



GUEST COLUMN ALEYA EL BINDARI-HAMMAD

DEFUSING THE HUMILIATION BOMB

Humiliation is the 'nuclear bomb of feelings', in the words of the psychologist and peace activist, Evelin Gerda Lindner.

I am sure that everyone has experienced an episode, if not more than one, when they have felt deeply humiliated.

How do we react when we are treated unjustly, when we are pinned down, when we are shown, sometimes by force, that our will does not matter because someone else's might is stronger?

Many people are trapped in humiliating situations, where their dignity and self-respect are continually violated. Some retreat and become closed-up, depressed and passive. Others convert their anger into an intense drive to change the situation. Still others are misled into thinking they can find a release in violent revenge.

We need to try to understand why people engage in acts that most of us consider immoral, inhuman, and incomprehensible. I think it's because the perpetrators, correctly or not, perceive themselves to have been the victims of acts equally immoral, inhuman, and incomprehensible.

RESTORING DIGNITY

When seen through the prism of humiliation, the phenomenon of female suicide bombers shouldn't surprise us. To varying degrees, girls grow up not only experiencing discrimination themselves, but seeing humiliation suffered by the women around them. For some there comes a time when the consciousness of inequality seeps in.

The goal of extremist leaders is to limit the choices that such a young woman feels she has. Once she is convinced that she has no other choice, she can be led to participate in desperate acts. Some women see extremism as offering a sense of equality, where value is measured by the level of your passion, not your position in society.

So how do we help change people's psychology? Restoring dignity includes the provision of physical security and basic needs and rights. But none of this is enough until people's psychological needs are addressed.

To start doing that, we have to reframe:

■ **Who we listen to:** do we only listen to the powerful, or are we also going to listen to communities, families, marginalized groups, and even groups who have been responsible for oppression and violence? Being listened to is one of the most fundamental ways of being accorded respect.

■ **The religious discourse:** in addition to inter-faith communication, we need more intra-faith dialogues within the Muslim world. Grievances and differences need to be heard and discussed; mainstream leaders need to explore how extremism has hijacked the discourse and how to reclaim it.

Being a Muslim today carries with it a high risk factor. I was in New York during 9/11 and saw the devastation, panic and horrendous suffering and pain. I felt terrible, like everybody else, but worse once I found out the identity of the terrorists. It was as if I had been personally responsible!

There's been a tendency to lump all Muslims together. But there are those for whom the pain cuts very deep. Like me, they want to cry out that Islam does not equal terrorism.

Some will express their hurt by playing out their faith more visibly through stricter attire and more austere behaviour. These external manifestations are not harmful and should not be looked upon with suspicion.

■ **How young people see their future:** many suicide bombers come from relatively educated, middle-class backgrounds and are not direct victims of material desperation. But they suffer from a desperation no less painful—the conviction that they have been collectively and utterly humiliated.

Often an insult against one individual carries enough symbolic meaning to be taken as a collective insult. Take the example of the leaked pictures of Saddam Hussein in his underwear. He was a ruthless dictator. But when he was disrobed in front of the world, he wasn't the only one humiliated.

Unless young people are shown that they have a future of dignity and security and that they have access to decent jobs and can earn a respectful living, some will continue to think that they will find more respect as 'martyrs' for their cause.

■ **Our culture:** The first key to reframing a culture of war into a culture of peace is to get them while they're young! Well-designed programmes that teach non-violence and conflict resolution should be implemented in as many schools as possible. We should also create more initiatives that promote good citizenship for adults. And, at every step along the way, women need to be there.

More of us should learn how to pressure the media to uncover the culture of war. We should challenge the impression that war is inevitable and help unmask the highly organized business of the global exports of arms. The countries of the North often ask those of the South, 'Why do you keep fighting?' The real question is, 'Why do you keep selling us arms?'

Both on the level of the individual, and on the level of society, feelings of anger, grief, and humiliation need to be addressed before they become bitterness and desire for revenge.

Dr Aleya El Bindari-Hammad is a former Executive Director of the World Health Organization and is now Secretary General of the Women Defending Peace Coalition.

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FOR A CHANGE

HEALING HISTORY/TRANSFORMING RELATIONSHIPS/BUILDING COMMUNITY



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LEAD STORY: For A Change visits Amar Seva Sangam, a groundbreaking centre for the disabled in India. PROFILE: Rajendra Gandhi, beating corruption in India

SPECIAL ISSUE: INITIATIVES OF CHANGE CONFERENCES IN CAUX 2005 PLUS RAJMOHAN GANDHI

EAR TO THE GROUND

FROM ANN RIGNALL BEHIND THE SCENES IN CAUX, SWITZERLAND

BEDS FOR ALL

The Caux conference centre could not function without all the people who work behind the scenes: most of them on a voluntary basis. I am part of the allocation team, which is responsible for finding beds for up to 400 people at any one time.

We can be found at the top of a little known staircase—if you can negotiate the tennis racquets and footballs, the coat hangers, the coat stand and other miscellanea, together with pieces of luggage which are left there for safe keeping. Our team comes from Australia, Canada, South Africa, Sweden, France and the UK.

In allocating rooms, many factors have to be taken into account: the ability to climb stairs or to walk the length of the long corridors; the need to be near a lift; the preference for a shower or a bath.

In some cultures husbands, wives and even children have completely different names. We hope that on their application forms they have indicated that they are all one family. As a crossword addict, I rather enjoy the challenge.

CHANGE-OVER

Suddenly the whole place is full of children: the intergenerational session has begun. The make-up of the house changes completely—there are 92 young people aged under 17 and only 51 over 65. This is the biggest conference of the summer. With so many children sharing their parents' rooms, the supply of camp beds nearly runs out.

