

The material and the spiritual need each other

If I were to write an epitaph for this civilization it would be: 'Created to love people and use things, we ended up loving things and using and abusing people.'

Alongside the euphoria of the Millennium—though perhaps we didn't spot it at the time—there was disillusionment and spiritual hunger. The disillusionment was caused because Western affluence was at the expense of increasing world poverty. The spiritual hunger was gnawing away at the entrails of Western society. Something was eating us up!

Spiritual hunger has manifested itself in what has become an addictive society. Computer games and excessive bondage to the Internet have replaced the earlier bondage to TV. Children lose the social skills of communicating and forming relationships and friendships. They cannot communicate with us, and we cannot communicate with them.

We live in an age of disposable products and that includes relationships. Sex has become a product that is accessible, instant and easy. Building a relationship demands effort and love. Yet only relationships can satisfy the human spirit because God is himself a relational being. In the Judeo-Christian tradition we believe that God is seeking a relationship with his people; and they with each other. Hence Jesus said that a fulfilled life is to know the Father—not just to know about the Father but to have a personal relationship with him. Jesus is saying that a fulfilled life is a life in relationship not in isolation.

The Christian tradition contends: God is love. St John wrote: 'He who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.' In Greek and all the languages of the Middle East 'abide' is much more than living with. It is an agricultural word: rooted in. To be rooted and grounded in relationships, in family and society—that is, I believe, the one thing that will feed the human spirit.

Yet how many marriages go adrift because one partner



by Bishop Michael Marshall

thinks the other partner can totally fulfil them? No one can ever fulfil you. You weren't made to be fulfilled by any other human being. There is no one and nothing that can ultimately satisfy us except God and through him the rest of his creation.

How do we need to change today's culture? I want to look towards something that I call 'a materialistic spirituality'.

• Spiritual hunger has manifested itself in an addictive society. •

Archbishop William Temple said: 'Christianity is of all religions the most materialistic.' We're not angels, we cannot relate to God or to each other in a purely spiritual way. But neither are we simply naked apes with a more developed intellect. Geneticists tell us that we are just one per cent different from the animals who came before us. But that one per cent, I think, is both the problem and the solution

for the human race. It accounts for this spiritual quest, this desire to be fulfilled. The Christian does not seek to bypass or split off the material from the spiritual. That's so often the quest in the 'flower power' religions, and means that you end up saying material things don't matter. The point is to bring the material and the spiritual together, thus raising the material into a higher

reality, giving it a more permanent significance and meaning.

Why was I created? Not to worship things, to go shopping, to eat food, to get a mortgage, to have 2.4 children. I was created for ecstasy, worship, adoration, wonder, love and praise.

If we were made to worship then we will worship. But when you worship a false god it brings you into servility and bondage.

Money, sex and power—the three obsessions of our age—are the tyrants in an affluent society. They need to be redeemed, rather than being split off in a schizoid view of the universe.

Sex and the body are not intended to be simply chemical. Rather the spiritual, and love itself, raise what is purely chemical to a new and greater significance which in the end can only be expressed in worship, adoration, poetry, art, or music.

The love of money is the root of all evil because money was not made to be loved, but to be used for good ends.

When you've seen through everything for what it is, there are only two alternatives, cynicism or contemplation. A contemplation which is not escapism but sees God in everything, God in the midst, God in the mess, God in the mystery of transformation.

Am I pessimistic about the future? I am if we continue down that road of materialism versus spiritualism, which will ultimately degenerate into naked secularism. That's where we are at the moment. There is this yet more excellent way of holding the two together, holding the spiritual quest but seeking it through material responsibility, through a new scale of values in our society, knowing the worth-ship of each other as well as of other things. A sacramental spirituality.

Michael Marshall is the Assistant Bishop of London. This article is taken from a 'Greencoat Forum' given at the IC centre in London earlier this year.

NEXT ISSUE

Lead story: Clean Election Campaigns, from Taiwan to Ghana

Profile: Letlapa Mphahlele, who ordered attacks on South African civilians and now works for reconciliation.

Guest column: Laurence Cockcroft, Chairman of Transparency International UK

FOR A CHANGE

Volume 16 Number 3

June/July 2003

Fair trade makes good

- Why Tom Tate returned to Germany
- Tata's army of volunteers
- Acting up for peace in Africa
- Living with cancer

by Paul Williams in Wales



Welsh on the up

All those concerned about the future of the Welsh language breathed a collective sigh of relief when figures from the 2001 census showed that, far from the further decline feared, the number of Welsh speakers had actually increased by two per cent (to 20.5 per cent of Wales's three million population) since the last census in 1991.

A boost for the ancient language's struggle to survive into the 21st century comes with the publication of the final volume of *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru*—the University of Wales Dictionary. Hailed as the Welsh equivalent of the Oxford English Dictionary, it has been 80 years in preparation. Work began in 1921 (when Lloyd George was British Prime Minister), with the first volume being published in 1950. The fourth and final volume was released last December—and work is already underway to revise Volume 1.

The dictionary has 3,941 pages and contains over 7,300,000 words, dating back to 601 AD. The longest word is *cyfrwngddarostyngedig*, which dates from the 15th century and means intercession or mediation. The entire work will soon be available on the Internet and on CD Rom.

Sydney's rival

Rising rapidly on the shores of Cardiff Bay is 'Wales' answer to the Sydney Opera House'—the Millennium Centre. It will house the Welsh National

Opera as well as the Diversions Dance Company of Wales, the Hijinx Theatre in Education and several other national arts organizations. With its 1,800-seat auditorium and two studio theatres, it is already being described as an icon of Welsh culture. It is set to cost £104 million and will be clad at the front and sides in traditional Welsh slate. It is due to open in November 2004.

The newly-appointed Chief Executive is Australian Judith Isherwood, formerly Director of Performing Arts and Acting Chief Executive at, yes, the Sydney Opera House.

Grey power

Some environmentalists, backed by Welsh Secretary Peter Hain, dream of Wales becoming 'the green energy hub of Britain'. Mostly they have wind power in mind. But

not everyone gives an unreserved welcome to giant wind turbines sprouting on Wales' most scenic hills.

Now people living in Porthcawl, one of Wales' most favoured seaside resorts, are up in arms at proposals to site massive turbines just four miles out to sea. The local authority has reportedly responded by saying it will be all right if the turbines are painted grey—'so they will only be seen with difficulty'!

A powerful people

'I feel so sanguine,' said David Lloyd George, 'that were self-government to be granted to Wales, she would be a model for the nationalities of the world.' He was speaking in a Home Rule debate in the British House of Commons in 1893.

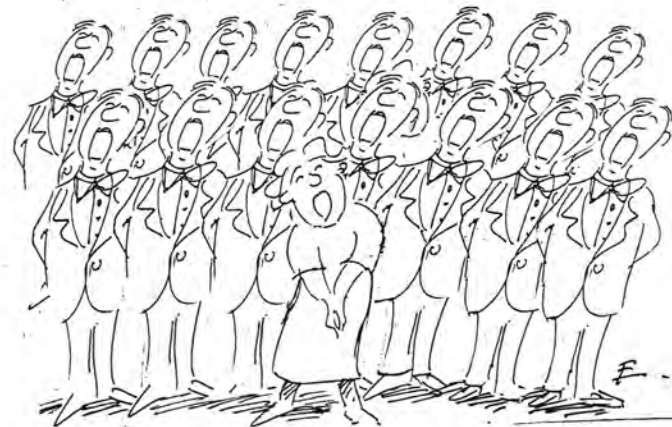
After four years of limited home rule under its auspices,

the National Assembly of Wales can't exactly claim to have been a model for others. Many now complain that it lacks the power to do a proper job. But, importantly, it has provided a democratic forum in which all areas of Wales are represented. This uniting potential is all-important in a land which, throughout its long history, has been famous for its divisions.

As the observant cleric Gerald of Wales put it bluntly back in the 12th century, 'If only the Welsh could fight in ordered ranks, instead of leaping about all over the place, if their princes could only come to an agreement and unite to defend their country, I cannot see how so powerful a people could ever be conquered.'

Wales' answer to Hollywood

Hollywood could soon be losing some of its business to 'Valleywood'. That is if the project to build a massive film studio complex on a former South Wales coalfield gets off the ground. Driving force behind the £350 million scheme is British film mogul Lord Richard Attenborough. He says the proposed Dragon International Studios at Llanilid, near Bridgend, will offer world-class film and TV studios, workshops and a film academy, together with a theme park. 'This is one of the greatest opportunities for British film-making we have ever had,' he enthuses. He is already planning to have a Welsh male voice choir at the opening.



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Cover: Fairtrade bananas in the Dominican Republic Photo: Julia Powell, The Fairtrade Foundation, 2002

FROM THE EDITORS' DESK

Relaxing the Midas grip

If love makes the world go round, greed also keeps things moving—but it makes for a stomach-churning ride. Personal greed is rampant—not least where failed company bosses receive seven-figure 'golden handshakes' while their redundant ex-employees are only offered a few thousand pounds. A recent white paper from Britain's Department of Trade and Industry offers hope that these scandals may be addressed, by linking directors' retirement pay-outs to their companies' performance.

A thousand scandals and scams aim to separate Joe Public from his cash. And Mr/Mrs Public's greed often makes them susceptible—as those duped by emails offering them large sums in return for access to their bank accounts know to their cost.

Institutional greed causes even more misery than personal greed. The good news for anti-capitalist protestors and conscientious employers alike is given in a ground-breaking report from Britain's Institute of Business Ethics*, which suggests that ethical companies do best financially. 'These are important, even momentous, findings,' commented *The Observer* newspaper.

And what of our Western trade systems and institutions? According to Oxfam, 128 million people would be lifted out of poverty if Africa, East Asia, South Asia and Latin America each increased their share of world exports by one per cent. Yet the tariff barriers they face when they export to the West are four times higher than those encountered by rich countries. These barriers cost developing countries twice as much each year as they receive in aid.

