

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES FOR RECONCILIATION AND JUSTICE

Towards an Inclusive Society

When was the last time I felt excluded? When was the last time I excluded somebody else? Exclusion and inclusion affect everyone, but especially those who are disadvantaged because of historical and social injustices, issues of race, class, religion and culture. Such exclusion is often sustained consciously, sometimes unconsciously, by those of us who wish to maintain power, privilege and our own self-interest. It is reinforced by attitudes of superiority and the stereotyping of people, more obvious to those

who suffer the consequences than to those who benefit. In particular, those who have not felt or understood the pain of exclusion want to move on quickly. The challenge is how to move on beyond denial and blame – to heal the past and build a future where all can fulfil their potential.

Cities around the world

These realities underlined the importance of the theme of the conference this summer which was arranged jointly by *Hope in the Cities*

that apologising is an act of greatness which helps the home atmosphere. I resolved this year to keep in contact with the people I promised to be in touch with. May God help me keep my promise.

Jamila Sajid

SPORT FOR ALL

This year the World Cup, the Commonwealth Games and other sporting events have dominated every area of national life. I decided to find out how the athletes could achieve such high standards of excellence. Much to my surprise I found that they have personal trainers who direct every area of their lives – from what they eat to the amount of sleep they have and how they use their time and energy.

It seemed to me that if I am to accept fully *Initiatives of Change* in my life I also need a personal spiritual trainer. My trainer is the God who made me and as long as I am ready and listening He directs my thoughts and actions. In order to remember His instructions I write them down and carry them out to the best of my ability.

Now, at 85 years old, the thoughts that come to me in silence make every day an adventure and every difficulty an opportunity.

Margaret Brown

NEW VIDEO

Breaking the Chain of Hate, a 17- minute video, shows the visit to the UK in April 2002 of Lebanese former militiamen.

They are seen in London and speaking to students at the Department of Peace Studies, Bradford University. (See May issue of Newsletter)

The video was made by a volunteer team, which included a Lebanese media professional. It is available with accompanying booklet for £14.50 including p&p and VAT. Cheques payable to FLTfilms, 24 Greencoat Place, London SW1P 1RD. Available at the national meeting or allow 28 days.

David Channer

FOR A CHANGE

A full account of the Caux conferences will be published in the October/November issue of *For A Change*, out on September 19, including features on Connecting Communities, Caux Conference for Business and Industry, Road to Renewal, Agenda for Reconciliation, and other surprises.

Greencoat Forums

Tuesday, September 17:

Geoffrey Lean, Environment Editor, *The Independent on Sunday* and Krish Raval, Chief Executive, *Learn to Lead*, will speak on **Outcomes of the Earth Summit**.

Tuesday, October 8:

Faith in Diplomacy – An evening with Archie and Ruth Mackenzie

Both at 6.30 pm for light refreshments
Talks begin at 7.15pm.



The Nottingham delegation at Caux

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(*International*) and *The Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies* in the US. It brought together in 'honest conversation' people from cities around the world, who were prepared to listen, acknowledge, learn from one another and be accountable, in order to find a common way forward in a somewhat fragmented and fearful society today.

Bashy Quraishy, Chair of the European Network Against Racism (ENAR), said that he goes to many conferences, but found refreshing 'such an honest and inclusive spirit'.

Partnerships in Nottingham

This was reflected by the multi-racial delegation of 23 from Nottingham, among them the former leader of the council and an assistant Chief Executive, representatives of business, police, Home Office and a variety of community organisations. During the six days together they not only got to know each other better, but reinforced the work of building trust-based partnerships in the city. One described the experience as 'an atmosphere that promotes reflection and personal realisation that defies explanation'.

Valuable contributions were made by African-American and white civic leadership from several US cities. The city manager of Cincinnati, which is facing a difficult racial situation at present, has recently moved from the same job in Dayton, Ohio. There she worked closely with *Hope in the Cities* using its experience to engage the city

leadership in 'honest conversation' dialogues. She said it had made a significant contribution to better race relations in Dayton.

Shared values

There was also a conference on the integration of Muslim communities in Europe. The speakers were a City Councillor from the Netherlands, Mohamed Sini, who advises the Dutch Prime Minister, and a Commissioner from Mannheim, Germany, who has done pioneering work in this regard in his city. Both emphasised the need for 'integration on the basis of shared values'. Councillor Sini, who chairs a national organisation, *Islam and Civil Society*, spoke of 'the shock wave through Europe' caused by September 11. "The multi-cultural society as it was, was not strong enough to handle such a crisis. We must recognise each other as people. Muslims like anyone else are people who want to live in peace."

There were three workshops on *The West's response to asylum-seekers*. Taking part were refugees and asylum-seekers, professionals and those representing grassroots support groups from 17 countries. Nitin Shukla, who in his work with the Tynside Careers Service has helped coordinate work with asylum seekers, participated along with Newcastle City Councillor David Down. Shukla and others, pointed out the skills shortage in the UK and the need for economic migrants. On this subject, ENAR Chair, Quraishy,

healthy ways of producing food as part of caring for the moral and physical health of their country. They gave this message as part of their enthusiastic participation in the Caux session on *Human Security in Health and the Environment*.