Ten days later most of the children have gone and many people from Africa are beginning to arrive. We are summoned to meetings by drumming rather than by the tinkling of a small xylophone,

and the house is full of bright, flowing robes.

HAILSTORM

One afternoon the sky goes as black as night and hailstones as big as golf balls begin to fall. All the lights go out and the computers go down. Some rooms become uninhabitable: windows are broken, or beds get wet because windows have been left open. Our team has no computers to find empty rooms for these displaced people. So we have to go around the house (with only emergency lighting to show us the way) finding what rooms are free.

Terrible damage is done to the vine-growing area around the Lake of Geneva. The only people who will benefit will be the glaziers. Over 300 panes of glass are broken in Caux's main building, Mountain House. Strangely some are not broken by the

hail but by the difference of pressure between the inside and the outside air.

DEMANDS AND REQUESTS

We get a few demands and many requests. The demands are for rooms with a better view and a bigger bathroom. We try to meet these, when possible. The requests are many and varied: a longer bed for a man well over 6 feet; a lower bed for a young man who says he keeps falling out of the top bunk; a quieter room; a move because the other person in the room snores; escape from a plague of ants or a horrid smell.

MUSIC MAKERS

Music always plays an important part in the conferences in Caux—violin, guitar, piano, flute, cello.... There is the Australian Johnny Huckle with his impassioned songs about healing and freedom for his Aboriginal people. And the Trio Tirabosco on the panpipes, double bass and piano, whose gypsy-style music brings the house down.

Then there are the house musicians for the last two conferences: Sally Wigan on piano, Anna Wigan on flute and Emily Hurrell on cello. They give two workshops and two concerts, as well as playing in a church service and in many of the meetings. In their interactive workshop, each group has to give a two-minute performance with anything that can be found. Perhaps the best is two men banging trays and fire irons together.



IN MY VIEW



Caux is the place

The guns of the Second World War had fallen silent at last. Battered nations dreamed of peace. Philippe Mottu, a young Swiss diplomat, had formed links with the German resistance during the war. As he searched for an answer, he sensed that the moment for reconciliation would come and he wrote, 'Caux is the place'. At the age of 33 he launched his friends on a mad venture of international reconciliation: starting with buying a huge abandoned hotel in the Swiss village of Caux.

Caux is perched high above Montreux, overlooking the Lake of Geneva, about one and a half hours from Geneva itself. Since 1946, the 'Caux conferences' have been held in the former hotel which belongs to the international movement, Initiatives of Change.

On Caux's agenda are the main concerns of the day and a search for solutions. In 1946 the first Germans allowed to leave their country after the war came to Caux. Over the next years, they came in their thousands and met equal numbers of French, British and Americans, as well as Japanese and their former enemies in Asia—all playing a part in reconstruction. Caux had a role in the pursuit of just solutions to tense industrial relations in Europe and Brazil in the Fifties, and as African nations moved towards independence in that decade and the next.

The search for values in new democracies in Eastern and Central Europe; racial healing in cities of the United States and Britain; the exploration of common ground in inter-religious dialogue have all been tackled openly in the framework of the Caux conferences. It was at Caux, too, that the idea was born of this year's meeting in Brussels of '100 imams and 100 rabbis', which will be repeated in Spain in 2006.

More than 1,400 people from 70 countries took part in this summer's five conferences, under the general theme of 'Narrowing the gap between ideals and practice'. They included delegations from the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes region of Africa; indigenous representatives from Canada, Sweden and Australia; students from every continent; religious leaders and complete families. Europeans of every nationality and background explored common values on which they could unite. Journalists from Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo examined the contribution journalism could make to reconciliation. Somalis of different clans relearned how to talk to one another.

Next year the Caux conferences will celebrate their 60th anniversary. And the agenda is fuller than ever.

Danielle Maillefer

DANIELLE MAILLEFER

email an article to a friend:
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FOR A CHANGE

For A Change is about change, how to make it happen and how to live it. We believe that what happens inside people has an effect on the world around them. At the heart of global change lies change in the human heart.

We draw our material from a wide range of sources, including Initiatives of Change. We give a voice to people all over the world who are making a difference. We invite our readers to join them. Your stories are our stories.



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 in individuals.

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 in more than 70 countries, working in such areas as reconciliation; tackling the root causes of corruption, poverty and social exclusion; and strengthening the moral and spiritual foundations for democracy.



COVER PHOTOS:
Isabelle Merminod

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FOR A CHANGE

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NO ONE IS TO BLAME FOR THEIR DNA



Rajmohan Gandhi warns against the poisonous wind which targets people for being born Muslim, American or Jew.

Acts of terrorism engender a sense of us-versus-them which is in some ways reminiscent of perceptions during the Cold War. Yet there is a troubling contrast.

During the Cold War the West tended to assume that the people of the Soviet bloc were innocent victims of tyrannical rulers with a callous ideology. It was the rulers, not the people, who were seen as the problem.

Today many in the West believe (or are being urged to believe) that the problem in Muslim nations is not the rulers—with whom business can be done—but the populations, who subscribe to a supposedly violent religion. And many in Muslim nations see (or are exhorted to see) people in Western lands as embracing either a religion with an aggressive past or a decadent present-day ideology of materialism.

Mistrust between whole populations

may turn out to be more serious than the autocracy of Soviet bloc rulers. In countries where Muslims and non-Muslims live cheek-by-jowl, this mistrust is an internal affair as well. If corrective steps are not taken on both sides of today's divide, we could—God forbid—see manifestations in different parts of the globe of the sort of suspicion-fuelled ethnic strife that disfigured Rwanda and the Balkans in the 1990s, and the Indian subcontinent in 1947.

One is thankful, therefore, for all efforts to restore trust between Muslims and non-Muslims, including those made by Initiatives of Change (IofC) at the Caux conferences and elsewhere.