There is, of course, a link between institutional and personal greed. Politicians would listen if voters in the West demanded that governments be more generous to the world's needy, even if this affected their own standard of living. If enough shareholders in international conglomerates demanded change, boards would respond.

A whole new climate of public opinion will be needed to shift the way we do business globally. And, on the individual level, we each have an internal Midas to confront.

There is a long way to go. But there is at least one area where the individual can make a difference. Fairtrade products, as our lead story reveals, offer Western consumers the chance to give a fair deal to small farmers in developing nations—and to empower them to improve their lot.

*'Does business ethics pay?' ISBN 0-9539517-3-1

www.forachange.co.uk

FOR A CHANGE

• closes the circle between faith and action, action and faith. It is for anyone, anywhere, who wants to make a difference to the world.

FOR A CHANGE believes that

- in a world torn by ancient hatreds, the wounds of history can be healed.
- in the family and the workplace, relationships can be transformed.
- in urban jungle or rural backwater, community can be built.
- peace, justice and the survival of the planet depend on changes in attitudes as well as structures.

FOR A CHANGE

- draws its material from many sources and was born out of the experience of MRA, now Initiatives of Change.

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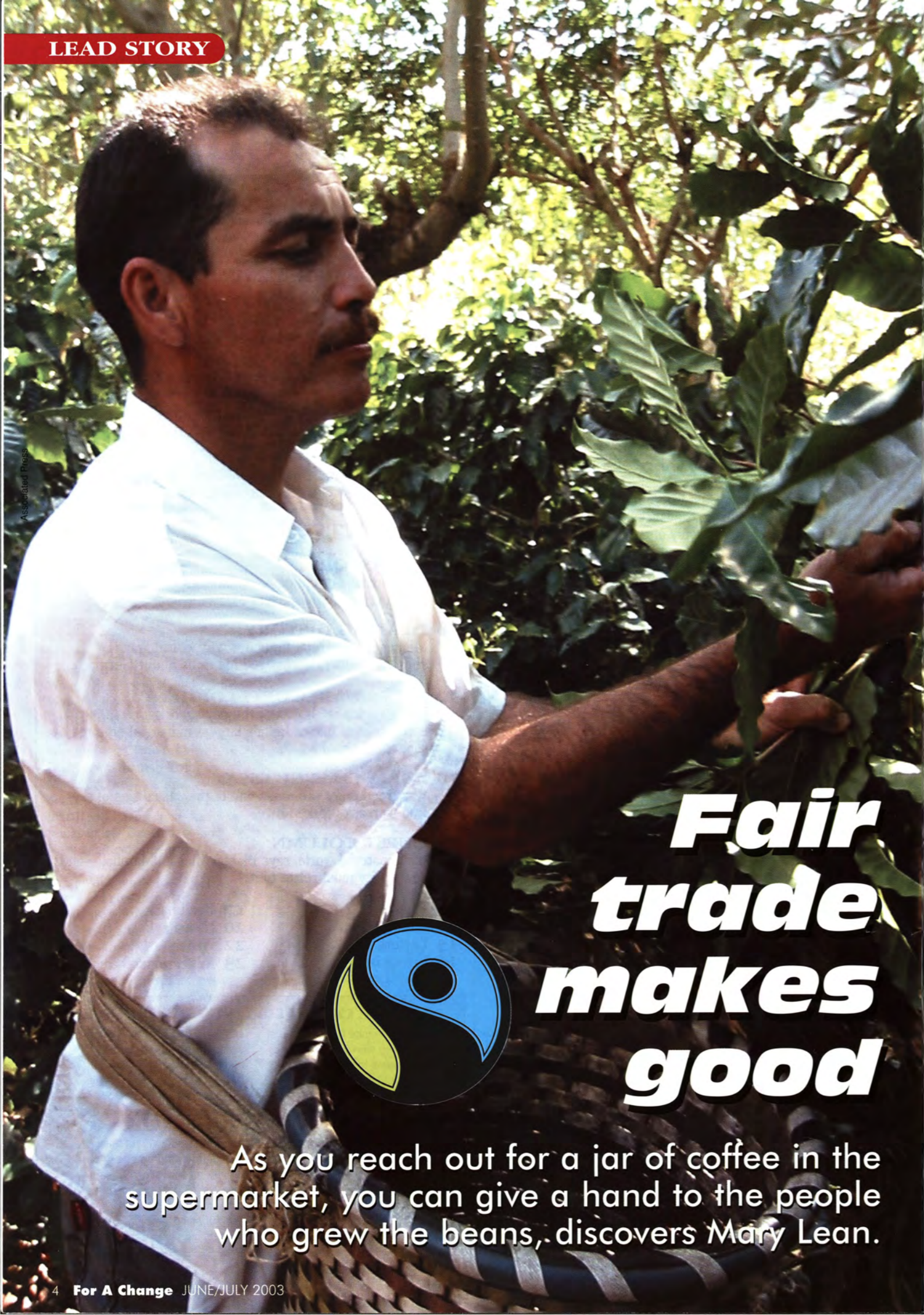
A NOTE ON INITIATIVES OF CHANGE

Initiatives of Change (formerly Moral Re-Armament) works for moral and spiritual renewal in all areas of life. It was born out of the work of Frank Buchman, an American who believed that change in the world must start with the individual.

Initiatives of Change is open to all. Its starting point is the readiness of each person to make what they know of God and eternal moral values central in their lives. This personal commitment to search for God's will forms the basis for

creative initiative and common action: standards of absolute honesty, purity, unselfishness and love help to focus the challenge of personal and global change.

These ideas have given rise to an international community of people at work in more than 70 countries in programmes which include reconciliation; tackling the root causes of corruption, poverty and social exclusion; and strengthening the moral and spiritual foundations for democracy.



Fair trade makes good



As you reach out for a jar of coffee in the supermarket, you can give a hand to the people who grew the beans, discovers Mary Lean.

Julia Powell, The Fairtrade Foundation, 2002

You'd be amazed how much difference your decisions in the supermarket can make to small farmers in the developing world.

The choices of western shoppers have made it possible for Mario Hernandez, a coffee grower in Nicaragua, to buy clothes for his family, and for Ugandan tea grower Aloysius Tibyabako to send his children to school. Grandmother Dolora Castillo now has an outside toilet, something previously unheard of in her small banana-growing community in the Dominican Republic. And Miguel Molina Barrantes, who belongs to a cooperative of coffee farmers in Costa Rica, has simply been able to stay in business.

These small farmers owe the upturn in their fortunes to one of the areas of the European economy which is booming—fair trade. They sell their produce to Western importers who guarantee them a fair price—liberating them from the vagaries of world market prices and the stranglehold of middlemen, who often take up to 70 per cent of the export value of a crop.

World sales of products sporting a fairtrade label rose by 21 per cent in 2001. In the UK, their annual retail value hit £63 million in 2002, nearly twice its level in 2000. Over 100 fairtrade products are available in the UK, ranging from coffee and tea, through bananas and mangos, to honey, orange juice and chocolate. In Switzerland, every fourth banana bought has been traded fairly.

The fairtrade movement dates back to the 1940s, when the Mennonite Central Committee in the US started importing products from poor communities. In the 1960s and 1970s 'world shops' opened in many developed countries, selling crafts from the developing world. Parallel with this a 'solidarity market' developed, which gave the politically conscious consumer the chance to support the Sandinistas, for instance, by buying Nicaraguan coffee.

The idea of using trade to promote community development came of age in the late 1980s. In 1986, coffee farmers in the Chiapas

region of Southern Mexico asked the Dutch development NGO, Solidaridad, to help them sell their coffee. The world coffee price was so low, and the local middlemen (known as 'coyotes') so rapacious, that the farmers were desperate to find a direct market. Two years later, the world's first fairtrade labelling scheme, Max Havelaar, was launched in the Netherlands. The Belgians and Swiss followed suit in 1990 and 1992, and the UK Fairtrade mark was launched in 1994. Seventeen western countries now have fairtrade labels, supporting some 350 groups of cooperatives in 36 developing countries.

ECONOMY BASED ON TRUST

Robin Murray, the Chair of the 'alternative multinational' Twin Trading, is passionate about fair trade. The non-profit company imports the coffee, cocoa and tea which go into Cafédirect, Teadirect and Day Chocolate, Britain's ground-breaking fairtrade brands. It has been at the cutting edge of alternative trade for nearly 20 years.

Twin Trading was set up by the Greater London Council (GLC) in 1985, in response to requests for help with trade and industry from developing countries. Initially these were requests from governments, but before long the company found itself dealing with the grassroots. When the GLC was abolished by Margaret Thatcher's government the next year, Murray, who had been its Director of Industry, joined Twin Trading's Board.

An academic economist by training, Murray sees fair trade as a model of how the world economy should be run. 'It's a much healthier relationship,' he says. 'We depend on the producers for coffee, they depend on us for the market—it's not just us with the money. And an economy based on trust is so cheap.'

Over the years, Twin Trading has learnt a lot about trust. In 1989, one of its staff, Pauline Tiffin, returned from Mexico with the preposterous suggestion that the company should send £30,000 to a group of beleaguered coffee farmers, who would then send them a container-load of green

coffee to sell.

'Pauline told us she thought they could be trusted,' remembers Murray. 'Everyone on the Board said of course we should do it. So we sent the money, backing the view that economics should be more like that. Two months later the container turned up.' They enlisted a coffee trader, and made a decent profit, most of which they returned to the growers.

The cooperative asked them to repeat the process and, as word got around, other cooperatives approached Twin Trading. 'We never turned anyone down,' says Murray, 'but we never took anyone on without Pauline going out there and getting to know them.'

Some 600 containers later, they have only been let down once, when a Peruvian cooperative went bust. Murray and his wife were in Peru at the time, and discovered the problem. 'We travelled with them for three days and in the end they trusted us enough to tell us what had happened. Then we had to assess what was going on. We felt that the two main people involved were entirely trustworthy and committed.' Rather than demanding their money back, and pushing the cooperative further into bankruptcy, Twin Trading decided to help them restructure, and the cooperative—now back in business—are gradually repaying the money.

