

CAUX

Healing the past—forging the future

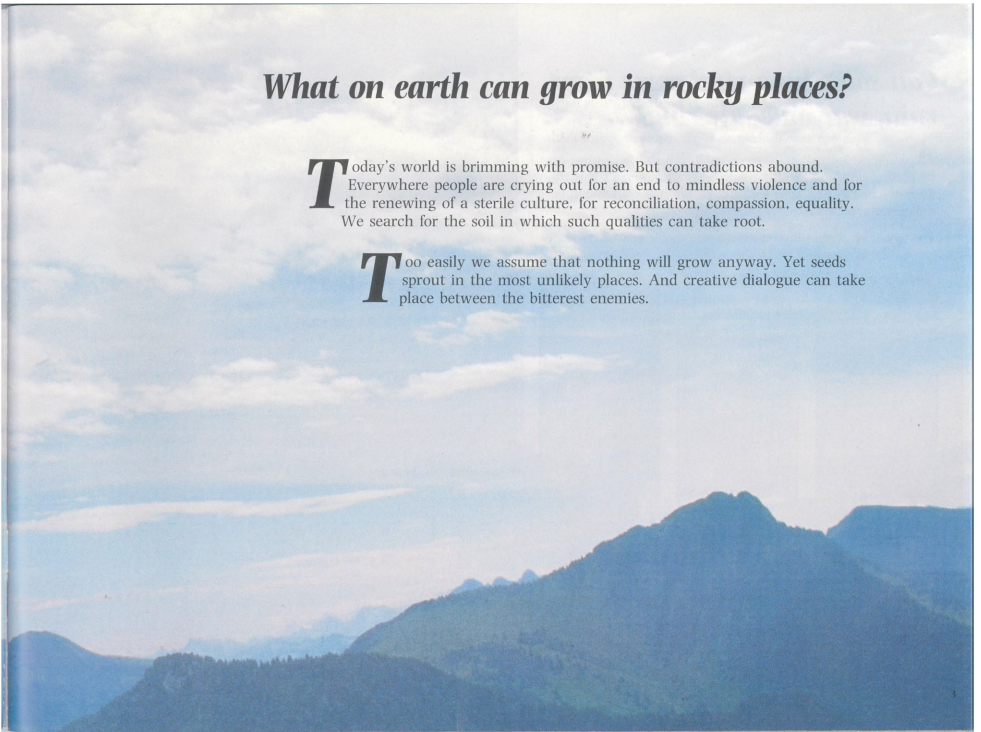




What on earth can grow in rocky places?

Today's world is brimming with promise. But contradictions abound. Everywhere people are crying out for an end to mindless violence and for the renewing of a sterile culture, for reconciliation, compassion, equality. We search for the soil in which such qualities can take root.

Too easily we assume that nothing will grow anyway. Yet seeds sprout in the most unlikely places. And creative dialogue can take place between the bitterest enemies.



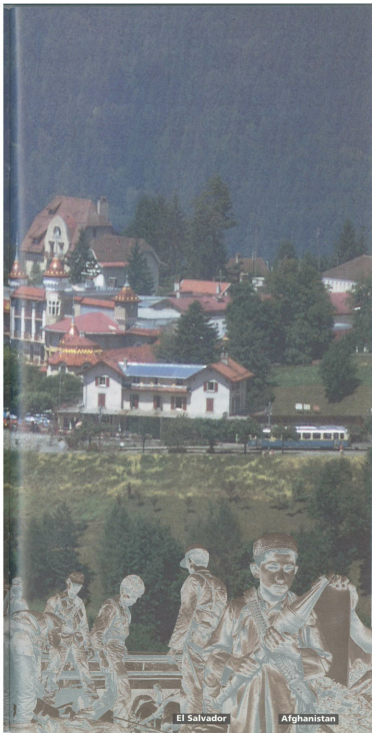
Can something vital come from ruin, war and suffering?

A deadlocked situation, large or small, can shift when one or two people decide to take risks – to cross the no-man’s-land, to listen to enemies and opponents, to expose their own search for a different approach.

The trouble is that human nature is so capable of cruelty, arrogance, exploitation and dishonesty.

But in every human heart there is also the ability to cherish, to sacrifice, to reach for what is creative and nourishing. We do not have to submit to the worst in the world or in ourselves. The choices are wider, deeper and simpler than we think.





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El Salvador

Afghanistan

Bosnia

Ruanda

Where could war-weary nations come together?

At Interlaken, less than a year after the end of the war, these Swiss hosted a meeting of 180 people from 12 European nations. Many of them had not seen each other since they had last met, seven and a half years earlier, in that same town. In September 1938, with war threatening, they had gathered in Interlaken for the first 'world assembly for moral re-ament'.

This informal movement – MRA as it became known – had sprung from the interaction between Oxford University students and an American Lutheran pastor named Frank Buchman. Buchman was not interested in starting yet another organisation. He saw the need for something far more organic – a wave of change in society set in motion by individuals putting right where they themselves were wrong, rather than hurling accusations at others. 'God has a plan for the world,' he would say, 'and you have a part in it.'