POISONOUS WIND

Last July my wife, Usha, and I visited Lahore, the capital of the Punjab down the ages, which became part of Pakistan following the division of the subcontinent in 1947. We interviewed 28 people who had memories or stories from that tragic year,

when half a million or more were killed and about 12 million moved eastward or westward across a new border.

Most killings and migrations occurred in the large Punjab province—the western, Muslim-majority half of which went to Pakistan, while the eastern half (where Sikhs and Hindus outnumbered Muslims) went to India. One of our interviewees, Chaudhry Muhammad Hayat, a 77-year-old former squadron leader in the Pakistani Air Force, said that in 1947 a *zahreeli hawaa*, a poisonous wind, blew across the Punjab. That wind turned 'normal' and 'decent' human beings into pitiless killers.

Many of the killings took place when armed attackers from outside a locality targeted minority groups, often forcing neighbours to identify those with the 'wrong' religion and to join in the killing. Other deaths occurred when trains carrying Hindus and Sikhs fleeing east, or Muslims escaping west, were forced to stop and most if not all passengers killed. ▶

However, there were many instances when protection was bravely, ingeniously, or clandestinely extended to individuals. An important aim of our interviews was to record such instances. We learnt of how Sikhs and Hindus in East Punjab had sent relatives of our Muslim interviewees to safety in West Punjab, and how some of our interviewees or their relatives had successfully protected Hindus and Sikhs.

RAILWAY RESCUE

Thus Mumtaz Qadir told us of how his father, who was a railway guard, had saved two sons of his Hindu neighbour in Bahawalpur in West Punjab. 'The boys were quietly put in the toilet on a train across the border, and ordered not to talk. The handle-lock outside the toilet was turned to lock the door from the outside and the handle was removed, making it impossible for anyone to open the door. They made it!'

Almost all of our interviewees spoke of how Lahore was the poorer for the flight of its Hindus and Sikhs. The poisonous wind injured everyone.

Hayat, the former air force officer, broke down when he recalled watching the dead bodies of Hindus and Sikhs around a refugee train that attackers had stopped outside the town of Gujrat, north of Lahore. He was 19 at the time. His hero, he said, is a Sikh schoolteacher called Bhagat Singh who helped him and other Muslim village boys with their schooling, but disappeared in the 1947 riots.

'I have not seen a better human being,' said Hayat. He added: 'One day Bhagat Singh talked about religion with five or six boys including me. "Does anyone control his birth?" he asked. "Does anyone give an application that he should be born in a particular home, caste, religion, or country? If he cannot choose his parents, how can we hate him for the religion he gets from them?"'

I remember Bhagat's words to this day and believe he spoke the truth.'

HEALTHY AIR

Hayat's recollection of Bhagat Singh's words reminds me of the Biblical story of the blind man in Bethsaida who, aided by Jesus's touch, first saw 'men as trees, walking' and only later 'saw every man clearly'. It seems to me that when we think of persons as Muslims or Christians or Jews or Hindus (or Americans or Africans or Iranians) we are only seeing them 'as trees, walking'. To see them clearly as men or women we have to recognize their humanness and the fact that a great majority of them came to their religion, race or nationality by 'accident'. They did not choose their parents or race, and most did not choose their religion.

If we blame Muslims for being Muslim, or Jews for being Jews, or Americans for being American, we are condemning them for their birth, for their blood, for their DNA. Condemning people for being born to their parents is not a new thought for human beings. The world knows that it led to the horrors of the Holocaust, the shame of slavery, and the crime of untouchability. Even so we seem willing, once again, to target a section of human beings for being who they are, for being Muslims or Brits or Americans or Jews or whatever.

All humans are flawed and many are vulnerable before poisonous winds. When such winds blow, the wise fortify the structures around them and allow an inflow of healthy air.

WILD BLAZE

And the courageous speak out. I have recently been studying the life of a powerful teacher of tolerance: Abdul Ghaffar Khan (1890-1988), a devout Muslim and a Pashtun (or Pakhtun, as his people pronounced the word) raised in the Muhammadzai tribe that occupied fertile lands to the northeast of the Khyber Pass, not far from the city of Peshawar, now in Pakistan, and close also to the border with Afghanistan. More popularly known as Badshah ('king') Khan, Ghaffar Khan spent 27 years in prison, 12 under the British and 15 under Pakistani rulers.

In May 1947, after violence had started on the subcontinent, Ghaffar Khan spoke frankly to fellow Muslims in Shabqadar, in the heart of his Pakhtun country:

'We are passing through critical times.... Some people mislead you in the name of Islam. I feel it is my duty to warn you against future dangers so that I may justify myself before man and God on the Day of Judgement.

'What gains will Islam and the Muslims reap from these riots and the slaughter of children, women and the aged?... The other day an old Sikh peddler was murdered on the road. Is it done for the sake of Islam? I warn the [extremists] that the fire they kindle will spread in wild blaze and consume everything in its way.'

THE REAL CHOICE

Very human despite the Mahatma ('great soul') prefix that Indians gave him, Gandhi, a Hindu, was wise as well as courageous. Though he failed to prevent the 1947 bloodshed, he helped contain it. He also ensured that India would be a nation for all communities, not for Hindus above all.

Champions of Hindu hegemony continue to resent Gandhi's intervention. Pravin Togadia, a leader of the so-called Vishwa Hindu Parishad (World Hindu Council),

TO SEE PEOPLE CLEARLY WE HAVE TO RECOGNIZE THAT THEY DID NOT CHOOSE THEIR PARENTS OR RACE, AND MOST DID NOT CHOOSE THEIR RELIGION.

said in August this year that Gandhi should have committed suicide in August 1947. Hadn't he declared that India would be partitioned over his dead body? Not to commit suicide was cowardly on Gandhi's part, Togadia thundered.