BRANCHING INTO BRANDS

In 1991, Twin Trading pushed the process one step further—by setting up the fairtrade brand, Cafédirect, in partnership with Oxfam, Traidcraft and Equal Exchange, who all ran shops selling crafts and products from the developing world. In 1993 Cafédirect became the first fairtrade product to break into national supermarket chains. The company has since branched out into tea and cocoa as well, and Twin Trading has helped to set up a fairtrade chocolate company, with its own brands.

Twin Trading handles all the purchasing and importing for these companies. 'About



Some of the Fairtrade products available in the UK—17 countries have similar ranges

Fair trade makes good

half a million farmers supply us with coffee and tea,' says Murray. 'That's more people than General Motors employs. Once we have adopted a cooperative we continue with them whatever happens.'

The company brings people from the cooperatives over to London, to learn such skills as quality control and tasting. 'One of the things that interests me as an economist is that very small marginal farmers can pick the best coffee because they hand sort it rather than machine sort it,' he says.

Whereas the fairtrade labels, inevitably, set minimum standards for fair trade, a dedicated brand can set its hurdles high. In recent years, when coffee prices have hit a 40-year low, Cafédirect has sometimes paid three times the world price. In 2002, Murray estimates, 46 per cent of Cafédirect's turnover went back to the farmers.

Cafédirect also runs a Producer Support and Development Programme, with a regional office in Mexico. Mexico and Peru are now setting up their own local brands for sale at home, and, it is hoped, in the US. Three producers attend every Cafédirect board meeting, and every two years the company holds a producers' conference with representatives from all the cooperatives involved.

Cafédirect achieved a turnover of £10 million last year, and expects to grow by 50 per cent this year. 'It's just motoring, zooming,' says Murray. 'There's a real lift-off in fair trade generally. People see this as one tiny way of doing something about world issues.'

BEST OF THE BEST

The Coop chain of supermarkets claims to be the UK's 'leading fairtrade retailer'. It pioneered the import of fairtrade bananas and mangos into the UK and launched the first fairly traded supermarket wine. In March 2000 it was the first supermarket to launch a fairtrade 'own brand'—a milk chocolate bar which ran alongside its regular own-brand range—and has now gone the whole hog, by converting all its own-brand bars of chocolate to fair trade. In so doing, it expects to double UK supermarket sales of fairtrade chocolate in the next four years.

Fair trade has really captured shoppers' attention, says Terry Hudghton, who as head of corporate marketing for the Coop is responsible for the chain's 'responsible retailing'. 'People phone in, write in, email in about it—both existing customers and those who say they will shop at the Coop

Banana power

Fair trade has transformed the life of Alfredo Martinez, a banana farmer in the west of the Dominican Republic. As a small farmer, he was unable to sell his bananas for export and had to contend with the uncertainties of the domestic market. Sometimes he couldn't sell his crop at all and his family had to go without.

In 2000, the UK's Fairtrade Foundation made a link between farmers in the two villages of Juliana and Jaramillo and a British importer, Mack Multiples. Martinez's bananas now sell in Sainsbury's supermarkets and he is guaranteed a minimum price throughout the year. 'I'm earning double what I was,' he says. 'Now food at least is secure.'

The 70 members of the Juliana-Jaramillo farmers' group, to which Martinez belongs, sell their entire crop to the fairtrade market. This has brought them the benefits of a steady income and a guaranteed minimum price. It has also brought far-ranging changes to the two villages.

As well as the price for their bananas, the farmers also receive a 'fairtrade premium' to spend on community projects. They have used it to bring water to their villages, where families used to have to buy drinking water in bottles or tanks at an estimated 40 pesos a day. Now they only have to contribute 40 pesos a month towards the running and maintenance of the generator and pump.

The premium is also paying for toilets, a clinic and a community canteen, where 200 people can get a midday meal at a low price. The farmers have upgraded the roads, drains and irrigation schemes and have funded uniforms for local schoolchildren and for six children's and adult baseball teams in the area.

because of this. We even have Coop members coming into our stores on a voluntary basis to promote our fairtrade products.'

The Coop's own-brand chocolate is manufactured by Day Chocolate, another of Twin Trading's babies. The company is the first fairtrade company to be partially owned by the producers, a Ghanaian cooperative called Kuapa Kokoo (Twi for 'good cocoa farmers').

In the 1970s and 1980s, Ghana fell from producing a third of the world's cocoa to just 12 per cent. The collapse of cocoa prices, coupled with drought, drove many farmers out of business. In 1992, a group of cocoa farmers approached Twin Trading and with the help of Pauline Tiffin and



Alfredo Martinez, Dominican Republic: 'earning double what I was'

The farmers employ 60 workers to harvest, wash and pack the bananas. They are paid above the minimum wage and are enrolled in the local social security system. Martina Valdez, who has worked with bananas for 23 years, says, 'We earn more money and if we have problems, they solve them.' When one of her young fellow workers fell ill, the Juliana-Jaramillo farmers helped to pay for her treatment and kept her on half-pay for the months she was off work.

The export market demands higher standards than the domestic market, and the farmers employ four agronomists to help them meet these. Their fairtrade commitment includes environmental issues, such as clearing up the plastic bags used to protect the bananas on the trees. The agronomists are also promoting the use of organic fertilizers.

'Every day we are working hard to do things better,' says one of the farmers, Angel Regalado. 'The fight is to show that we can organize ourselves as well as the big companies can.'

another of its staff, Dick Day, set up Kuapa Kokoo. 'In its first year 1,000 farmers joined,' says Murray. 'It now had 40,000 members, and has had to set up a new organization to cope with the overflow.'

Day Chocolate was launched in 1998, with Kuapa Kokoo owning a third of the shares, and named after Day, who had died suddenly at the age of 46. When Tiffin and Day first visited the cocoa farmers in 1992-93, one of them told them, 'No one comes to visit us. We are just tree minders.' Now they have a major stake in their own brand, with one Board meeting a year held in Ghana. As well as the Coop chocolate, the company makes Divine and Dubble chocolate, and will soon be launching its brand in the US.

The Fairtrade Foundation

The Fairtrade Foundation



UK comedian Harry Hill and newscaster George Alagiah launch the Fairtrade mark.

Kuapa Kokoo's motto is *Pa pa paa* ('the best of the best'). It is made up of village societies, which are run on principles of democracy and transparency. Each society employs its own 'recorder' who weighs and bags the coffee, using accurate scales which can be understood by people who are illiterate.

'Before, we farmers were cheated,' says Comfort Kumeah, who farms in the Ashanti region. 'People adjusted the scales. I joined Kuapa because I saw it was the only organization which could solve some of our problems.' Whereas farmers used to struggle through the lean season, now they can borrow money through Kuapa Kokoo's Credit Union.

The website of the Fairtrade Foundation, Britain's labelling organization, is full of such testimonials. For many, fair trade has been the key to survival. Adolfo and Isabel, a young Costa Rican couple with

three children, depend on coffee for 70 per cent of their income. 'If it wasn't for Fairtrade, we would get deeper and deeper into debt,' says Adolfo. 'Some abandon coffee altogether, and then the father goes and seeks work in the city or in a hotel, or in the United States. When that happens, the family is split up.'

In spite of its growth, the fairtrade market is not large enough to absorb all the produce which people like Adolfo and Isabel would like to sell. The cooperative they belong to, Coopeldos, still has to sell some of its coffee on the traditional market—at much lower prices.

For the fairtrade movement is, of course, just a drop in the ocean. Ninety nine per cent of the world's 20 million coffee farmers still live at the mercy of the world market and of the 'coyotes'. When you order a cappuccino, only one per cent of its price gets back to the farmer—unless, of course, you patronize a coffee bar which offers you a fairtrade alternative.

And while fair trade undoubtedly benefits the farmers involved, true international justice will require the dismantling of a world economic system which is stacked in favour of the industrialized nations.

Cafédirect is now the UK's sixth biggest coffee brand—though its 1.9 per cent of the market is tiny opposed to Nescafé's 59.5 per cent. 'But it's astonishing how the big ones are now having to address the issues,' says Robin Murray. 'Nestlé are now emphasizing how ethical they are! What we want to show is that this way of doing things is entirely possible, utterly feasible—and that Nescafé and Maxwell House and the others should do what we do.'



Comfort Kumeah, Ghana: 'Before, we were cheated'

Did you know that...?

- You can buy products with the internationally-certified fairtrade label in Belgium, Canada, France, Denmark, Germany, Finland, Italy, Ireland, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK and the USA.
- Swiss shoppers spent the most per person on fairtrade products in 2001, followed by the Dutch.
- Coffee is the southern hemisphere's most important export after crude oil.
- Mexico produces the most fairtrade coffee: Germany drinks the most.
- 70 per cent of the world's coffee and 80 per cent of its cocoa is grown on small farms.
- Over 150 brands of fairtrade coffee are available in Europe.
- In 2001, fair trade earned coffee producers \$30 million more than ordinary trade would have done. The figure for cocoa farmers was \$1 million.
- Footballs are the first manufactured, non-food products to carry the fairtrade label—assuring purchasers that no child labour has been used and that adult stitchers have been paid a fair wage.

● To win a fairtrade label, products must be produced in accordance with specific environmental, health and safety requirements. Farmers' cooperatives must have a democratic structure, and plantations and factories must pay decent wages and provide good living and working conditions. The price must cover the cost of production, with an additional social premium, and must be paid partly in advance. Contracts should allow for long term planning.

Sources and useful sites:
www.cafedirect.co.uk (Cafédirect);
www.fairtrade.net (Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International); www.fairtrade.org.uk (Fairtrade Foundation);
www.fair-mark.org (Fairtrade Mark Ireland); www.traidcraft.co.uk (Traidcraft)



PEOPLE

MAKING A DIFFERENCE



Hope on the street

It's not often you see elderly church-going ladies baking chocolate cakes for prostitutes working the streets at night. But in Bristol that is exactly what's happening—with remarkable results.

The One25 Project prefers not to reveal its location or to give the names of those involved. It began when three women, one a nun, were working at the Salvation Army drop-in centre in 1995. They realized that the prostitutes who came there needed particular kinds of support that they were not able to receive in a conventional centre.

