

REARMEMENT MORAL · CAUX

Centre de Rencontres Internationales

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TÉLÉGRAMME CAUXVAUD

MOUNTAIN HOUSE
RUE DU PANORAMA
CH-1824 CAUX

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

Monday, 28th August 1989

Dear Friends,

So we've come to the end of the final chapter of this year's instalment in the continuing story of Caux. The house is emptying fast. The closing meeting was yesterday morning. When daylight comes and the clouds clear, we'll see fresh snow on the Dents du Midi, and probably on the Rochers de Naye too. Autumn is rushing on, and friends are rushing off: the season of farewells! But this week has been anything but an anti-climax.

It started with the final meeting of the industrial session, and a senior African, who has been Cabinet Secretary in his country and served the UN in a senior job for 12 years. A large man, he simply said that he had been stabbed in the back by another African, an Arab, and he'd developed a hatred proportional to his size. 'I was consumed with anger and hatred,' he said. 'But if you hate, you carry a heavy burden. I leave the hatred now to those who want to continue to hate; I want to shed this burden. I don't know if it will reduce my weight, but if it does, I'll be very happy.' He apologised for his hatred towards Arabs, and met afterwards with students from Jordan, ending with them in a time of quiet and prayer.

He was followed by a Swedish industrialist, here for the first time, seventeen years after first being invited. 'It's taken me a long time to get here,' he confessed, 'but it has been a memorable and important experience.' He proposed a gathering of the countries around the Baltic, on the theme of care for the creation. Money spent by Sweden on cleaning up the environment in Poland and East Germany would be more effective per dollar than fine tuning at home, he said.

There has also been progress on ideas for next summer in Caux, and we'd like to promise you an invitation for next summer's conferences before Christmas. We dream of having the invitation for 1991 ready by the end of the summer of 1990. Then we should be coming up to average!

Many of us celebrated with Clara Jaeger on her 80th birthday - she was serenaded by a chorus of children, and then later in the dining room by the entire cook shift. Said Bill, 'I'd only add this: the important thing in life is to marry the right person. And Click is the best wife in the world, bar none.'

In two full meetings, we tried to evaluate this summer, and the different continuing strands of God's work that have been weaving through it. We spoke of bridge-building between Europe

and the Arab world. A Jordanian student said, 'We have felt at home here, with our family. Moral standards put you on the right way. They are the first step to being with God, and they clean you to accept Him as your guide.' He had decided, he said, to end his selfishness at home, which meant an end to excuses for not helping his brothers and parents. A fellow student added that for him, the greatest discovery here had been the time of quiet. 'I feel something's changed inside me,' he added.

We heard about the cities initiatives, and the planned conference in Caux next year; the Koreans and the Burmese; the senior industrialists (who got beyond sharing the sins of the other nations to real dialogue); the Poles (and plans for a seminar in their country); 13 visitors from the Soviet Union, including four diplomats, three of whom brought their wives, and the fourth his parents; the Lebanese and others from Cyprus, Greece and Turkey; the youth, and plans for sessions next summer. We heard too of the continuing work of our friends in Paris, around the Cambodian peace conference - a case study in MRA's approach to a problem through change in people, and healing divisions.

We experienced another of the great magic moments of the summer in an afternoon session with a young Israeli couple from the religious peace movement. She is well known in Israel for having searched out the Palestinian family who had been driven out of the home that her parents were given when they arrived in Israel, and having offered to return 'her home' to its original owners. The son of the Palestinian family has been expelled to Lebanon, as a leader of the Intifada, and now works with the PLO.

They spoke with heart-opening honesty and simplicity. He spoke of the selectivity, with each side clinging to its own view of justice and injustice, each saying 'We will get back what was taken away from us, whether it was 2,000 or 42 years ago. 'There is no space on the map for the others' identity because there is no space here,' he said, pointing to his heart. Their small son is called Raphael - God heals. Raphael tottered around the audience while his parents spoke, clinging for a while to the knees of a young Muslim before staggering on. The wife asked, 'How do you break the cycle of hate and revenge? How do you transform suffering? This is the central religious question.'

Then this last weekend has had a Swiss accent, with friends coming in, and the many Swiss in the house coming out of their hidden work places to meet all together. I was surprised to come late to a meeting and discover some 70 already there. With all the others attending the conference, they helped to welcome the many outsiders who came for the second open day on Saturday - 280 visitors had guided tours of the house or followed the clear system of arrows, saw films and videos, bought books, chatted and asked questions. Clearly an experience to be repeated. But with three friends, I abandoned my wife at 4 a.m., and realised a long-cherished dream of climbing the Dents du Midi. We viewed the open day from there!

Yours ever,

Andrew Stallybrass