Considering that Gandhi was assassinated only 30 days after 1947 ended, we should ask why a man like Togadia is so angry that Gandhi did not quit the scene in the August before. The answer is not hard to find. In the five-and-a-half months between 14 August 1947, when India was divided, and his death on 30 January 1948, Gandhi managed to make certain that India would be a state for all its citizens, including Muslims.

In particular he saw to it that Delhi, India's ancient as well as modern capital, would not be emptied of its Muslims. An extremist plan to expel all Muslims from Delhi was foiled because of Gandhi's firmness, the support he mobilized from Delhi's Hindus, who were a majority, and the backing he secured from India's Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, and the Deputy Prime Minister, Vallabhbhai Patel.

Gandhi wanted Lahore, too, to regain its composite character, and had planned a visit in February 1948 to that city as well as to Karachi, Pakistan's capital at the time. But before he could leave for Pakistan, Gandhi was killed.

That Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Jews, and Sikhs worshipped the same God was a key belief for Gandhi, and one he repeatedly underlined. The thought may be relevant to all today. The clash or choice the world faces is not between 'our' God and 'their' God, for God is one. The choice is between a wind carrying poison and the whisper of the one God, intimating his sane counsel to us. ■

Rajmohan Gandhi is a journalist and author and currently visiting professor at the University of Illinois. He will be in Britain in November for a speaking tour: more details from www.uk.iofc.org

HEALING HISTORY



Breaking the silence

Mary Lean and Andrea Cabrera meet an artist whose work has given a voice to Holocaust survivors, and their descendants.

Even chairs stood in the exhibition hall: three wrapped in pieces of clothing, one embossed with fossils, one burnt and charred, one holding a thick book, in which visitors could write their responses.... From them emanated the voices of survivors of the Holocaust, or their children and grandchildren.

'I have become persuaded that true deep and focussed listening can have a profound effect on both the speaker and the listener,' says the creator of the installation, Francisca de Beurges Rosenthal. 'A common thread within my work is an attempt to enter into that world of silence, which so frequently results from an avoidance of suffering and inevitably leads to distortion of reality.'

Rosenthal's installation, *Sh'ma* (a Hebrew word, which means 'listen with understanding', drawn from an ancient prayer for the dead), was first seen at the Ellis Island Immigration Museum in 1996, and has since visited Britain, Germany and Poland.

The issues of the Holocaust—and of the silence produced by trauma—are personal for her. Her parents met in Morocco during World War II. He was German and had been a member of the Hitler Youth when he discovered that he was of Jewish origin. Her mother was English, and returned to Britain when Francisca was born.

Rosenthal spent the first four years of her life in a children's home, and then lived with her mother and stepfather in Qatar, where he was opening a hospital in the desert. 'My mother, having been abandoned by my father, threw a lot of anti-Semitic stereotypes at me,' she says. When she was ten, she was sent to boarding school in England, spending her holidays with her natural father.

Her choice of media—sculpture and voice—derives from those early years in the desert. 'There were no other children,' she says, 'I used to build things with sand and rocks.' Tuning in to the crackling sound of the BBC left her with 'a strong impression of the power of the human voice'.

From school she went to interpreters' college in Germany, and then to South Africa where she met her husband. They went to the US, and it was only when their children reached their early teens, that she decided to go to art school.

'In art school, I had to start looking inwards,' she says. Her father—who was unable to speak about the traumas of his own upbringing—had abused her sexually. Her first two installations focussed on her own story and on sexuality. Then in the early 90s she was invited to do the exhibition at the Ellis Island Immigration Museum in New York.

LISTENING CAN REMOVE THE VEIL WHICH MAKES US STRANGERS

The first person she interviewed for *Sh'ma* was an 82-year-old Auschwitz survivor, a psychiatrist who worked with survivors and their children. She asked him what was the most common presenting problem of the second generation. 'They grow up in a vacuum of silence and it's crazy-making,' he said.

It took Rosenthal a year to transcribe the interviews in long hand, and then select extracts. Among them were the words of the man who could hardly bear the weight of the blanket with which he fled; the woman who could not use her mother tongue to describe her experiences; the mother who did not want to tell her children how their grandparents died for fear of teaching them to hate; the woman who said, starkly, 'My parents died because they were Jewish'.

'Without exception each one told me how glad they were to have talked to me. When people have been very badly hurt, others tend to shy away from their pain. One woman, whose father had been taken away and thrown down a well, told me she had only been asked her story four times in her life.'

The process was healing for Rosenthal as well. 'You isolate yourself when you come from an abusive background,' she says. 'This was a way to become part of the world. Interviewing these people helped me to make some sort of sense of my father's behaviour towards me; some forgiveness could enter in. I had spent many years in therapy, and before he died we had finally reached a profound sense of closure.'

She used chairs, she says, because 'chairs represent absence and presence'. Around one she placed shoes filled with sand, pointing in different directions, to suggest the tension between living in one country and longing for another which so many of her interviewees felt. From the 'fossil chair' came the sound of tectonic plates moving under the oceans, like distant canons. 'It was a way of speaking to the fact that the planet survives, the individual survives.' One chair was wrapped up like a package, 'because Jews have always had to be prepared psychologically to pick up their luggage and flee overnight'.

When we met her at an IOFC conference at Caux, she was working on a new project—interviewing Jewish, Muslim and Christian women about what it means to live in the US.

'In everything I do I hope to learn a little more myself,' she says. 'But I also hope to create a listening space for other people, a way to make connections and not be so fearful. Compassion is the pathway towards healing, and listening can remove the veil of silence, which makes us strangers one to another.' ■

NO BREAD WITHOUT PEACE

Paul Williams discovers that security is not just a military issue.