Some 80 per cent of young women who get into prostitution are victims of abuse and all have had a significant break-up from their families at some time or another. Almost half have been in care.

Like others who have been abused, these women have been made to feel worthless and unvalued and they are ready to clutch at any way of feeling better so as to hold together a tattered sense of self. Short-cuts include taking drugs, or maintaining a relationship with a jealously abusive boyfriend. But drugs cost money and this is what leads most girls onto the streets.

So the three women found money for a van, and volunteers started by taking flasks of hot coffee, chocolate cake and condoms out to these vulnerable young women. The contact meant the volunteers could also provide a listening ear and advice. In 1995 the project set up a drop-in centre of its own, which has since been running most afternoons. The women use its creche for their kids, enjoy a comfortable sofa to sleep on, and find the environment friendly and supportive.

But the One25 Project is much more than that. Its founders' Christian philosophy has enabled them to involve churches in the surrounding area. They have overcome prejudice and helped churchgoers to understand that these women are victims who, with support over a long period, can begin to take themselves out of the cycle of drugs, abuse and prostitution.

One worker says that her faith has helped her 'to see the windows in people's lives where they are open to the possibility of some change'. That same worker was also amazed and heartened by one woman's response after her child had been taken into care for adoption. 'This life is no life for a child,' she said, 'I want her to have the start I never did.'

Caz and Sandy Hore-Ruthven

Hopscotch theatre

'La Marelle' is French for hopscotch, one of the oldest children's games still in use, going back to ancient Greece and beyond. It's an appropriate name for an unusual Christian theatre company that's been touring Switzerland, France, and sometimes Belgium and Holland, for the last 21 years.

At the heart of the venture lie the conviction and calling of André and Edith Cortessis. It is supported by an association with some 250 members and the Reformed Evangelical Church of the Canton of Vaud in Switzerland.

André was born in Egypt, with a Greek Orthodox father and a Swiss Protestant mother, and came to Switzerland as a teenager. He met Edith through youth activities of the Protestant church. Their first taste of theatre was taking part in evangelical shows of songs and sketches in holiday camping sites. But they soon became involved in an attempt to bring greater professionalism to 'religious theatre'.

Their approach is based on 'sharing, not proselytism', they say. They want to let their audiences make up their own minds, to stimulate thought, to challenge, but not to pressure. As Edith says, 'God has to

touch people's hearts, as he wills. We want to contribute to a better world, but we can't save people's souls.'

A new play every year, since 1982, plus extra plays sometimes at Christmas and Easter; a new tour every year; nine months a year spent largely on the road, with rarely two nights, two performances, in the same place. Most often, they are booked by local churches. Their tally now stands at 3,126 performances, to a total audience of 290,768.

Where do they find the energy and enthusiasm to keep going? 'The public still want us,' says Edith. Sometimes their local hosts turn out to be the third generation of their fans.

This season's play is *Max Havelaar, the Dutchman from Sumatra*. *Max Havelaar* was the title of an epoch-making Dutch novel (in the line of Uncle Tom's Cabin), published anonymously by a colonial civil servant in 1860, but it is now the name of a foundation that works to encourage fair trade (see Lead Story). The play deals with fair trade and Europe's colonial past, and its tour is supported by fairtrade groups and NGOs.

The next tour, starting in September, will break new ground for the Cortessis—Edith has written her first play, on God and the Internet, aiming for a younger audience. André will be driving the truck with all the equipment, setting up the improvised stages, handling the lights and sound. *La Marelle* is still on the hop. (www.paroles.ch/marelle)

Andrew Stallybrass

School for buccaneers

The atmosphere at the Portofranco centre in Milan is ideal for young people who don't feel comfortable at school. Opened in November 2000, it provides help with homework and a quiet place to study, consult books or use computers. No payment, no marks, no duty to stick to the schedule; all students have to do is enroll and abide by normal rules of behaviour.

Portofranco is manned by volunteers: 40 teachers, who come after school, and some 150 university students. The secretary and the cleaning ladies are also volunteers. They operate in a disused school building in the heart of the city. Some 40 students attend each day.



High school students in Italy

The centre's name can be translated as 'free port', and it does remind one of a Caribbean port where buccaneers feel at home. 'We never have problems with discipline,' says the director, Alberto Bonfanti. 'The atmosphere helps them to concentrate. They respect these strange teachers because they can't get over the fact that they work without pay.'

Each student has an interview when he enrolls. 'If we notice he is very weak, we entrust him to a tutor,' says Bonfanti. 'The trick is to spark motivation through a personal relationship. You can't say these boys and girls don't like to learn: they just don't like school.' Last year two thirds of the students assigned to a tutor were successful at school. 'But, above all,' says Bonfanti, 'they changed inside.'

Thirty per cent of the students leave without completing the course: but even they benefit, as these extracts from the diary of one of the teachers, Aldo Baldo, indicate.

'Salvatore has short straight sticking-up hair. He keys in text messages at the rate of 200 letters a minute. He has to take one train and two trams to get here. When he first came I thought he would never come again. Instead he has even learnt to write in an orderly manner.'

'Fanny, on the other hand, is a sweet little blonde, full of doubts and fears. She often skips school because she has not

done her homework. In the afternoons she is too busy training; she is a champion in synchronised skating. The two commitments are too much. Maybe she should leave school, but how can I tell her, when everybody else tells her to give up skating?...

'What a surprise today! Salvatore has brought a friend along, which shows more than many words that he thinks it is worth coming to Portofranco....'

'Fanny is sinking deeper and deeper into her crisis. I have tried getting her to produce a website on ice skating, which she can use as credit for her final exam....'

'Today Fanny has decided to give up school. Everybody says she is a fool, but she looks happier....'

'This evening we have all got together for a pizza. Fanny has brought her boyfriend along. He is a pizza baker, but has decided to go back to school. Fanny will come this summer to work on Electronics, because she wants to take her finals next year....'

'Sadly Salvatore has not passed at school, but he is ready to try again.'

And what about the teacher? Baldo adds, 'Coming to Portofranco has been like going back to the first school where I taught. It was in a very underprivileged area and at the beginning I felt useless. Feeling useless is useful, very educational!'

Adriano Costa



André and Edith Cortessis in 'Max Havelaar, the Dutchman from Sumatra'



The memorial in Huchenfeld to the British airmen murdered in 1945

Bringing a nightmare to an end

At the end of World War II RAF ex-prisoner of war Tom Tate said to his wife, 'I'm never going to Germany again in my life.' Yet, 50 years later, in 1995, he returned to Germany and he has gone there every March since. 'I will do anything to further reconciliation and understanding,' he tells me.

The story of what changed his attitude is the unfolding saga of a small community that has turned a terrible crime into an opportunity to bring two countries closer together. It is a testament, whichever way you look at it, to extraordinary twists of luck or fate or destiny.

In March 1945 Flying Officer Tom Tate was one of the crew of an RAF Flying Fortress in a bomber raid over Germany. It was his 45th sortie. His plane's task was not to bomb but to jam enemy radar. Hit by flak an engine caught fire and 40 minutes later, believing the plane had crossed into Allied territory, the pilot, Flight Lieutenant John Wynne, ordered the crew to bale out while he searched for an emergency airfield. Eventually he gave up the attempt, tried unsuccessfully to bail out and, after

the fire burned out, managed to bring the plane home to England.

Tate and the others landed 30 miles west of the town of Pforzheim and were captured. After interrogation they were moved to Pforzheim. They were not to know that three weeks earlier the town had been destroyed by the RAF in a firestorm which in 20 minutes killed 18,000 people, a quarter of the population. As the RAF prisoners were marched through the suburb of Huchenfeld they were stoned. They were then locked up for the night in the boiler house of a local school.

That evening, in revenge for the attack on Pforzheim, a group of Hitler Youth teenagers, under orders from the district commandant and egged on by a mob, overpowered the guards and dragged the prisoners to a cemetery. It was clear to Tate that they were about to be killed. Somehow he broke loose in the dark and managed to get through the crowd and into the woods.

The next day Tate surrendered to the Wehrmacht. A soldier protected him from a second mob, shared his bread and schnapps with him, and gave him clothes and a pair of

The people of Pforzheim, Germany, suffered dreadfully in World War II—and a British aircrew paid a terrible price. Michael Henderson discovers how a small community is laying its ghosts to rest.

shoes in which he could walk to the station. He spent the rest of the war in a prison camp. His five fellow airmen had indeed been murdered.

The following year Tate was asked to return to Germany to give evidence at the war crimes trials. In court he stood before the 22 men and youths who had dragged them off. 'I had a feeling of hatred and no compassion,' he says. The commandant was executed, the others given prison sentences. It was then that Tate swore he would never go back to Germany.

'FATHER FORGIVE'

The story might have ended there but for former German cavalry officer and prisoner of war Pastor Curt-Jürgen Heinemann-Grüder, who retired to Huchenfeld in 1989 and heard rumours of a wartime massacre. Having established what had happened, he suggested, with the backing of the local pastor, Horst Zorn, that a plaque should be put up as a way of making amends.

Heinemann-Grüder was in close touch with Dr Paul Oestreicher at Coventry Cathedral. Since the cathedral's destruction by German bombers in World War II, it has pioneered a work of reconciliation. Only six weeks after its bombing, the Provost of the time, Dick Howard, made a radio broadcast from the ruins asking British people to say 'No' to revenge and 'Yes' to forgiveness.

Despite criticism from local people the pastors persisted in their conviction. In November 1992 a bronze memorial was unveiled by Oestreicher with the names of the men and the words 'Vater vergib' (Father forgive). At a special service

Heinemann-Grüder told the congregation, 'Cowardice is a sin, just like fanaticism; this we confess and we seek forgiveness.'

The widow of one of the murdered airmen, Marjorie Frost-Taylor, was present. She had heard about the event through an article in a British newspaper headed 'German village faces its ghosts' and had been encouraged by Oestreicher to attend. For years she had prayed to know what had happened to her husband: now she felt God was answering her.

