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## BLOEMFONTEIN CONFERENCE

The conference on 'Healing the Past; Building the Future' in Bloemfontein brought people from 24 countries to South Africa this month. Four were interviewed on national TV, and there have been numerous radio interviews and press articles. Walter Sisulu, the ANC's elder statesman, received a group of eight led by Sam Pono.

In Soweto, Walter Kenney, ex-Mayor of Richmond, and other participants addressed a Palm Sunday rally of 2,000 people. Meanwhile Jara Moserová's play, *Letter to Wollongong*, was performed in Pietersburg, Pretoria, Cape Town and Bloemfontein. The play deals with Czech attempts to come to terms with its past – as South Africa is attempting to do through its Truth and Reconciliation Committee headed by Archbishop Tutu.

The conference drew people from across South Africa. It opened with a stirring speech by the Premier of the Free State, Patrick 'Terror' Lekota.

The Bloemfontein media gave extensive coverage and many Bloemfontein citizens – particularly students – attended. Among a number of noteworthy speeches was a call by Sir Howard Cooke, Governor-General of Jamaica, that MRA take on wholeheartedly its 'God-given calling to train leaders... Too often we are diffident. Some of our political and business leaders are dying for someone to sit and talk with. We must free ourselves of fear and reach out to them.'

Rev Motlalepula Chabaku, Speaker of the Free State Parliament, summed up the weekend with a tribute to the men and women of all races who have battled through the years to take MRA to South Africa. 'The illustrious way they lived helped us to be where we are. The joy of this weekend gives me every hope that we will not just grow but mushroom, because the seeds that have been planted have been very good.'

A conference report, an audio-cassette, and a 30-minute video by TV producer Jan Horn, will be available shortly and can be ordered from MRA South Africa for US\$25 including postage anywhere in the world.

**John Bond**

## JAEGERS IN GENEVA

Bill and Clara Jaeger, accompanied by Campbell Leggat, have just spent a week in Geneva, during the meetings of the Governing Body of the International Labour Organisation, meeting old friends, and launching Clara's biography of her husband. Two tea-receptions in the Mottus' home brought together some 30 friends, old and new. A Chinese government representative brought the greetings of the Chinese Minister of Labour who had been on the phone from Beijing that morning. Peter Sutcliffe, just retired from the press office of the ILO, and a friend of many years, spoke at the first occasion. Sutcliffe expressed admiration for Clara Jaeger's courage: 'Bill moves fast on his feet; he is a moving target!'. He applauded 'this extraordinary life of an apparently ordinary man' who had made 'a contribution towards the social progress of our age'. He commented on the 'marvellous partnership of Philadelphia Quaker and Lancashire Baptist'; their lives represented 'a sweep of modern social history'. He ended by quoting Churchill's words: 'like the Mississippi, let them roll on!'

**Andrew Stallybrass**

## MOSCOW SPRING

A highlight of our recent two-week visit to Moscow was being at a meeting of 17 'Caux alumni' called by political scientist Dr Sergei Chugrov. Amongst those present were academics, journalists, religious educators, a Protestant lay leader and an Orthodox priest. The meeting was opened by a thought-provoking statement by the elder of the group, Professor Grigori Pomerants. And one of the main items on the agenda was to discuss the practicalities of publishing a book on MRA in Russian. It was decided to go ahead as soon as \$3,500 still needed for production costs are raised.

Along with Professor Pomerants we were interviewed for a TV programme which is being prepared on MRA and due to be broadcast in early May. We also took part with him in a discussion on inter-religious dialogue which was recorded for national radio.

We felt this visit consolidated friendships which have been developing over the past six years. This was against the backdrop of increasing tension in

the country as the June presidential elections approach bringing political uncertainty. We saw two friends who were re-elected to the Duma last December, one a rising star in the Yabloko party. We also saw two friends who were not re-elected – both scientists with a continuing concern for the country.

A group of 11 will be coming from Moscow to Caux for the first half of July, with a few more in August. Philip Boobbyer followed us into Moscow, while further visits are planned by other friends in May.

*Bryan Hamlin Leif Hovelsen*

#### **FINDING A BETTER WAY IN SOUTH AMERICA**

**COLOMBIA:** The growing group that has formed though our annual visits over 31 years is like a family to us. In this nation, where the drug trade has subverted all political credibility, concern about decaying values is universal. So we were made to work hard. In just over three weeks we had 14 major speaking engagements in Bogotá, Medellín, Palmira and Cali, plus countless smaller occasions. In Cali a group of employers had adopted the Caux Round Table Code of Ethics. They asked us about Caux and the Round Table. In Medellín we were invited to address an audience which included victims of the violence of the Wild West-like Uraba region, all expenses paid. In Bogotá the prestigious Centre of Colombian Studies asked us to speak about Moral Power and International Reconciliation. The positive response surprised our sponsors.

