

Andrew Stallybrass, Director of Caux Books.

This conference centre has many stories to tell. I call her the old lady on the mountain. She's well over one hundred years old now. I love this place, and have come to know at least some of her tales. She has lived several lives... She was the child of daring men with big dreams: the local architect Eugène Jost, and the promoter and hotelier Ami Chessex. They were called the Texans of Montreux... Born in luxury, in another world, she opened as a hotel in 1902. Then there were about 200 guests and 200 staff. Princes, lords, the jet-set of a world before jets. Big names like Kellogg, Rockefeller and Gillette, writers like Kipling, Edgar Wallace, Daphne Du Maurier, Scott Fitzgerald... The Maharajah of Baroda and his family were among the guests, as were members of the Russian imperial family. Artists too, musicians like Rubinstein and Stravinsky...

The architectural style is called 'eclectic' – a bit of everything. In the theatre and the promenoir, you will find neo-classical Grecian pillars. And here, in the hall, you are in the fake-mediaeval. A Swiss designer's idea of what he thought an English Lord would expect from Switzerland. Please note the Swiss soldier with an early model of the Swiss army penknife on the chimney, recently uncovered by restorers. You can see some of the original tables and chairs around the house. I like to say that our foundation never had enough money to do too much damage!

But that old world was killed by the wars: wars are extremely bad for the health of tourist resorts. So, in a second life, with the coming of the Second World War, internees and refugees found shelter here. There's a plaque at the railway station, expressing gratitude 'from officers and men of the British Empire, escaped prisoners of war 1943-1944'. Down on the terrace you can see another plaque at the foot of an oak tree that marks the 1,600 Jews who were housed in the Caux-Palace in 1944, and reminds us of those who were turned away to their deaths: a painful part of our Swiss history that we've had to revisit.

But the big dreams continued, in the thick of this terrible war that cost 72 million lives. Another visionary, Philippe Mottu in 1942 had the thought: 'If Switzerland is spared, our task will be to make available to Moral Re-Armament (the name of this movement then) a place where Europeans, torn apart by hatred, suffering and resentment can come together. Caux is the place.' Mottu died last year. In the Expo you can see the contract to buy Caux in 1946. Some important post-war reconciliations had their beginnings here. When you visit the CAUX-Expo, as you must, you will see a photo of French Foreign Minister and Prime Minister Schuman, one of the architects of the new Europe, outside the main entrance to Caux with Frank Buchman, the founder of IofC. And you can see a photo of Konrad Adenauer, his German counterpart, sitting here in this hall. But there were also thousands of ordinary men and women. What we would today call 'civil society'. Are there any here in the hall who were present in those years? I know that there's one lady in the house who first came here in 1939, and who has for years been coming every summer to make sure that we have all the vegetables that we need for our meals... correctly prepared for the cooks in the kitchen.

Since its beginnings as a conference centre, the sufferings of the world have been part of the tapestry woven into Caux year after year. There are many more stories we could tell – and you may discover some of them in the coming days, and draw hope and encouragement from them.

This conference is founded on the idea that 'a profound change in lifestyles and attitudes is possible'. That we are all responsible. A big word, a big concept. Initiatives of Change (IofC) works on the principle that changes in

people's motives, attitudes and behaviour are not only possible but are the only sure basis on which wider lasting change in society can be brought about. This is the experience of millions of people, whether involved in lofC or not, who have decided to start the 'change process' in their own lives. 'Starting with myself' may sound too simple, but there is a certain inescapable logic to it. 'Building trust across the world's divides', it says at the top of the home page of the Caux and the lofC web sites. Building on a foundation of ethical values of honesty, selflessness, purity and love.

I would like to tell you one story, one of the many that could illustrate 'the Caux approach'. In 1953, a young Tunisian nationalist came to Caux – his country was still a colony of France. He lost here his hatred of the French. My wife looks after the Caux archives, and there's some fascinating research work to be done in this treasure trove – now reaching 130 linear metres in the Vaud Cantonal Archives. I quote from the transcript of what Mohamed Masmoudi said from this platform. 'I was suspicious and mistrustful, pathologically sensitive. I was dry, and my human matter was sterile...' Then he talks about having a time of quiet reflection – another of the basic approaches of the house and lofC, and he then tells about writing a letter to his mother. She had been threatened by French gendarmes, they told her that they would kill him, and she ended her letter to him, 'God bless you my son, and curse the French'. He was writing to her, 'Keep praying for God's blessings on me, but stop cursing the French.' And he concludes, 'In my opinion, this is the start of change'.

When he went back to Paris, and at the lofC centre there, he met over a meal Jean Basdevant, then responsible for Tunisian affairs at the French foreign ministry. They started to develop a relationship of trust. Here's are slides of two letters recounting that meeting. Basdevant and Masmoudi were two key members of the delegations that negotiated independence, and one of the histories of this period talks of how each of the two of them seemed to have more problems with their own delegations than they did with each other, and that whenever deadlock threatened, the two of them would retire to the garden of the ministry for a private talk. Masmoudi became the first Ambassador to France. In 1956, while leading the first Tunisian delegation after independence to the United Nations in New York, President Bourguiba declared, 'The world must be told what Moral Re-Armament has done for our country.' Robert Schuman wrote to Buchman, 'There can be no doubt that the history of Tunisia and Morocco would have been different if it had not been for Moral Re-Armament.' Masmoudi, by then a member of the Tunisian government, said, 'Without Moral Re-Armament, we would be involved today in Tunisia in a war to the death against France... Tunisia would now be a second Indo-China.'

Fifty years later, Caux is part of a similar process working towards peace and democracy in Burundi, a work of 'accompagnement' 'accompanying, walking alongside' the politicians, the military, the former guerrillas and civil society as a troubled nation moves into elections. This work of lofC-International and Caux is financed by the Swiss foreign ministry. But at its heart is the same effort to change motives, to free men and women from hate, to build trust. Such change is at the heart of living together with difference, and healing our wounded histories in our multi-cultural societies of today. So I look forward to learning about the new stories that could grow out of this week.