From top: Barry Hart, US; Thembi Silundika, Zimbabwe; participants in the Global Indigenous Dialogue; Michael Ambühl, Switzerland; Ahunna Eziakonwa, Nigeria; Niketu Iralu, Nagaland, India; Rama Mani, India



Just how riveting, I wondered, would I find a conference with the term 'human security' right up there in the title? What did it mean anyway? And what sort of issues would we be dealing with?

It soon became apparent that the issues were astonishingly wide-ranging, highly relevant and all urgent. The actual title of the conference was 'Good Governance for Advancing Human Security'. 'Human security', I discovered, tops the internet reference league table and has been called 'the largest topic of the 21st century'.

One definition came from Dr Rama Mani, who is based at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy as Director of its 'New Issues in Security' course. 'It puts human beings at the centre of security,' explained Mani, 'and recognizes that the sources of insecurity go beyond state and military security to encompass development, environment and human rights.'

As the conference proceeded, many aspects of the hybrid term revealed themselves—issues of security for countries facing civil war, rebellion, dictatorship, occupation or in transition; food security; job security; security for indigenous or minority peoples; access to health and education. The list goes on....

In her address to the conference Mani said she had been 'a committed servant of freedom from want' since her childhood in Bombay, even though she now worked more in the field of security. 'I started with addressing the needs of want and poverty,' she explained, 'But then I saw I needed to look at the factors underlying conflict—because it kept erupting and undoing the good work.' Development, human rights and security were inextricably bound together.

The real enemies to be overcome, she asserted, were the forces of greed—personal, corporate, national and international. 'Greed has been sanitized, legalized and glorified,' she said. 'It has come to be accepted as the bedrock of economic systems, but it ought to be criminalized and shown up for what it is and what it does.' It invariably led to conflict, the commonest cause of which was 'deep-festering grievances from unmet needs'.

Another source of much of the violence we were witnessing today was reaction to humiliation, suggested Dr Aleya El Bindari-Hammad (see Guest Column). A former Executive Director (number two) at the World Health Organization, she is now Secretary General of the Women Defending Peace Coalition in Geneva. Humiliation, she said, had been described as 'the nuclear bomb of feelings'.

'Shame not dealt with and fear not faced are a highly combustible combination,' said Dr Barry Hart, Associate Professor of Trauma and Conflict Studies at the Eastern

Mennonite University in the US. Acknowledging and naming fears was the first essential step on the road to being free from them. All speakers stressed that pardon and forgiveness were essential to healing. 'Hurts not transformed will be transferred' were words that clearly resonated with many.

So why is good governance so important? Because without it the best-laid plans to bring improvement fail. The conference invitation quoted UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, 'Good governance is the single most important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development.'

At her desk in the UN Office for Humanitarian Affairs in New York, Nigerian Ahunna Eziakonwa is very conscious of this. She is Head of the 'Africa 2' section, which covers a wide swathe of countries from West Africa across to Somalia and Sudan. 'I walk into my office each morning without knowing what new crisis may have arisen—from food shortages to a coup in one of the countries,' she told the conference.

In her keynote address Eziakonwa, who emphasized

how her earlier experiences at Caux had helped her find an international vision, laid out a wide perspective of what 'good governance' meant. It certainly included the family, where the way things were run and relationships were handled had such an effect on how young people acted. And the community, which could be the

CONFLICT KEPT ERUPTING AND UNDOING THE GOOD WORK

office staff, or any organization, club, charity, business or public body large or small. 'When people sense they are respected, needed and listened to they feel secure,' she said.

At government level, she continued, good governance was all-important both for security and development. When minorities were not respected, when ordinary people were not empowered to improve their lives, when there was bureaucracy and wide-spread corruption, everything stood still. 'Illegitimate governments

have to buy legitimacy,' she went on. 'They have to make harmful deals and concessions, especially to ethnic groups, to buy support. This only creates further weakness and division.' At the UN, she said, bureaucracy often came in the way of a quick response.

Rama Mani also named corruption, alongside complacency and complicity, as factors making for bad governance. The corner stones for good governance, she suggested, were responsibility, accountability and compassion.

An example of what was being done at a national level to further human security was provided by Dr Michael Ambühl, Switzerland's State Secretary for Foreign Affairs. Dr Ambühl, who was giving a Caux Lecture, illustrated in detail how a small country could invest in peace-building, extending human rights and strengthening international law. 'To be secure at home Switzerland has to respond to conflict abroad and promote peace,' he said.

The country's long tradition of neutrality enabled it to be seen as an 'honest broker'. As such it had facilitated dialogues between opposing sides in Sudan, Colombia, Sri Lanka, Kosovo and the Middle East. One Swiss expert, Professor Alain Sigg of Geneva University, spoke about the problems faced by countries emerging from conflict and ways to deal with them. The conference was also enriched by the participation of those attending the Global Indigenous Dialogue, which was held concurrently at Caux. It included delegates from the Cree nation in Canada, the Sami people of Sweden, the Nagas of North-East India and an Aboriginal folk singer from Australia. Lewis Cardinal from the Cree nation made a powerful plea for the 'dignity, survival and human rights' of the world's 300 million indigenous people spread across 70 countries. It became clear that individuals had a part to play as well as governments and large organizations. Many left with a heightened awareness of where the needs were in their families, communities and countries and equipped with an action plan to begin to make a difference. ■

BLAIR CUMMOCK (7)

Europe is not for the lazy-hearted

What does it mean to be European today? **Mary Lean** reports from Caux.

The eight staff in the European Commission (EC) office where Peter Rundell worked until recently come from six countries, speak nine languages and include Christian and Muslim believers, left- and right-wing economists.

This diversity—so typical of Europe today—generates creativity, says Rundell, who was responsible for poverty reduction strategies in the office of the EC's Director-General for Development.

