

THREE M.P.s AND THE ORGANISING SECRETARY
OF THE MINE WORKERS' UNION ARE
REPRESENTING SOUTH AFRICA AT
THE CAUX CONFERENCE OF
MORAL REARMAMENT.

Preaching brotherly love on a Swiss mountain

CLEARLY THE BUCHMANITES believe in the influence of outward beauty upon inward man. I reflected, looking upwards from the deck of the Swiss lake steamer. Here they were perched 3,500ft. high at the lovely end of Lake Geneva.

Five years ago the Buchmanites were taking their first steps back from severe wartime blight, due mainly to dexterity displayed in avoiding service with the armed forces, and to their founder having, in 1936, thanked heaven "for a man like Adolf Hitler."

By the spring of 1946 the resort of Caux had been acquired for a very small sum; a collection of "luxury" hotels and chalets footed by a wall which lends something of the aspect of a fastness to the whole.

A world assembly of over 4,000 people was able to convene at Caux in the summer of 1946.

The fifth annual "conference" is in session there now. Men and women of all ages, hues, callings and conditions journey to Caux in large or small groups to receive instruction in discipleship. They themselves are understood to have already "changed" through a pursuit of absolute honesty, purity, unselfishness and love.

Baring their sins

WALKING up to Caux, hot but satisfying—why waste nearly five Swiss francs on the funicular?—I had but an outline of what to expect, and it kept colliding with those sharing sessions which gave a sticky send-off to the movement in the '20s, when parties would collect at English country houses and bare their (perhaps excessively sexual) sins, repressions and omissions.

The steep, shaded ascent zig-zagged through fashionable half-way Gllion, and fine cars whizzed by each time I crossed and re-crossed the main road. Were their occupants Groupers? Must be. But the first for certain were young Scandinavians who stopped and were zestfully "come hither" as I picnicked in the almost nude just below Caux, where there is a fine spread of tennis courts.

At Mountain House, former "palace" hotel, I was conducted with great friendliness to Press quarters twice as large as those I was presently to see at the Strasbourg European Assembly. There was a warmth and gladness abroad that did not appear to be strained after. People sat around in the corridors, reading, writing, chatting.

That night the two-hour musical show "The Good Road" (late of the Westminster Theatre), would be given. It has been described as a "skilfully compounded propaganda for 'God-control' from such various elements as Swiss yodellers, Joan of Arc, Lincoln, Washington, the Magna Carta, a G.I. on Okinawa, and an average family."

All barriers down

UP at Caux you soon notice the absence of that worldly trio: make-up, smoking and bars.

The whole setting might be considered too magnificent by some people, for practice of those four principles claimed to have been taken from the Imitation of Christ; on the other hand, "Caux" proceeds on an entirely classless, servantless basis.

Directly on arrival you are tactfully guided whither your services will be most welcome. It may be in the kitchen or the dining-room, making beds or washing up, sweeping and polishing or at reception and the switchboard.

Never mind whether one is Princess This or Congressman That, docker from London or Italian intellectual; all barriers are down.

I was bidden to see the kitchens where the cooks of 10 nations were that day hoping to satisfy interiors as divergent as Chinese and Yorkshire. And meals are served by women in national costumes.

Mr. Paul Hoffman has called this movement "the ideological

by
**Ferdinand
Tuohy**

counterpart of the Marshall Plan." O.K.—who pays for it? Admiring the properties of Mountain House as I was led around by a Fleet Streeter doing his bit as publicity man, I learned that if duly booked-in guests could not pay non-profit-making Caux rates bigger purses saw to it in an anonymous group manner. But with regard to wider finances—such as who paid for bringing 72 Japanese across the world—one encounters hesitation and for a moment the frank Buchmanite eyes leave yours.

When I asked who was likely to succeed Dr. Buchman, who had lately entered his 73rd year, I was told "No one." A group, a mind shared, would carry on his work. Yet somehow that did not register, so very much in Buchmanism being Buchman the leader. Again and again his own people were at pains to impress what a fine character he was, "Something pretty big in the old man, you know!"

Buchman

THERE must be something pretty astute, Frank Nathan Daniel Buchman has come a long, slippery way since being born into a Pennsylvania Dutch family (Caux hand-outs give it as Swiss). Lutheran minister in 1902, he passed to boys' welfare and Y.M.C.A. work in his home state; never married; founded the "First Century Christian Fellowship" of "changed souls" during or directly after the Kaiser's war.

He alighted on Cambridge, England; then, after collecting a handful of adherents there, moved over to Oxford, where the first 44 Buchmanites formed themselves into a group in late 1921.

Their subsequent exploitation of the telling title "The Oxford Group" was acutely criticised. The real Oxford movement took place under the leadership of John Henry (later Cardinal) Newman, John Keble and Edward Pusey, and I need a lot more convincing that Dr. Buchman's transference to Oxford was nothing more than a casual move in evangelism.

Schuman plan

THREE Catholic priests were there, and ex-Communists from the Ruhr had but lately left.

The "Oxford Group" title is being allowed to die out, to be replaced by "Moral Rearmament." M.R.A. lately became an active reality in world politics by contributing to the Franco-German rapprochement and thereby indirectly to the Schuman Plan.

So much is an established fact, and it was consecrated by France bestowing the Legion of Honour on Dr. Buchman, appropriately enough, while he was addressing miners in the Ruhr. Buchmanism was strong in Germany before Hitler's war and Germans are now almost as numerous at Caux as British and Americans.

Great hopes are placed in M. Schuman's having written so fervent an introduction to Dr. Buchman's birthday book, which adherence will, it is hoped, in time cause the Pope to come back on his February decision not to receive Dr. Buchman.

In the front of all Caux minds is the thought that the counter-ideology to Communism has been found, the link bringing employers and employed, colour, creed and nationality together.

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