Pat and Kristin Evans

PEACE-BUILDING INITIATIVES

Nothing had prepared me for what I found on my first visit to Caux - neither the beauty of the location, nor Mountain House itself nor, more importantly, the atmosphere of reconciliation, understanding and love which developed between strangers, enemies, fellow guests.

It was an amazingly rich gathering in search of peace and reconciliation between nations, tribes and individuals. But how to achieve this? We heard of attempts to put an end to wars, hatred and jealousies by force, to no avail. What to do? With God's help, courageous people in conflict situations came to realise that there are better ways than violence to achieve justice, to understand and appreciate other people and their points of view. The first and most important step in the peace process is to take time to pray, to listen to God, to search for divine inspiration and then to follow the directives leading to peace-building, no matter what the cost. At all times the need was stressed for fidelity to prayer as the only way to reconciliation and forgiveness.

There were several outstanding

moments: The Caux Lecture by Dr Aaron Lazare on *The Healing Power of Apology*; the talk by Anila, a young Pakistani-American, who spoke of her work with the people of Pakistan and Afghanistan. Both these talks were given standing ovations. Many were moved to tears.

At the closing session we shared in groups of four on the message we would take from Caux and the resolutions we had made as a result.

Sister Pauline Clarke

CAUX IS A SPECIAL PLACE FOR ME

It provides me with an opportunity to meet many people from different backgrounds of culture and religion and to learn from their experiences. I take from them the good work they are doing in their home towns. I have found hope to change myself for better service to God and people. I learned the language of hearts which does not need any words. Mountain House heals the wounds of past wrongs and helps others to become creators of peace. As a mother of five children I know that women play a great role in creating peace and harmony. I work in the flower team to beautify the house. It is a very creative community.

The most important lecture I heard was from an American professor, Dr Aaron Lazare, who spoke of the healing power of apology. He was humble and gave examples from his own family life which were very touching. I understood

JUBILEE PARTY

A Golden Jubilee garden party took place in Birmingham in July for families, post-graduates and citizens from China, Taiwan, Philippines, France, Pakistan, Bulgaria, Burma, Jamaica and Korea: 50 people from 15 nations. There was a wonderful spread of food from different countries on colourful tables. Children played together. The sun beamed down. As we mingled and talked it gave us all a further insight into the international community being built in Birmingham, a practical example of what the Queen had emphasised on her recent Jubilee visit.

The next day ten of us were invited to the Sikh Gurdwara in Handsworth. The visit was arranged by William and Margaret Ozanne, friends of the Chairman, Bhai Sahib Mohinder Singh. They are deeply involved in inter-faith action. The Gurdwara is a beautiful building overlooking Birmingham. Over lunch the Administrator, Mr Sewa Singh Mandla, gave us a history of the Sikh faith. He had known the work of IC/MRA in Kenya and was keen to renew his links.

In the kitchen volunteer Sikh ladies were rolling out hundreds of chipatis. Every week they provide 40,000 lunches as part of their care for the community. Their doors are always open and a welcome ready for all who come.

David and Gail Hind

THAI FARMERS VISIT TO UK

Thirteen agriculturalists from Thailand spent eight days in Herefordshire, staying in the homes of our neighbours and visiting farms and projects before flying on to Caux. They were organic farmers, a frozen food exporter and advisers to the Ministry of Agriculture on organic farming. They were led by Rosukhon Poompanvong, also an advisor. She has developed an enzyme made from the fermentation of farm or garden waste which has proved very effective for both fruit production and raising pigs and poultry.

On one of the six farms they visited, Angus Davison grows soft fruits and employs over 100 East European students every year. He is trying to produce strawberries organically and is about to give up because of a strawberry pest he can't get rid of. His agronomist called in one evening for a consultation and we now have large containers of highly explosive looking strawberry waste fermenting on our back doorstep, hopefully producing an enzyme that can deal with the bugs!

They also visited a research station, a horticultural college and a marketing enterprise. They exhaustively questioned each farmer on their motives for farming. At one place a surprised customer found himself being recorded on video as to why he bought organic food.

They are clear in their own commitment to finding effective and

called for "a humane approach... Europe has a tradition as a continent of humanity and openness. Let's keep it that way for coming generations." he said.

Gerald Henderson

PERSONAL JOURNEY BEGINS

It is not often that white people are forced to think about race but I remember being faced by a Ghanaian man at an exhibition of slavery in Bristol. A video was showing graphically the nightmare of the slave crossings of the Atlantic. He told me how terrible it was that Britain had been involved. My immediate reaction was to apologise for my ancestors' and country's part in this. It wasn't enough – I still felt guilty and he didn't seem happy with my apology. We both walked away from this fruitless meeting.