Unlike him, many Europeans today see the continent's increasing diversity as a reason for fear, not rejoicing. Immigration and asylum issues, the enlargement of the European Union (EU) in May 2004, the draft constitution—recently rejected by French and Dutch voters—are often seen as a threat to national identity.

But what if, as was suggested at the conference in Caux where Rundell was speaking, Europeans opened their minds to embracing a new identity, rather than defending an old one? As one French participant said, 'We all share the identity of living in a multiracial society.'

The conference, in July, took place during the week of the second wave of bombings in London, and the devastating attacks in Sharm al-Sheikh, Egypt. It drew participants from 63 countries, both within and outside Europe. 'Beyond political structures, geography and history force us to learn to live together,' stated its initiators, Hennie de Pous from the Netherlands, Charles Danguy from Lorraine, France, and Andrew Stallybrass, an Englishman with Swiss citizenship. 'Black and white, immigrant and native, Jew, Christian and Muslim, secularist and believer—all have a part in creating a heart and a soul for Europe.'

TWO-PARENT FAMILIES

The fight against what the Swiss academic Tariq Ramadan described as the 'ideology of fear' was a recurring theme.

'I'm a European Muslim,' stated Ramadan. 'Eighty per cent of my time is spent explaining to people why this shouldn't be a problem for them.' That same week, he was

the focus of controversy in the UK, where *The Sun* denounced him as presenting 'an acceptable face of terror to impressionable young Muslims' while *The Independent* described him as 'one of the brightest hopes for achieving reconciliation between Muslims and the rest of society'.

'Fear can turn us into victims,' Ramadan told the conference. The discussions over whether Turkey should join the EU often overlooked the fact that millions of Muslims were already integrated into European society and that 'Islamic thought has been nourishing Europe for centuries'. He stressed the importance in a pluralistic society of teaching religion in schools. And, he reminded the hundred British at the conference, the young suicide bombers who had attacked London on 7 July came from 'two parent families'. 'One parent is the Muslim community: the other is British society in general.'

BREAKING DOWN PREJUDICE

Ramadan was taking part in a dialogue with Andrew Stallybrass, the Vice-President of the Geneva Interfaith Platform. 'Our fear of terrorism, our fear of the other could turn us into prisoners,' said Stallybrass. 'Fragility is the norm of human existence. The "answer" to fragility is not security, it is community.' He urged those present to take up the challenge of 'crossing the threshold' towards those they perceived as 'the other'.

The conference was full of examples of people who were doing just that: reaching out across barriers of race, religion, disability; creating honest conversations in divided communities; tackling unemployment; sharing their skills overseas; befriending asylum seekers.

Two couples from France, Nizar and Nour Alaya and Frédéric and Nathalie Chavanne, described how they and others were working to build bridges between Muslim and indigenous French communities in Paris. The links within their core group had become so strong, said Nathalie Chavanne, that they had sought each other out after both 9/11 and the Madrid bombings. 'Because of the trust between us we can speak honestly, heart to heart.'



'Our relationships have allowed us to speak better about the other in our own milieu,' said Nizar Alaya. 'Prejudices are being broken down.' Young Muslims in France were faced with a crisis of identity, he continued. 'We have to help them to construct an identity which can reconcile their parents' origins, authentic Islam and their adopted country and culture. Their identity doesn't have to be against white society.'

For the conference's keynote speaker, Swiss-American academic and author, Catherine Guisan, the very existence of such challenges was a mark of how far Europe had come in the last 50 years. 'It is time for Europe to accept that it has become a

continent of immigration, like the US,' she said. This was a positive sign: in the past Europeans had had to leave their continent in search of a better life.

Guisan described Europe's post-war experience of achieving peace, after centuries of war, as 'a kind of lost treasure which we need to re-find'. 'Peace like democracy is an ongoing creation,' she maintained. 'Problems which are resolved once and for all are rare.'

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Returning to the identity issue, she said, 'There is no such thing any more as an identity given once and for all at birth. In a Europe which is constantly changing, identity is found by a dialogue of acknowledgement.'

This acknowledgement also involves the recognition that Europe has 'unfinished business', to use the words of another speaker, Pierre Spoerri. His talk, which traced Europe's tradition of reconciliation back to the end of the Thirty Years' War in the 17th century, was followed by speakers from Russia and Bosnia.

Speaking of Russia's faltering steps towards democracy, Olga Zimenkova, a professor of law from Moscow and the founder of a human rights education NGO, referred to the fake model villages erected by Grigori Potemkin to impress Catherine the Great. 'The democratic structures exist



Clockwise from top left: Andrew Stallybrass, Stephanie Lesaux and Tariq Ramadan; workshop; Nizar Alaya and his daughter; Cornelio Sommaruga and Catherine Guisan

outings—to the Jean Monnet Foundation for Europe in Lausanne, the ancient Abbey of St Maurice, the Red Cross Museum and the International Museum of the Reformation in Geneva.

COMMITMENTS

Each day began with a time of quiet reflection in the bay window of the meeting hall, looking out at the mountains around Lake Geneva. Evening programmes ranged from a harpsichord concert, through rap and breakdancing, to an interfaith celebration led by Rev Aart Mak, of the Dutch United Religions Initiative, and Imam Hamzeh Zeid Kailani, a Palestinian living in the Netherlands.

Professor Hans Küng, President of the Global Ethic Foundation, gave a Caux Lecture calling for 'a spiritual concept of Europe with an ethical foundation'. He stressed that neither a technocratic, secular model of Europe, nor a narrowly Christian one, could meet the continent's needs.

