEARS?

It will soon be six years since *For A Change* began. It has been a major means of outreach for MRA in many parts of the English-speaking world. However, subscriptions have remained static at around 4,700 copies, of which 1,700 are paid for by the recipients, and the rest sponsored by individuals and MRA bodies. In spite of initiatives to raise the subscription level, no progress has been made. But thanks to generous gifts, *FAC* more or less broke even financially last year.

In late April a group will meet near London to look at the magazine's future. We believe we should take a five-year view. The options are (a) to continue as at present, (b) to cease publication, or (c) to change formula, format, frequency and/or size. We would welcome everyone's thought, so that we can make decisions based on the widest consultation possible. Please could you write to me by Easter (69 Victoria Road, Oxford OX2 7QG). A discussion document is available.

Edward Peters

#### EDITORS IDENTIFY NEEDS

Eight editors of the MRA periodicals *Caux Information*, *Changer*, *For A Change* and *Nieuw Wereld Nieuws* spent a day together in the new MRA office in Boulogne near Paris in March. After an exchange on aims, editorial philosophies, financing, distribution and promotion of our respective magazines, we addressed some immediate questions: our need to co-operate better internationally in collecting and editing material, to cover the Caux conferences better, and to find someone (voluntary or paid) to do the most necessary photo lab work during the summer in Caux. We hope we can find solutions before this year's conferences.

Philippe Lasserre

#### A NOTE FROM THE *WORLD BULLETIN* EDITORS

The *World Bulletin* serves a far-flung fellowship; and those who value it most are those who are most isolated. Each month we try to produce four pages of news, ideas and thought-provoking questions, and thereby help build a sense of common heart and direction. When you have something you think might interest others, please do jot it down and let us have it. These pages can only hazily reflect the myriad shafts of light which emerge from this diamond which we call MRA; but the more we capture, the more will we find a comradeship across the world, and the hope and courage that springs therefrom.

## FACTS ON FAXES, PHONES AND ADDRESSES

France: The MRA home and the MRA office in the Paris area are now located at the same address: 22, avenue Robert Schuman, 92100 BOULOGNE-BILLANCOURT, FRANCE. Tel(office): +33 1 41 10 40 50. Fax: +33 1 41 10 80 67.

Tel(home): +33 1 41 10 40 55 (not 41 10 40 60 as wrongly announced to many of you by fax on March 3). Please do not use either the old address or phone number of the MRA Office.

India: Asia Plateau now has a fax: +91 2168 40004.

Brazil: The Vogels' address is now: Anexo IV, Gabinete 327, Congresso Federal, 70160-900 Brasilia, DF, Brazil. Phone: +55 61 318 5327. Fax: +55 61 318 2347.

*The deadline for the next Bulletin is Thursday, April 15, 1993.*

John Bond  
38 Wisdom Street  
Hughes ACT 2605  
Australia  
Tel: +61 6 281 0940

Andrew Lancaster  
10 Dooley Place  
Curtin ACT 2605  
Australia  
Tel: +61 6 281 2107

Fax: +61 6 285 3616

Those named below have been asked to distribute this in their area: Asia: South - C Iralu; Malaysia - Tan; Philippines - Cardel; Japan, Rest - Fujita; Australia - A Lancaster; Pacific - Annette Porteous; Africa: East - Patel; South - Horn; Zimbabwe - Sibare; Nigeria, Rest - I Amata; N.America: Canada- Weeks; USA - Ruffin; Latin America: Brazil, Rest - Puig/Vogel; Caribbean - Edwards; Europe: France - Lasserre; Germany - Spoerri/Bräckle; Denmark - Jorgensen; Finland - Koponen; Norway - Eskeland; Sweden -Söderlund; Switzerland - Mottu; UK - C Evans; Netherlands, Rest - J de Pous; Middle East - Grandy