**COSTA RICA:** Eliézer Cifuentes, a refugee from Guatemala in Costa Rica (see p.27 of Caux Pictorial), and his wife Clemencia organised an Easter conference. The generosity of this couple who have so little is remarkable. They housed six from Nicaragua and had the 20-30 participants for lunch every day without charging anything – each time there was more than enough. They had raised money cooking 'tamales' which they sold at Eliézer's office. Most impressive was the witness of change of the seven young women, students and professionals, who had come 13 hours by bus in steaming heat from Managua. They represent a larger team which grew from the change in Clemencia's twin sister, a veteran communist and atheist, transformed through the care of her sister and brother-in-law. The young women, all from poor backgrounds, shared how the four standards had helped them let go of deep hatreds (resulting from wife beating and tyrannical fathers) and to get their lives in order. They are now involved in many types of community service. Said one of them, 'Through listening to God we have found a better way.'

**EL SALVADOR:** After 12 years of brutal civil war El Salvador is a convalescing patient. The needs are many. Eduardo Molina, arranged a meeting with his MRA group of about 25 which he describes as a 'group of friends, not a team'. At this meeting people said that what each one has in his heart with

God is more important than big projects. Yet people in this group do fantastic things, such as Christian-based care for prison inmates; working towards a code of ethics within the legal profession which is – they say – after the military, most responsible for the war; and fighting that an ecologically crucial zone is not sacrificed for the extension of the capital.

*Peter and Digna Hintzen*

#### **COMMUNICATIONS FORUM IN HUNGARY**

The latest session of the International Communications Forum took place in a Jesuit conference centre in the hills above Budapest, from 29 March to 1 April. There was a significant representation from ex-communist bloc countries – Albania, Poland, Lithuania, Slovakia, Serbia and of course Hungary – as well as Britain, France, United States and Canada. Issues discussed included the relations of the state and the media, ownership problems, techniques of accountability and quality control, and violence on the screen. Perhaps most important was the general agreement that the integrity of the individual in the media is the sine-qua-non of progress; and this integrity was defined in terms of honesty, courage, balance and humility. A well-known French journalist suggested that screen violence may be not so much the cause of social decay as a sign of social decay, requiring a deeper self-honesty by each one of us about how we actually live. The next initiative of the ICF will be a World Media Forum at Caux, 23-28 July.

*Archie Mackenzie*

#### **MRA HISTORY ON DUTCH NATIONAL TV**

On three consecutive Sundays in March, one of our national broadcasting corporations, VPRO, transmitted a half hour radio programme on the history of the Oxford Group and MRA in Holland. The first programme dealt with the pre-war period, highlighting the Whitsun meetings at the Utrecht Vegetable Hall which were attended by some 100,000 people. The programme included newspaper items from that time, interviews with all kinds of people who were present in 1937, and a recording from the radio archives of Queen Wilhelmina calling the Dutch nation to moral re-armament. The VPRO weekly carried a two-page article by historian Jeroen van der Kris about that period, along with photos. The other programmes covered the efforts to build bridges with Germany and Indonesia. They referred to the apologies of the then senator Dirk de Loor, Mayor of Delft, at the Baguio conference in the fifties; to the Cold War period, the role of Caux and its 50th celebration, as well as to recent initiatives including Hope in the Cities and the Caux Round Table.

*Aad Burger Johannes de Pous*

## MUCH NEEDED AID

In the last week of March a large convoy took ten truckloads of humanitarian aid from The Netherlands to Poland and Ukraine. This yearly enterprise is carried out by several organizations and institutions in our country, of which MRA is one. Apart from collecting aid, our main contribution is in finding proper destinations and reliable ways of distributing the goods. This is possible only because of the indispensable involvement of Wanda Tarnawska in Poland and Jaroslaw Grybalskiy, Svetlana Bednazh, Andriy Vovkanych and others in Lviv. Through them the goods went to places such as the Dzerelo children's Rehabilitation Centre, the Ukrainian Foundation 'Reabilitatia Invalidiv' and the new trauma treatment centre in a Lviv hospital. It is encouraging to experience this growing network of positive and well-motivated people cooperating effectively. And it is inspiring to be part of the friendships and initiatives that originate in this network.

**Tony Roodvoets   Kees Scheijgrond**

## IMPACT ON BRITAIN

I have recently travelled around the country with Dr Yusuf Al-Azhari, former Somali Ambassador to the USA. His father-in-law, who was Head of State, was assassinated following a military coup in 1969. Dr Al-Azhari was imprisoned in solitary confinement for six years. He describes vividly how God came in during a time of spiritual struggle and took away his despair and hatred. After being released from prison he sought out the man responsible for his suffering, the Marxist General Siad Barre, and forgave him. This had a profound impact on both men. I invited him here to tell of his experiences and present efforts to bring reconciliation to a country torn by civil war. He has spoken to Members of Parliament, overseas aid officials, relief and development agencies, media representatives, Moslem leaders, the large Somali community and senior students in 25 high schools. Everywhere people have been deeply challenged by a faith in God that is transparently real. This may not be religious education in an academic sense but we all know that much needed spiritual qualities such as love and forgiveness are caught rather than taught. I am grateful to be able to work with people like Dr Al-Azhari to heighten people's moral and spiritual awareness. In the process I have been educated about the Muslim faith while being strengthened as a Christian through understanding more about God's forgiveness.