At the final meeting, participants streamed onto the platform to post up the commitments which they had made. There were pledges to learn another European language, to buy a Qur'an or visit a mosque, to work for greater understanding between the EU and the USA. A grandmother promised to teach her 13 grandchildren to understand other people; a Muslim expressed her appreciation of having met Serbs for the first time.

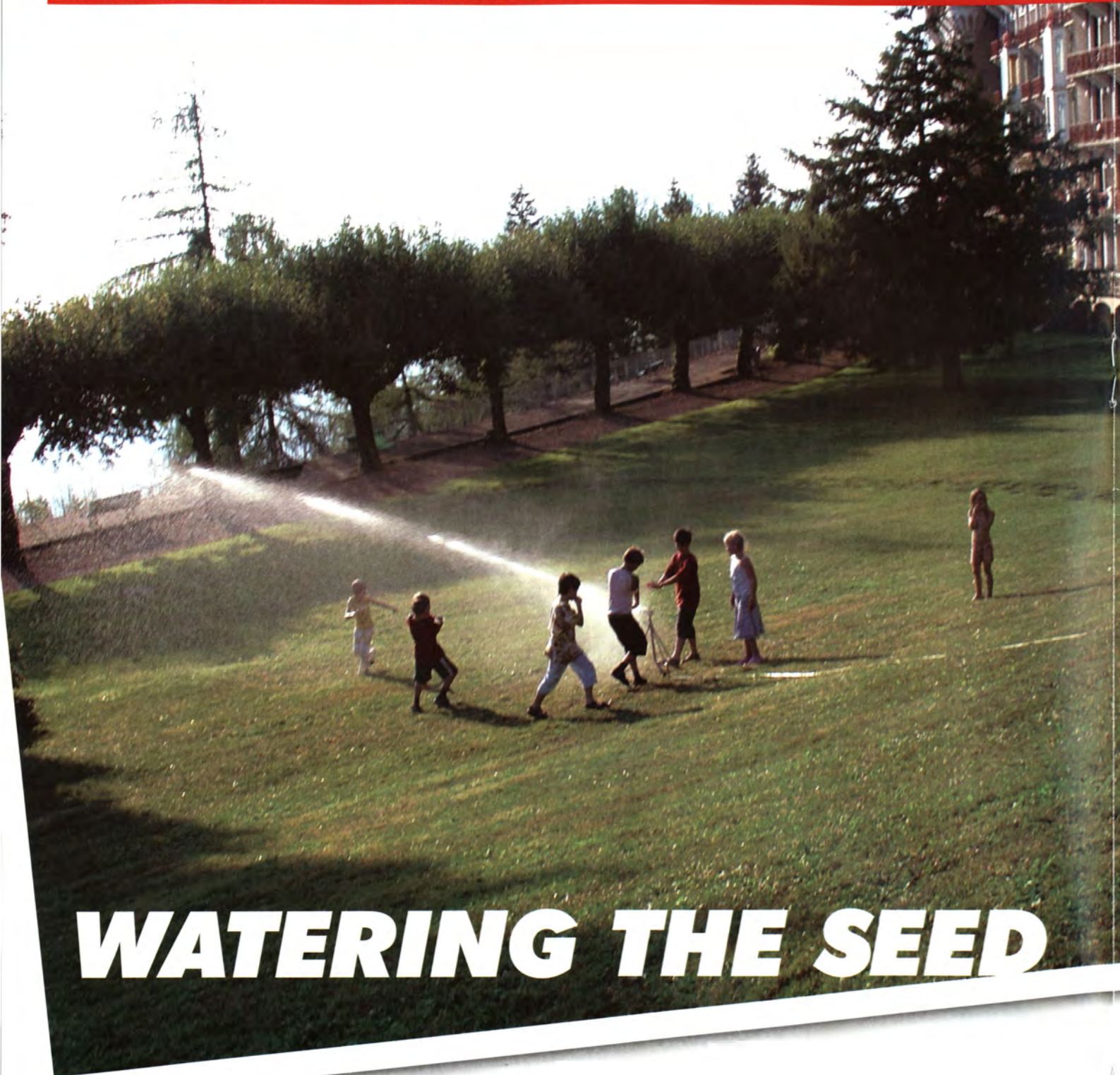
A French student described how she had resisted making the first move towards a group of young Muslims and Hindus from Nottingham in England: 'it was as if my heart was lazy to get opened'. However they had got talking at a workshop organized by IofC's Hope in the Cities programme from the UK, and now had plans to arrange exchange visits between their home cities. Her decision, to guard against a lazy heart, summed up the central challenge of the conference, and for an ever-changing Europe. ■

THE ANSWER TO FRAGILITY IS NOT SECURITY, BUT COMMUNITY

in Russia,' she said, 'but as time passes they turn into Potemkin villages.'

Another speaker, the Vicar General of Sarajevo, Mato Zovkic, spoke of the continuing divisions between Serbs, Muslims and Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina and of the recent commemoration of the Srebrenica massacre of 1995. When the meeting was opened to the floor, a Serbian participant rose to describe the suffering in his own community: 'I am not able to separate myself from my relations who were killed.' The two men met later to talk privately.

The conference also included a meeting of the International Communications Forum, which campaigns for values in the media; a power-point presentation on 'ethics in crisis' by Howard Taylor, the chaplain of Edinburgh's Heriot-Watt University; and workshops on spiritual and cultural themes. 'Is the European Union simply a Christian club?' asked Ebtehal Younis, an Egyptian professor based in the Netherlands, in a workshop which offered a view of Europe from the outside. One day was devoted to



WATERING THE SEED

School leaver **Eorann Lean** gets a buzz out of a conference for young and old

Entering Mountain House perched just above Lake Geneva, you can see children playing, teenagers learning drama and adults enjoying the children's games or going to workshops.

The main concentration of the Intergenerational Experience of Community Living is on faithfulness. How in this modern time, where families are

breaking, is it possible to stay together and how can we help each other be faithful?