In a world clogged by the Depression and appalled by the rise of Hitler and Stalin, the idea that real change has to start with oneself had an earthy practicality. As the European crisis intensified, large gatherings of people who wanted to try this approach took place in several countries – Britain, the Netherlands, Scandinavia and Switzerland, for instance. Following that first Interlaken assembly, Buchman was given a lunch at the League of Nations in Geneva on September 15, 1938, the very day British Prime Minister

Chamberlain flew to Berchtesgaden to see Hitler in a futile search for 'peace in our time'. Buchman told diplomats from 53 countries present, 'We need to call into being a whole new philosophy of living – that quality of life that is above party, above class, above faction, above nations – people unitedly under God's control.' His host at the lunch was C J Hambro, a Norwegian Member of Parliament who was to become the last President of the League of Nations. Speaking about Buchman and his colleagues, Hambro said, 'In this hour of grave apprehension and fear it is of vital importance to meet hope and faith and strength. Where we have failed in changing politics, they have succeeded in changing lives.'

Among the Swiss responsible for the Interlaken gatherings was Philippe Mottu. In 1944 Mottu, by then a diplomat in his 30s, and his wife Héléne were invited by Frank Buchman to join him in America. During the war Mottu had come across senior Germans who were profoundly opposed to Hitler. One of them, the diplomat Adam von Trott, asked Mottu to take to America a list of those who would form a new German government if the planned coup against Hitler succeeded. The failure of the coup and von Trott's execution were shattering blows for Mottu. They reinforced his conviction that something extraordinary would be needed if a new Europe was to be born.

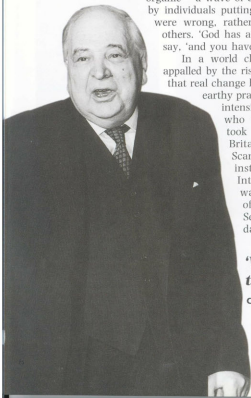
Buchman believed that God can give ideas to people who are willing to search for them objectively and without conditions. In one such time of quiet reflection as early as 1942, Mottu had thought of a huge hotel above Lake Geneva in a village called Caux. And at Interlaken in 1946, he was keen to explore its possibilities.

***'Where we have failed in changing politics,
they have succeeded in changing lives.'***

Carl Hambro, Buchman's host at the League of Nations

When it opened on July 7, 1902, the Caux-Palace was the biggest and most luxurious hotel in Switzerland. Among the guests in its heyday were John D Rockefeller, the Maharajah of Baroda (whose drawing-room, specially furnished in citron-wood, still exists), the violinist Ysaye and other great stars of music, opera and the stage, the thriller-writer Edgar

***In a huge old hotel
above Lake Geneva..***

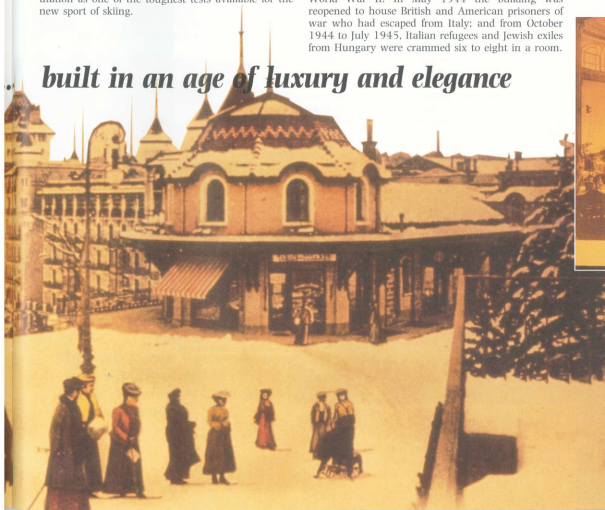


**The Maharajah of Baroda, the violinist Ysaye,
thriller-writer Edgar Wallace and Prince Ibn Saud of
Saudi Arabia were among its guests...**

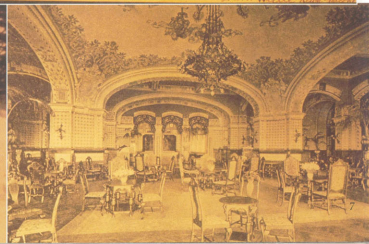
Wallace, and Prince Ibn Saud, later to become King of Saudi Arabia, Olympic skating champions trained at Caux; world federations of bobsleigh, tobogganing and ice hockey were founded there; and the run from the mountains above, the *piste du diable*, gained a reputation as one of the toughest tests available for the new sport of skiing.

During World War I the Palace was empty for five years and lost a million francs. It reopened but its facilities had deteriorated and it was not till 1929 that its owners found a further million francs to refurbish it. Too late, because the Depression struck, and then World War II. In May 1944 the building was reopened to house British and American prisoners of war who had escaped from Italy; and from October 1944 to July 1945, Italian refugees and Jewish exiles from Hungary were crammed six to eight in a room.

built in an age of luxury and elegance



Palace-Hôtel — Restaurant





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