During Communion an older man pulled aside one of the clergy and whispered, 'I was one of the Hitler Youth who shot that night. I killed them. Forgive me but I don't have the strength to meet her.' He turned and left.

Renate Beck-Ehninger, who has chronicled the Huchenfeld story in *The Plaque—letters to my English godson*, writes, 'What a story! For 47 years Marjorie had not known how her husband had died. For 47 years a former Hitler Youth—then perhaps 16 years old—had borne the burden of having carried out a grown-up's command to kill. What would it have been like, had they been able to meet? To this very day it has remained Marjorie's true but unfulfilled wish: "I want to give my hand and say I have no bitterness any more."'

ROCKING HORSE

Oestreicher presented Huchenfeld with a replica of the Cross of Nails which was fashioned from mediaeval nails discovered in the ruins of Coventry Cathedral. This is an honour that has been afforded to cities which have suffered like Dresden, which was destroyed during the war and has since worked for reconciliation.

Shortly before the plaque was put up, the pilot, John Wynne, was traced and told about the forthcoming ceremony. He had not known of the fate of the five crew members. Then 71 and a farmer in Wales, he felt that a reciprocal gesture was called for and in 1993 commissioned a small rocking-horse for the Huchenfeld kindergarten. It was named 'Hoffnung' (hope) and was presented 'on behalf of the mothers of 214 Squadron RAF'. 'Our future will ride upon her back,' said Wynne as he handed it over to 91-year-old Emilie Bohnenberger who had lost her husband in the war, but had saved another British airman from a mob and later provided a pair of her dead husband's boots for Tate's journey to prison.

A three-page spread, describing what had happened, was carried by the English magazine *Saga*. Back in England, absorbed in golfing and gardening, Tom Tate, was given a copy of the magazine by a friend, who recommended its tours. He was about to throw it out unopened when an impulse of his 'inner being', as he puts it, persuaded him to unwrap it. He read to his amazement what had happened and got in touch with Wynne who urged him to go to Huchenfeld.

Local people, he was told, had longed for years to meet a survivor so that they could express their shame and horror and ask for forgiveness. 'Fate had played its trump card,' says Tate.

His first visit was undertaken with some trepidation. But he reached out beyond his fears to the people of the town. He

recognized, he says, that local people who had no part in the crime had lived with this ongoing stigma and he realized how wrong he had been to remain an enemy for 48 years. He told those he met about the soldier who had helped him on the morning of his arrest: 'In the hands of a lesser man I would not have survived.'

Tate met the soldier's son and has since paid public tribute to him in German as 'a noble example of honourable behaviour towards a fellow human being'. This soldier's action had to some extent offset the heinous crimes of the previous day. Tate also met Frau Bohnenberger who had taken a great risk in giving him her husband's boots.

Since then Tate has attended the annual commemoration ceremony every year. He sees the plaque as a powerful symbol of the 'wonderful ties' of friendship which have been established, while the holiday exchange of children between Huchenfeld and Llanbedr, home of John Wynne, ensures

'It is time to forgive and live in friendship and peace.'

that such friendships continue to be cultivated. 'Friendships are most easily made between children and young parents; the relics of war cling to their prejudices,' says Wynne. 'Our aim is that every primary school child in Llanbedr shall have the opportunity to visit Huchenfeld before he or she moves on to secondary school.'

It is an ongoing story. In December 2002 Chris Bowlby made a programme about Huchenfeld for BBC Radio and *The Times* published an article by him. As a result, Glenn Hall and Richard Vinnall,

whose fathers had been murdered, learned more about their fate. Both now hope to visit Huchenfeld.

Are any of the murderers, like the unknown man who came forward at the service, still alive? Tate would like to meet them. 'I have reached the stage to think they've suffered enough. They have had this on their conscience for 57 years. It is time to forgive and live in friendship and peace.' He often thinks of the terror the people of Pforzheim suffered and tells them that he hopes that 'in understanding and sharing your nightmare memories you will also derive some comfort from me'.

Michael Henderson is the author of *'Forgiveness: breaking the chain of hate'*. Website: michaelhenderson.org.uk



Tom Tate with Emilie Bohnenberger who, 52 years before, had given him her late husband's boots for his journey to prison camp



Tata's army of volunteers

Michael Smith reports on the Indian industrial empire that is producing social capital as well as profits.

As you drive along a dusty road, past parched fields east of the steel city of Jamshedpur in Bihar, a large brick college building comes into view. It dominates the tribal hamlet of Asanboni. The college serves 500 students from some 75 villages, in one of India's poorest regions. It was opened in 1993 by J J Irani, then Managing Director of the huge Tata Iron and Steel Company (Tisco) in Jamshedpur. A local *adivasi* (tribal) leader, Shailendra Mahato, had persuaded the company to fund the building's construction, as part of its social welfare policy.

The Tata Group, one of India's largest private sector conglomerates (involving some 80 companies), is renowned worldwide for its commitment to social welfare. Western businesses may be

discovering the virtues of 'corporate social responsibility'. But Tata has been practising it for decades, in a nation that has virtually no welfare safety net. Housing for employees, company-run hospitals and schools, and rural development projects such as road building, tree planting and well digging, are all part of the Tata package. Tata Steel introduced the world's first eight-hour working day, back in 1912, and today employees are deemed to be at work from the moment they leave their

'The company's soul lies in its social involvement.'

homes and are paid accordingly.

Revolutionary stuff. But now Tata's social ethos is under threat due to globalization. Just at the time when Asanboni's village college was opened, India was also opening its doors to global competition through trade liberalization and reduction of import tariffs. This has put enormous pressure on companies such as Tata to cut costs.

The biggest challenge facing the Tata empire today is 'how to be an international company and, at the same time, maintain its soul,' says R Gopalakrishnan, Executive Director of Tata Sons, Tata's parent company. In his view the company's soul lies in its social involvement.

At Tata headquarters in downtown Mumbai, Gopalakrishnan expressed satisfaction with the agreement that Telco, the Tata Engineering company in Pune, had

just reached with MG Rover cars in Britain. Telco is exporting its popular five-door hatchback, the Indica, to Britain, modified to Rover's design style, to sell under the Rover marque. It is an example of a reverse globalization working to India's advantage, and Gopalakrishnan portrays it as being of symbiotic advantage to both companies. Deals such as this have helped the Tata Group to achieve profits last year of \$719 million on a turn-over of over \$10 billion.

Yet despite such figures there are those who fear that Tata will find it increasingly tough to maintain its social welfare commitments. Production costs have already been slashed. Tisco, for instance, claims to produce the cheapest steel in the world. But it has achieved this by cutting jobs dramatically.

PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT

Anant Nadkarni, who oversees Tata's community initiatives, says the way to maintain Tata's social ethos is through 'a holistic approach'. Tata may have to 'look beyond its current social expenditure of \$30 million a year', he says. Throwing money at development 'misses the point. It is not a question of chequebook philanthropy but of personal involvement. We need to innovate. It is like a river confronted by a mountain. The river has to go round.'

So how has Tata innovated? By getting its employees to volunteer for community service. 'We have 14,000 volunteers registered from 20 companies,' says Nadkarni, who is General Manager, Group Corporate Social Responsibility. Staff

typically give 3-4 hours per week.

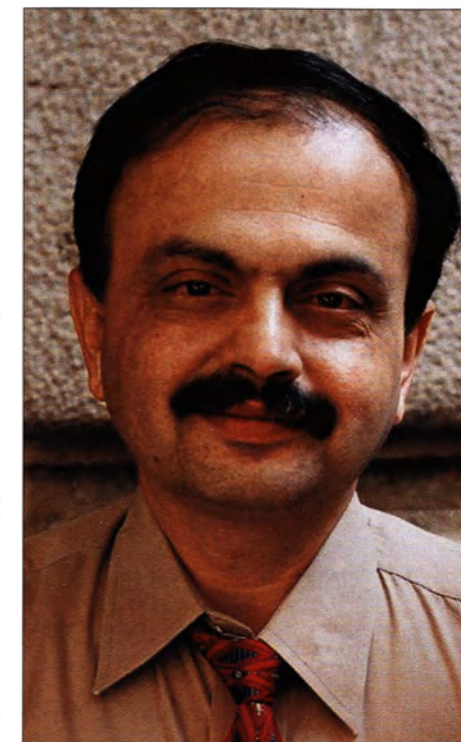
Nadkarni sees this as being holistic 'because it is very therapeutic'. Serving the less fortunate in the villages 'is a way of understanding yourself', he says. 'Modern systems of management,' he believes, 'are not designed to release the true potential of individuals whilst achieving the company's ends. But community service does that.' He quotes Sir Edmund Hillary: 'It is not the mountain we have to conquer but ourselves.'

Nadkarni talks about the 'push and pull' influences on his own 25-year career in Tata, which have led to his current position. He had received higher education, housing and medical care at Tata Engineering in Pune where he was an internal auditor. 'Tata gives promotions and rewards without leaving a sense of obligation for the receiver,' he says. 'This gradually transforms you into being a giver yourself.' When he was bored by mundane work on production targets, he volunteered to mentor two non-governmental organizations in Pune. He built up some 25 citizens' groups under the National Society for Clean Cities, in liaison with the municipal authority, and became joint coordinator of the Express Citizens' Forum. This community work gave him an opportunity, he says, for 'self-expression, problem solving and creativity'.

Two friends stood by his side at that time, he continues. They were connected with the Initiatives of Change centre in Panchgani, where they invited Nadkarni in 1992. 'This reinforced a lot of what I had earlier believed, but the process there took me further in realizing that change begins with me.' The experience encouraged Nadkarni to make his long-term career shift within Tata, to pioneer the Tata Council for Community Initiatives as its first operating head, seven years ago.

Nadkarni points to the many initiatives that have emerged. A designer at Tata Automation has developed a new type of artificial limb, which could be adopted globally. An officer from Tata Engineering in Jamshedpur has set up a care centre that rehabilitates people cured of leprosy. And Tata Consultancy Services (one of Tata's major companies) has developed an adult literacy education system that claims to teach 60-year-olds to read a newspaper within three weeks. 'This initiative is greatly impacting the pace at which the nation's Adult Literacy Programme is being implemented,' Nadkarni believes.