**Howard Grace**

## THE SERENE LIFE

This new video-film for Cambodia was given its title by Cambodian friends when David and Alan Channer visited Phnom Penh in March. It features the message and example of Venerable Maha

Ghosananda, International Patriarch of Cambodia, who has been nominated for this year's Nobel Peace Prize by the American Quakers and who is a member of the Caux 1996 invitation committee. It will be launched in Phnom Penh on May 9. Initial support towards the cost of making the film has been provided by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and Oxfam.

For many years now, MRA's work for Cambodia has involved close collaboration between friends in France, Japan, Australia, the USA, Malaysia and UK. On April 30, we will be joined in Phnom Penh by Juliet Brown (UK) and Andrew Lancaster (Australia) for the première of the film and to invite people to Caux.

**Alain Tate   David and Alan Channer**

## SPINNING THE SILVER THREAD

Last summer in Caux, the musical production *The Silver Thread* was born. It was clear by the reactions of people that it had touched them a great deal. 'We must get hold of the Silver Thread (of our lives) and follow it.'

We aim to produce *The Silver Thread* Mark II this year at the end of July. A production team is hard at work in Britain, Sweden and the US. In order to make this possible, and to give a maximum contribution to the Jubilee summer, we specifically need help in two areas. One is finance for some travel and part of the stay for some participants. The other is for good musicians and singers. Anyone interested can contact Gunnar at Djurgardsvägen 220, 115 21 Stockholm, Fax +46 8 662 7474, Tel +46 8 667 0281.

**Kathleen Dodds   Gunnar Söderlund**

## A PIONEER REMEMBERED

As we celebrate 50 years of Caux, we may also remember that on May 22, 1946, shortly before Caux opened, Ronald Fangen was killed in a plane crash. That in his native Norway he is still regarded as a man of stature can be gauged from the fact that two books have just been published in Oslo – a selection of his essays on spiritual, moral and political themes, and a volume of tributes from writers, priests and others. He is recalled as an outstanding personality, who experienced a 'Christian breakthrough' at an Oxford Group house-party in 1934; who expressed his new vision in the book *A Christian World Revolution*; and who helped to guide his fellow countrymen's thinking during the clash of ideologies before and during World War II. He was the first of a remarkable group of cultural and religious leaders in Scandinavia who embraced the message of the Oxford Group.

**Alwyn McKay**

## EDITORIAL TEAMWORK

This issue of the World Bulletin is the product of editorial teamwork on three different continents – Nada Bond and Margaret Lancaster in Canberra, John Bond in Pretoria, while I am in New York en route to the Caux 50th planning meeting in Paris – our joint efforts aided by e-mail, fax and a desire to defy the tyranny of distance!

*Andrew Lancaster*

## FACTS ON FAXES, PHONES AND ADDRESSES

**United Kingdom:** From June 11, Ailsa Hamilton's permanent address is 5 Buccleuch Mews, Melrose, Roxburghshire TD6 9LD, Scotland (same phone/fax +44 1896 823546).

**Finland:** Jorma Koponen's phone/fax number has changed slightly: +358 0 27 56 024.

**United States:** Rob and Susan Corcoran have a new home phone number: +1 804 358 6756. The office number for Richmond MRA/Hope in the Cities remains: +1 804 358 1764 as does the fax number: +1 804 358 1769.

# Calendar of Events

APRIL '96	<u>Paris (Boulogne)</u>	Caux '96 Council and preparation meeting	Apr 20 - 24
MAY '96	<u>West Ukraine</u>	Seminar - Creation of a new ethical basis for political life in Ukraine	May 1 - 5
	<u>Phnom Penh Cambodia</u>	Launch of <i>The Serene Smile</i> at Konrad Adenauer Foundation HQ	May 9
	<u>Asia Plateau</u>	Families conference	May 15 - 18
	<u>Asia Plateau</u>	Youth camp	May 21 - 30
JUN '96	<u>Asia Plateau</u>	Creative Leadership	Jun 4 - 8
	<u>Caux</u>	50th Anniversary celebration	Jun 29 - Jul 3
JUL '96	<u>Caux</u>	Europe at the crossroads	Jul 3 - 6
	<u>Caux</u>	Forging the future - preparing for the 21st century	Jul 12 - 16
	<u>Caux</u>	Business and Industry focus and Communications Forum	Jul 23 - 28
AUG '96	<u>Caux</u>	Faith, moral values and our future	Aug 3 - 7
	<u>Caux</u>	An agenda for reconciliation	Aug 10 - 15
	<u>Caux</u>	Farmers' Dialogue	Aug 18
	<u>Caux</u>	The creators of peace - a women's initiative	Aug 19 - 21
	<u>Caux</u>	Final weekend event	Aug 24 - 25
OCT '96	<u>Sydney Australia</u>	International Communications Forum	Oct 25 - 29
NOV '96	<u>Minnesota USA</u>	Farmers' Dialogue	Nov 14 - 17

*The deadline for the next Bulletin is Wednesday, May 15, 1996*

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