Politically correct apartheid

I think this experience is not an unusual one when white liberals are faced with dealing with issues around racism. We feel we want to do our best and acknowledge what has happened but we also tend to step back and let those who experience racism come forward and say their piece. Although it might seem important for white people to let black people have their say the way it works at the moment is not solving the problems of racism in Britain. We live in what you could almost call a politically correct

apartheid. Equal but separate. Black people deal with racism and white people let them get on with it because we feel we don't know enough to really have an opinion.

A different approach

Hope in the Cities has a different approach and this was illustrated in Caux this year. So, as always when I go to Caux, a personal journey begins. It is the first time I have sat down and talked with people in the black community from the UK and America about their experience of being black and how they are affected. It is difficult to understand how it feels when security guards follow you around stores, cashiers question whether your cheque is valid or taxi drivers don't stop for you. It seems it is the uncertainty of whether these incidents are racist or not that can lead to lower self-esteem and all the problems this can create.

How do I react to these things – with an apology, with anger or that it's simply 'their' problem? *Hope in the Cities* brings people together as equals and refuses to acknowledge victims and victimisers in discussions. This means no one makes judgements and we can each explore our own and each other's histories, backgrounds and attitudes. This in turn helps us to accept and understand each other and see others as human beings. This will always make racism more difficult.

Sandy Hore-Ruthven

BRITISH ARTISTS JOURNEY ON THE ROAD TO RENEWAL

A significant group of British artists were among the 250 people from every continent, including many younger people, who took part in the *Road to Renewal* conference at Caux, co-ordinated by Renewal Arts.

The conference was a week of profound and varied experiences from early morning until late at night, shot through with a tremendous sense of fun. The days started early with various meditations/reflections and continued through a choice of nine interactive workshops, main meetings, a choice of up to ten afternoon arts events, a main evening event, finishing with a late night film festival for those



Ahmed Moustafa with his giant installation *The Cube of Cubes*

who had the stamina!

Egyptian-born painter Ahmed Moustafa delivered the Caux Lecture. His theme was *Symbols and Treasures*. His giant installation *The Cube of Cubes*, recounting the 99 names of Allah, stood all week in the bay window of the Great Hall and attracted much attention and comment.

The Rt Rev Michael Marshall, Assistant Bishop of London, gave five early morning reflections on the theme of *Wonder*. An accomplished musician, he also gave a talk on *The Spirituality of Franz Schubert*, which he illustrated at the piano. He took a leading part in a panel discussion on *Artistic Renewal as a Challenge to the Way Things Are*, along with contributors from the Czech Republic, Russia and the United States.

The Rt Hon Ann Widdecombe MP, gave a fascinating workshop on *Writing Fiction*, in which she revealed some of the trade secrets behind two successful novels and a third on the way. Over tea she signed copies of her latest novel *An Act of Treachery*, which sold out in ten minutes! She also took part in a panel discussion on *Artistic Renewal As A Doorway To God* and led a discussion with the Youth Focus.

Musicians from Britain were very much to the fore. The Fitzwilliam String Quartet was joined by violist Carolyn Sparey. They performed a magnificent evening recital of Mozart and Tchaikovsky, played at early morn-



Sculptured bust of 'Nicolette' by Anna (MacLeod) Corcoran

Photos: Leif Soderland

ing Music Meditations and gave several afternoon presentations.

Louise Marsh, sub-organist at Guildford Cathedral and Karen Gibson, director of the Kingdom Choir took a popular series of workshops on choral singing. The Kingdom Choir gave a concert of their distinctive gospel songs on Swiss National Day.

Liverpool sculptor Stephen Broadbent was interviewed from the platform and showed projections of his large public sculptures in Chester, Liverpool, Warrington Lincoln, Glasgow and Belfast. He described his latest work in progress, the Triangle Project, to commemorate the sufferings of the Slave Trade. The sculptures will be sited in Liverpool, Richmond, Virginia and Benin in West Africa.

Anna Corcoran exhibited some of her sculptures and during tea on the terrace demonstrated how she works with clay. Elisabeth Loy took a very popular workshop on card making and flower arranging and

the results of their work could be seen all over the conference centre. Actress Edie Campbell performed her one woman play, *Emily Dickinson and I*. Her director husband Jack Lynch and theologian and historian Timothy Firth took a fascinating morning meeting on the importance of myth and story to all our lives. There was a display of the original illustrations by Dell Williams for *The Legend of the Fourth King* which was performed in French by Michel Orphelin, following its run in Paris in May.

Other Britons who took part during the week included composer Kathleen Dodds, interior designer Ann Babington, journalist and author Mike Smith, playwright Hugh Williams, director Elisabeth Tooms and musical psychologist Dr Nick Foster. "This week has made me re-think many things in my own life" was a comment which reflected the response of many.

Hugh Williams



Musician Parker Bent from USA