Tata's enlightened approach could become part of a wider trend. Next year, Tata Industries will be one of the 30 international companies to submit 'triple bottom line' accounting, measuring not just their financial results but also their social and environmental practice, to the United Nations Global Reporting Initiative.



Nadkarni: 'holistic approach'

Tata is also developing an index measuring 'human excellence', similar to the Human Development Index of the United Nations Development Programme. 'This is the first time that any corporation in the world has applied the Human Development Index principles through a business process,' Nadkarni says. The company has also sought the help of the Confederation of Indian Industries in creating a network of companies that maintain community initiatives.

WELL-BEING

Nadkarni says that there has never been any resistance to Tata's social expenditure from its two million shareholders. Nor, he claims, do Tata executives see community involvement as a means of burnishing the company's reputation. They have even been known to remove 'sponsored by Tata' signs from village initiatives, he says.

So what's in it for Tata? 'I don't see the need for the question at all,' Nadkarni replies briskly. 'Gautam Buddha left his house to seek enlightenment: how to conquer disease, old age and death. But when a paradigm shift, or enlightenment, happens you forget the first questions. If you ask what is the business sense in this you are not the man I may want to work with.' He agrees with R M Lala, author of a best-selling book on the house of Tata, *The Creation of Wealth*, that wealth is far more than profit or income generation. It is to do with 'weal, which means well-being or happiness' of the communities that businesses serve. And that, says Nadkarni, is what Tata is determined to maintain. ■



JJ Irani opens Asanboni College, funded by Tata Steel in 1993



When a group of Ugandan children was asked to put on a play, they chose war and reconciliation as its themes. **Mercy Mirembe Ntangaare** worked with them.

Acting up for peace

During the 1979 Liberation War in Uganda, my village was a battlefield. With bullets whizzing over our heads, we herded our cattle into the kraal, snatched a few belongings, and ran for the mountains. My mother was heavy with her seventh-born and could not keep up, so we had to leave her behind in the next village.

Two days later, the grown-ups sent us young people back to our village to look for food. They thought we would be less likely to be captured and conscripted. I was 15, and this sounded such an honourable duty to perform for our families. Off we scampered, with an immeasurable sense of excitement and freedom.

On the way, we did things we would never have dared to do before. We broke into people's deserted homes and feasted on the food we found. We ate their sugarcane, mangoes, bananas and other fruits. It was all

a merry-go-round until we reached the village where we had left my mother. She was okay, and had given birth normally, but the victorious troops were on the rampage, looting homes and raping women and girls. We were hushed into hiding under the beds behind stacks of ripe yellow bananas. By now, the soldiers were weary of eating bananas, and would move on after a casual chat with our grandmas, strategically positioned in the living room.

This was just one of my country's 'liberation wars'. Civil unrest in Uganda had intensified since Amin came to power in 1971 and was not to subside until 1986 when the present government took control. There is still conflict in northern Uganda.

This experience of war has inspired me and some of my age-mates to use our careers in theatre and the arts to advocate coexistence and peaceful living. In particular, I have produced two children's plays for the Uganda Theatre Network



(UTN), a community theatre initiative which is part of the Eastern Africa Theatre Institute.

Dustbin Nations (October 2000) was composed and performed by a group of seven, aged from nine to 17, from different parts of Uganda. We had been invited to perform at a youth festival in Ethiopia, and our initial plan was to take entertaining songs, dances and stories. But the children wanted to present something that would reflect what they saw and heard around them daily; something that told of Africa's present and future dilemma.

The play they created revolves around three sets of people in a refugee camp, where tribal hatred leads to the stabbing of a mother of two. The poignant tragedy is the way the grown-ups use the children: the killer asks a 12-year-old to steal a weapon for her in return for meat. The 12-year-old's father later asks, 'Why should wars, poverty, famine, and diseases be the

trademark in Africa? The children we maim and orphan are the leaders of tomorrow; give them the peace and love they deserve.'

At first, taking part was heavy for the children, as the plot was close to their own experiences. The mother, for instance, was played by a 16-year-old former refugee of northern origin, who had known war all her life. Her father lives in some sort of exile in London and her mother died in early 2001. As a result of war and Aids, child family heads are not uncommon in some parts of Uganda: in playing the mother, she was acting out her life experience.

Three of the children came from the former Luwero Triangle in Central Uganda, the scene of intense fighting in the early 1980s. Their parents had been displaced, they had lost close relatives in the war and had seen young relatives conscripted. The mother of two of them died of Aids in mid-2001; their father now performs with them in a community theatre group.

In the first week of rehearsals the children were uneasy and unwilling to open up. Even though the story was their idea, we wondered if it was unfair to make them act out these experiences. But the outcome was good. The children became good friends, and have continued to support each other, and we have kept in touch with them since the project ended.

NATIONAL THEATRE

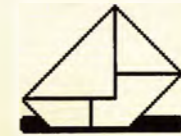
The second play, *The Chief of Shumankuzi Village*, was written in a similar way, by a group of Ugandans and Ethiopians aged from 12 to 22. They lived and worked together for three weeks in Kampala before they came up with their one-hour production on corruption.

The play tells the story of a village chief who openly cheats a blind boy of his money and physically assaults a widow. Since none of the adults seem to care, the children work together to expose and confound the chief's corrupt tendencies, enlisting the assistance of some circus artists. The play also emphasizes issues of disability, cultural pluralism and regional cooperation.

Five of the children who took part in the play had disabilities—one was blind, another lame, two were deaf and one had mental problems. They performed it five times at the National Theatre in Kampala. Ambassadors and government ministers were in the audience.

As directors and producers of UTN we have also taken theatre to the areas of Uganda which are still experiencing conflict. We have worked with women and young people in the Bundibugyo Refugee Camp in western Uganda, and are now preparing to work with internally displaced people in camps at the heart of the war area in northern Uganda.

Mercy Mirembe Ntangaare is a playwright and Head of Music, Dance and Drama at Makerere University, Kampala.



From Penelope Turing, London, UK

It is almost unbelievable that in Bryan Hamlin's interesting article (Feb/March 2003) there is not one mention of Israel and the Palestine situation. He seems perplexed that there are feelings of animosity in Europe towards the US.

Does he not realize that it is difficult for people in other parts of the world to put the slightest reliance on protestations of good, altruistic intentions on the part of America—and Britain—while the US takes no decisive steps to ensure that Israel evacuates territories occupied in 1967, dismantles illegal settlements and allows the Palestinians to establish their own state under their chosen leader, Arafat?

Until this happens those unhappy people, their way of life, health and education systems destroyed, will—alas!—continue to strike back in the only way left to them: terrorist reprisals by desperate, heartbroken men and women. Only the US is able to bring this pressure to bear, and the world knows that.

From Harry Pople, Bristol, UK

Does Bryan Hamlin realize, I wonder, just how provocative the proposition that the USA 'has now become the world's policeman' appears on this side of the Atlantic? It is the very basis on which many like myself find ourselves mistrustful of American 'might'.

Police by their very nature are appointed to their role and are answerable for their conduct to legal and governmental authority. Can Bryan Hamlin tell us who appointed the USA to such a responsibility? No wonder that, confronted with these unanswered questions, people like me have deep concerns that America, however well-intentioned, seems to be acting as judge, jury and on-the-spot police officer. Why cannot America, with its enormous potential for good, earnestly set about creating a multinational police force?

From Virginia Goulding, Birmingham, UK

I cannot agree with all the points raised by Antoine Jaulmes (April/May letters). It is nonsense to suggest that Americans want to be global police or sheriffs. Recently I spent six weeks travelling across the USA, my homeland. I stayed in 10 different homes in five states. No one I met wanted war. Even now they feel that the sooner Iraqis can take democratic control of their own country, the better. Thus letting our forces go home and stay.

From Fiona Leggat, London, UK

Last year I returned to Sherkole Refugee

Camp, Ethiopia, where I had previously worked as a volunteer. I was surprised to hear people there discussing stories that seemed familiar. Then I realized that the stories were taken from *For A Change* articles that they had read.

Thanks to a generous donation, I had arranged for *FAC* to be sent to the school library for the last two years. It is the only magazine received in the camp and, together with the BBC World Service, is one of the main sources of news from the outside world. My refugee friends told me that they love reading the stories which they find inspiring and encouraging in a situation where there is little to give them hope.

On my return to Addis I met the previous UNHCR head of the camp who complained that since leaving Sherkole he was missing *FAC*. But like so many from countries with a poor foreign exchange rate, he cannot afford a subscription. So it looks as if I'll be looking to find another generous donor!

And to all the Sudanese refugees in Sherkole who are reading this, you are in our thoughts and prayers.

From Eelko Bergsma, The Netherlands

In a group Bible study at my Methodist Church, we looked at the action of the Holy Spirit. We asked whether we had had experiences that could be put down to its influence. To my surprise many of us came up with stories.

One of the group had the sudden realization, whilst listening to a sermon in church, that he should talk to someone else who had probably been hurt by an earlier conversation.

For myself, I recalled being at a loss when the editors of a book rejected an article I had written about the importance of personal motivation in Third World development projects. I felt a growing conviction that I should get the article published because it explained why much development effort in the Third World is ineffective. It felt rather presumptuous but, with colleagues' help, the article was published in a very good international journal.

In terms of countries and international relations, such experiences may appear irrelevant. Yet the attitude of earnestly searching for the will of God for individual lives and for a community may create a type of social life that is recognized as being of value to everyone.

The Editors welcome letters for publication but reserve the right to shorten them.



'I have tomorrow'

When 19-year-old Romanian **Eva Szabo** discovered she had cancer, she didn't understand why her family were so upset. Two years on, she faces the future in a country where home support and palliative care are only beginning.



Caroline Reed

No one deserves to have cancer but now if I could have my old life back, I would choose to have cancer. Sounds silly doesn't it? However, it has brought me closer to God than I have ever been.

At the age of 19 I noticed a lump forming in my right leg. It was soft when my leg was relaxed and it got hard when I flexed it, but it didn't bother me much. After a while my leg began to hurt. The doctor told me to put ice on it, rest and see if the swelling went away.

Until that time I knew almost nothing about cancer. Nobody in my family had been seriously ill. When I first heard that I had cancer, I wondered why my dad was crying—he used to be in the army and was the strongest man I had ever known. I thought that I would be in hospital for some weeks and then everything would be fine.

After two weeks in hospital in my home city, I was sent to another hospital 80 km away. Three weeks and lots of tests later they discovered that I had Synovial Sarcoma. My doctor sat on my bed and told me that if I were her daughter she would recommend that my leg be amputated. I didn't hear the last part of the conversation—I just saw her lips moving, felt her hand holding mine and tried not to cry. Then I asked her to go because I could see the pity on the faces of the other seven patients in the room.

I couldn't speak or move. A whole world broke down inside me. Nobody dared to

come near me. I hoisted the blanket up over my head and fell into myself. What had started as small lump on my leg had turned into a fight for my life! I felt angry and forgotten by God but he didn't let me down.

Next day my brother came with the news that a doctor in Hungary would operate on me and that I had to be in Budapest in three days' time. I had never been outside the country before. I got my passport in one day and my brother and I travelled for nine hours, overnight, to Budapest. It was the first time I saw a train or a metro.

The day before the surgery my boyfriend proposed to me and I was shining with happiness. My brother and boyfriend spent every day with me. They even helped me to forget that my parents hadn't come to see me.

The doctors tried everything but in the end they had to amputate my leg. I don't know which was worse—losing my leg, or the pain I felt. I spent the night awake trying on this new 'me'.

Once I got used to my new leg, things started to get back to normal. I was told that the entire lump had been excised, but to be sure I was sent for chemotherapy. Afterwards I returned home. I looked horrible as my hair was falling out and I couldn't afford a wig. But God did not let me down as I met a group from Britain (from Medical Support in Romania). I received a wig, which made me really happy, and in time they became a part of my family.

Over the next 12 months, I had quarterly check-ups. It was a difficult period, because

my grandmothers died, my father began to drink heavily and my boyfriend wanted just to be my friend.

In April 2002, I started having pains in my back and two spots were found on my right lung. I had to start all over again, but it was tougher now because I had an allergic reaction to the chemotherapy. My immune system was so weak that I couldn't complete the treatment.

Helping others seems to be the greatest form of therapy. I began to feel better about myself when I realized that I could bring inspiration and hope to others coping with cancer. I have met some wonderful people. Some of them I had known for years, without knowing how wonderful they were. Others I would never have known. I have met extraordinary people battling with the disease and medical people who have gone beyond the call of duty to help me. My disease has profoundly changed my outlook on life, on people, on religion, on the world.

I believe that a positive attitude is the only way to fight cancer, because without that you are letting it control your life. I don't know what the outcome will be. I believe I have a good chance of survival. My strength is slowly returning and I am thankful for the time I am on this earth. I cling to the fact that I have tomorrow, for now. ■

First novel

Every third person
by Karin Peters
Highland Books, Godalming, £4.99
ISBN: 1-897913-66-4

When she was 14, Karin Peters' uncle died of cancer. 'It felt like a bomb had been dropped on top of my world,' she says. In her attempt to come to terms with what had happened she found herself writing a novel, about a teenager struggling with the disease.

Three years later, the book has been published in Britain, and in Sweden, her mother's country. Readers accompany 15-year-old Vada through the ups and downs of her disease—and of teenage life. In the process she learns about herself and her faith and relationships become stronger.

The book was originally written by hand and then typed up and printed out with the help of her family. Sales of the first self-published edition raised over £300 for cancer charities.

The title refers to the fact that one in three people will suffer from cancer at some point in their lives. Written in an authentic teenage voice, this book will appeal to all ages.

The thrill of the big picture

Even the most pragmatic students become philosophers after reading *Sophie's World*, discovers **Marta Sañudo**.

Ask a young person whether they are interested in philosophy and they may well reply that they do not know what philosophy is. Ask any of my students the same question and 99 per cent would answer that they find philosophy not only interesting but thrilling. This is not so much a testament to my teaching skills as to the effect of using Jostein Gaarder's novel, *Sophie's World*, as a textbook in my Introduction to Philosophy course.

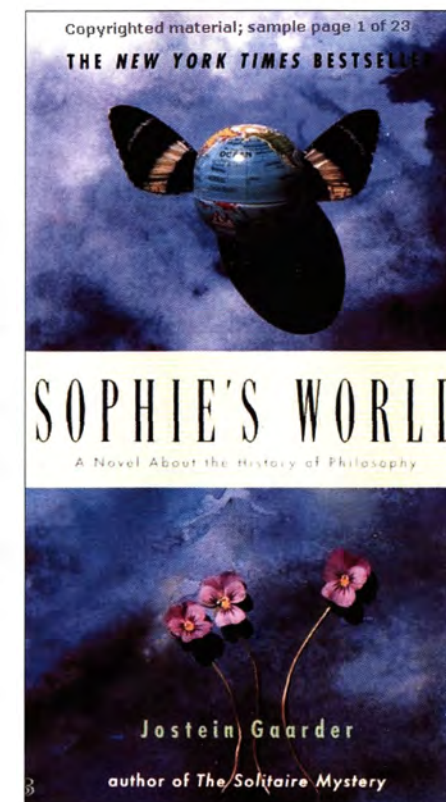
The course—at the University of Monterrey in northern Mexico—is open to students majoring in any subject. It's an example of the new plurality in university curricula around the world. This beautiful ideal materializes in my class in the interaction between students of Medicine, Engineering, Literature, Accountancy, Law, Administration....

Gaarder presents the splendour of philosophy in a rather colloquial tale. *Sophie's World* is the story of a girl who, a few months before her 15th birthday, receives a mysterious letter which asks: 'Who are you?' As Sophie begins to muse on this, the reader also begins to ask questions: 'What makes me into me? Who am I after all?'

HEADACHES OF DELIGHT

When I arrive for the second class—by which the students have to have read the first 50 pages of the book—I walk into a room of convinced philosophers. A discussion commences about whether we have lost our innate sense of wonder and this soon develops into discerning the ways in which our society makes us comply with its rules, and limits our inquiring minds. Philosophy has a revolutionary quality.

However, it is not sufficient to rebel. It is much more complex than that. The history of philosophy reveals that one must first consider the big picture—what is the overall meaning of life? what are the deepest human desires? what end should society serve?—before doing away with the established 'good life' that our society offers us. Philosophers call this larger picture 'metaphysics'. In *Sophie's World*,



Gaarder introduces this by considering whether there is an overall plan for our lives (call it Providence or destiny), and whether reality is as it appears or hides within a labyrinth of logical deductions and mystical experiences. This exhilarating quest gives my students headaches of delight.

This is just the first 50 pages—and the Spanish translation of the book has 632, which no student, so far, has complained about reading in full. The rest of Gaarder's book, ranging from the ancient Greeks through to the 20th century, is a smooth and enrapturing read—because Gaarder has already lured the students into a philosophical quest. In the first few pages, he masterfully conveys the thing that professional philosophers find so hard to get across to non-philosophers—the kick we obtain from realizing that we are grasping the hub of an issue that has

immediate consequences for the way we look at the world.

As the story progresses, the letters multiply and Sophie sets out to find their author, who turns out to be Albert, a philosopher. He shows her that they are in fact both characters in a book on philosophy, written by someone else. Albert is teaching Sophie philosophy in an attempt to distract the author, who is making them the victims of his whims. Albert suggests that they should try to escape from his pen.

MIRROR OF THE JUMBLE

The reader wants to know what will happen—and at the same time starts wondering if we are all characters in a story written by someone else. In that case one would either have to comply with the script set for one or rebel against it. We come here to issues of freedom and determinism. The book, with its stories within a story, is a mirror of the jumble we call life.

Anyone who has had the slightest contact with academic philosophy won't find much new philosophical content in this book, which is a repetition of mainstream histories and has little to say about alternative interpretations. Similarly, anyone who approaches *Sophie's World* with novels like Tolstoy's, Maugham's or Kundera's in mind will be disappointed. But *Sophie's World* manages to combine the suspense of a good novel with acquainting the reader with a wide range of philosophical authors and their ideas.

Gaarder's genius is to turn Sophie's world into the reader's own world. Over 20 million copies of his book have been sold, in 45 languages. Its success is a hopeful sign. The name of the main character, Sophie, and the book's title play with the etymology of 'philosophy' which stems from the Greek for 'lover of wisdom'. It is encouraging that so many readers all around the world—including my students in Mexico—find wisdom worth pondering and loving.

Marta Sañudo is a lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Monterrey, Mexico.

Associated Press



US Brigadier General Vince Brooks faces reporters at a press conference at the Coalition Media Centre in Qatar

Truth, lies and freedom

by Mike Lowe

As a youngster I was greatly impressed by an uncle who told me that, although he was a conservative, he read a socialist newspaper. He wanted to be presented with viewpoints and arguments different from his own so that his mind would remain challenged and alert.

I recalled this when reviewing media coverage of the recent war in Iraq. Democracies which go to war with public opinion so divided take great risks. If there is any truth in the axiom (of American journalist IF Stone) that 'all governments lie', then it is likely to be true at such times.

Certainly politicians have been very aware of the media's potential as a weapon of war. In Britain, the Home Secretary and the Commander of British Forces in the Gulf were among those highly critical of the way the war was being reported, whilst the Foreign Secretary acknowledged that television images, in particular, could

impact military strategy.

Given such political interest in what the media reports, it would not be surprising if some politicians went beyond criticism to more sinister attempts to control the media. This is the accusation made by the European Broadcasting Union (EBU)—which represents the BBC, CNN and French, German and Italian independent and state broadcasters. Early in the conflict the EBU secretary-general claimed that US Central Command policy was 'actively restricting independent newsgathering' in southern Iraq, and creating a 'caste-system' in which certain journalists—usually from coalition countries—were 'embedded' with troops and allowed to report from the front line, whilst other journalists were being forcibly removed from the area.

At about the same time, Britain's Defence Secretary wrote in *The Times* that he had 'sanctioned the "embedding" of 128 British journalists and technicians within our units'. He went on to claim that 'the imagery they broadcast is at least partially

responsible for the public's change in mood, with the majority of people now saying they back the coalition'.

HERMETIC WORLD

New York journalist Michael Wolff described the 'hermetic' world of the Coalition Media Centre. After he had been there 48 hours he realized that 'information is probably more freely available at any other place in the world than it is here'. According to him, 'there are two kinds of forward reporters: the official embeds with units on the ground in Iraq, who know only the details of the action they see, and those posted to military press centres in Kuwait or Qatar who know only what they are told'.

One good thing about the unprecedented numbers of journalists reporting from the front line was that the coalition military had to be on their best behaviour. At the time of writing there have been no reports of the kind of atrocities that, sadly, have all too often been a feature of warfare.

But has all this reporting given us the real story? At the time, the 1991 Gulf War was the 'most televised conflict ever'. Yet the public was given precisely the picture that suited the American-led forces—that this was a high-tech war of 'surgical strikes' and few casualties. The truth was somewhat different. In a 1991 report by Human Rights Watch, the largest human-rights organization in the United States, the US Air Force chief of staff is quoted as saying that only 8.8 per cent of the munitions dropped by Allied Forces were 'smart bombs'. The remainder were unguided bombs with an estimated accuracy of 25 per cent. And whilst downtown Baghdad (with its international journalists) was bombed using only precision-guided weaponry, other cities suffered a disproportionately high amount of damage. The true human cost of that war may never be known, but a 1993 report by International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War estimated that over 200,000 Iraqis died in 1991 from the effects of the war or post-war turmoil. One could add to that the thousands who have continued to die since 1991 from the effects of damage to health and sanitation infrastructure.

AL-JAZEERA

A major difference between the time of the last Gulf War and now is the existence of the Internet and satellite media. Qatar-

based al-Jazeera TV station claims to have picked up an additional four million European subscribers since the start of the conflict, bringing the worldwide total to more than 50 million. Clearly not everyone is pleased about this. At one point the Iraqi authorities expelled them from Baghdad. The Pentagon wrote to the station asking them to refrain from broadcasting 'sensitive' material but found that there was little pressure that could be brought to bear on them (although al-Jazeera's accreditation at the New York stock exchange was revoked). Perhaps the bombing of al-Jazeera's Baghdad office by two missiles was a 'grave mistake' as US forces claimed, along with the 'accidental' bombing of other media offices. But the Arabic station says that it was careful to give the Americans its exact position to prevent such accidents, and sees the bombing as deliberate. (Its office in Kabul was also bombed by the Americans during the Afghan conflict in 2001.)

We in the West are rightly proud of our freedom of speech. It is fundamental to all other freedoms. Freedom, by definition, means choice. Freedom of thought therefore implies the possibility of choosing between different ideas, perspectives and points of view. George Orwell understood this in his nightmarish depiction of totalitarianism, *1984*. A government that controls the raw material of thought (language and information) can enslave people's minds without them even realizing they are not free.

Regimes that lie and ruthlessly control the media to prevent their lies being exposed are nothing new. Stalin, Hitler and

Mussolini used these tactics. So did Saddam Hussein. (Western journalists were subject to stringent controls in Saddam's Iraq.) Compared to the efforts of these tyrants, Western democracies' attempts to control the media seem half-hearted, almost benign.

There are, I think, more worrying forces. One is media monopolies. In Rupert Murdoch's native Australia, the best-selling newspaper in every major capital apart from Perth is owned by his News Corporation. Worldwide he owns

'Freedom, by definition, means choice'

175 newspapers as well as the gigantic Fox television network. All but one of these titles (in Tasmania) has taken a pro-war line, prompting at least one journalist's resignation (from Britain's *The Sun*).

In early April, the lower house of the Italian Parliament voted to limit to two the number of TV channels any single company could own, thus forcing Prime Minister Berlusconi to give up one of his three channels.

But even media monopolies may be less effective than self-censorship when it comes to stifling freedom of thought. We can be our own 'secret policemen' denying ourselves exposure to 'dissident' ideas.

Thanks to new technology we have access to a wider range of information sources than ever before. Yet there is evidence to suggest that people are simply choosing to tune into the channels which reflect their own biases. It is easy to understand why. Doing so makes us feel good and confirms our sense that we are right and others are wrong. Yet, if we truly care about freedom, we should follow my uncle's example—or its cyber equivalent. ■



A journalist is searched at a security point in Baghdad



WEBSITE

by Robert Webb

What follows war?

Having lost a son in World War I, the great German artist Kathe Kollwitz was avowedly anti-war but equally committed to what she called 'a new idea—that of the brotherhood of man'. In his book, *All Saints: daily reflections on saints, prophets and witnesses for our time* (Crossroad, 1997), Robert Ellsberg writes that Kollwitz worked for many years on the statue, *Mourning Parents*, modelled after her and her husband, Karl. Commissioned for the Soldiers Cemetery near Dixmuden, it was finally unveiled in 1932, and, in Ellsberg's words 'remains a devastating image of sorrow over the waste of life'.

Some wars may be just, some unavoidable, but every war summons us to work all the harder for that 'brotherhood of man'. That's why the United Nations was born from World War II.

The trouble is, we forget so soon. One reason generals are often the most reluctant warriors is that they, more than most, know war's horror and don't forget. From knowing that horror, General and later US Secretary of State George C Marshall, whom I once interviewed, surely fought all the harder for that 'brotherhood of man'. He gave his name to the post-World War II European reconstruction plan. Similarly, US Secretary of State Colin Powell, a retired general, was one of the most reluctant to agree to the war in Iraq. That war, with all its horror and merciful

brevery, calls on us, once again, to work all the harder for peace coupled with justice.

Of course, many people in and out of government work for peace in many ways. One is Radwan Masmoudi, the Tunisian founder and head of the Washington, DC-based Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy. He believes strongly that Islam, democracy and peace are compatible. He carries that message wherever he goes. A few months ago he conducted workshops in Egypt, Yemen and Morocco with participants from a wide spectrum of religious and secular philosophies. His lengthy report reveals an equally wide spectrum of opinions. But there are rays of hope for freedom and democracy in areas where they are sharply limited today.

It has been well said that peace is 'people becoming different'. We become different by trying to understand and even

care for those who oppose us. We become different by taking a hard and honest look at where we ourselves need to change. For me, born and reared in the racially segregated Deep South of America, that meant finding love for those of another colour, for those of different religious and ethnic backgrounds. It means making restitution as best I can for things I've done wrong. An American Muslim businessman I met some months ago agreed this was the secret to peace in the world.

As a boy scout in World War II, I was frequently asked, along with fellow scouts, to help direct traffic and otherwise assist at military funerals. At one point I was asked to take a two-hour turn as honour guard of an Eagle Scout killed in air-cadet training. I'll never forget the sorrow symbolized by the bugler's 'Taps' and the pain of mourning parents. Most of us have lost relatives and friends in wars—wars we should never forget even as we strive to understand, and even love, those who differ from us.

Perhaps the most rewarding, though demanding, work for anyone is turning enemies into friends. Were she still alive, Kathe Kollwitz would surely agree.

Robert Webb is a former columnist and editorial writer for the 'Cincinnati Enquirer'. He lives in Alexandria, Va, USA.

FOR A CHANGE

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REFLECTIONS

by Fabiola Benavente



Home knows no borders

I have found that when I live each day in the context of global citizenship, each person I meet is a journey of discovery. This approach also helps me to feel that we all live under the same roof, the sky.

Whenever I have travelled, I have been struck by the realization that when we peel back the layers of our cultural differences, we are all looking for the same thing—to be fulfilled and happy in life.

I first left my family in Chiapas, Mexico, to venture outside my country in 1996, when I was 17. I spent a year in the United States, staying with a family in Kingston, New York. I had heard people describe American culture as cold—but the family I stayed with shattered this stereotype. From the first day, they welcomed me as another member of their family. They didn't have a spare bedroom, but they adapted a TV room into my special space. They introduced me to all their relatives, and took me to high school each day. Today I feel that I have a second family in the US.

Naturally there were challenges—particularly facing life on my own. This helped me to get to know my inner self:

when I felt homesick I founded it helped to keep a diary, to register my emotions. But what helped most was having my American family there for me. We had a family joke about whether there are eggs in Mexico, something my host-brother had asked me about. When it was time for me to leave, we all had tears on our faces.

I went home with some big questions in my mind: why is it so difficult to keep prejudices from becoming attitudes which determine how we treat people? And is the only way of learning this to live in another culture for a long time?

I next left Mexico when I was 21 to take part in an Initiatives of Change conference in the Swiss village of Caux. It was my first experience of the old continent—and because it was an international conference, I met people from different ages and cultures, with unique stories. As I flew home, I reflected on how my Latin culture tends to be seen as warmer than others—but that this wasn't necessarily true. Human warmth doesn't know frontiers.

Of course, different cultures have different ways of doing things, but I have found that with a bit of patience and love one can see beyond them, without having

to abandon one's own values or approach. For instance, at times, people have been very direct with me. In my culture, we tend to say things in a less straightforward way. It was a chance for me to learn to be less emotional and more rational, to balance feelings with thoughts—and also, perhaps, to show others that emotions have a role to play.

When I greeted people with a kiss on the cheek, as we do in Latin cultures, they would show a certain resistance. I discovered their preference for shaking hands rather than kissing or hugging didn't mean they didn't care.

I am still in the middle of my third overseas experience, working in London. As I write, I am home on a visit to my family. Looking back, I realize that being in different cultural contexts, yet surrounded by warm and enriching people, has made me value my life.

I also find it fascinating that when I am away from home, I still feel close to Mexico. Life is full of discoveries. One of them has been learning to be humble enough to feel at home wherever I go. After all, ultimately, we all share the same home. ■