As the conference is directed at all age groups, with many families bringing all three generations, the set up is slightly different from the normal Caux experience. For example the meetings in the morning have a half an hour with the children and then a more serious discussion for the adults.

This leads to a very cheerful atmosphere around the house although important topics are being discussed.

Having arrived late into the conference my integration into this big family starts with being told to stand up and sing 'ti ti ta ta' with actions such as 'thumbs up, tongue out'. This exercise is enjoyed by all age groups and breaks the ice nicely before a discussion on how to be a good

friend. An added extra is Mr Incredible who after bounding in to the *Ghostbuster* theme tune saves us from Jealousy.

A BIG FAMILY

Once the children have left, the meeting turns to a more in-depth discussion of 'purpose' and 'commitment'. The people speaking are whole-heartedly honest. This honesty spreads throughout the building,

augmented by the relaxed atmosphere caused by the families. This builds up to such an extent that you can sit down next to someone you have never met before at lunch and leave having heard about not just their successes but also their struggles. It becomes natural to tell people experiences that you would never in daily life reveal.

I thought I would have to sneak into the planning meeting of the day but it is open to anyone who wants to help. This inclusiveness encourages the idea that everyone under the roof is one big family with enough children and grandparents to go around.

As the conference is concentrated around families there are workshops for married couples and fathers. I don't qualify for these workshops, but there are many options as well as community groups in which everyone can discuss different issues.

PREPARING THE SOIL

The children and teenagers participate in fun workshops such as singing, drama and T-shirt printing. All of these conclude in a variety night where they perform. Children are quite naturally making new friends with people from other countries and other cultures.

At the very first meeting the desired outcome is stated as being that everyone leaves with a group of friends and a sense of urgency. On a personal note, I can say that I left the conference with many new friends and a Latin American glass game, as well as a renewed sense of urgency to make my time count.

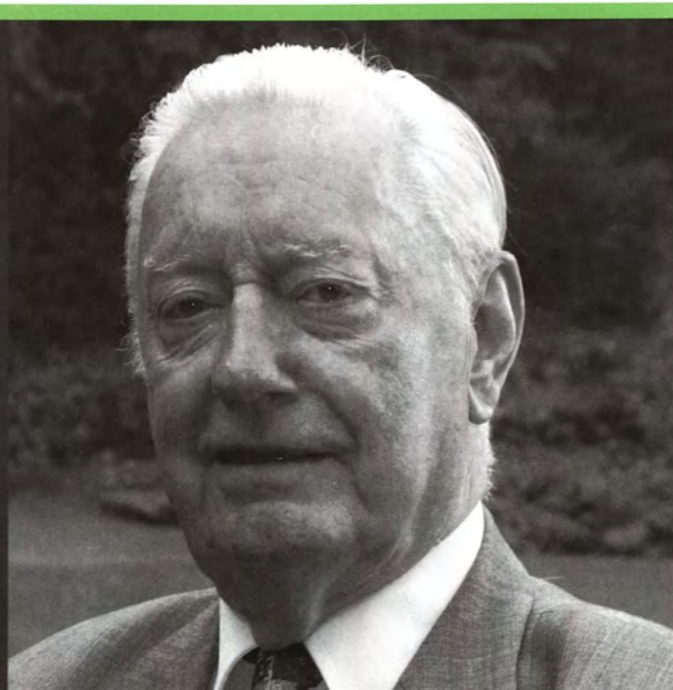
A saying cited at the planning meeting, 'Yours to prepare the soil, me to drop the seed,' applies brilliantly to the conference. It worked as an expert gardener preparing the soil in those new to Caux and searching, such as me, and watering and nurturing those already growing. ■



Listen to the children

It's not just families that need to listen to children: the world must too, according to the Caux Lecture of Carol Bellamy, a former Director of the United Nations' Children's Fund (UNICEF) and now President of World Learning. In spite of the fact that the UN Charter on the Rights of the Child is the most widely ratified law in the world, violence against children continues. She cited trafficking of children to work on plantations in West Africa, child soldiers, Chinese girls sold off as young brides, and children abused by family members. She gave examples from around the world of children speaking out, and told the participants in the intergenerational conference that they had a voice—and a duty to use it. 'Our chances for a better future depend on your speaking out about your experiences and your engaging with the world around you.'

THE MAN WHO SET OUT TO CHANGE THE MEDIA



Bill Porter founded a global think-tank out of his concern about the media's influence. **Michael Smith** tells his story.

If you are thinking that way, why don't you do something about it?' The words, spoken to publishing executive Bill Porter by his wife Sonja, remained ringing in his ears. When she died unexpectedly three weeks later, they came back to him with the force of a command. They were a trigger, he says, to 'do something' about the influence of the media.

The first trigger, which prompted the talk with his wife, was reading an article in the *Financial Times* that year, 1990. The communications industry including the mass media had become the largest industry in the world, it said. That might be so, Porter thought to himself. But was it responsible for its output? Did it always consider its moral impact on its audiences? The answer, he thought, had to be no. It was not just the sex, sleaze and scandal in the media that worried him, but rather a conviction that the media had a crucial role in building a free and just society, yet rarely turned the searchlight on itself.

Porter admitted to himself that his motivation, as the chief executive of a large academic and business publishing house in London, 'had been primarily to make money and to become important, both for my company and myself'. And while these were not wholly bad motives, 'they lacked the balancing element of responsibility'.

With some trepidation—'not wishing to be rejected or laughed at'—he approached colleagues in the publishing world and found in some of his friends a similar degree of concern about the media.

Porter launched the International Communications Forum (ICF) in 1991, with a first conference at the IofC centre in Caux. The aim was to 'build up a worldwide network of men and women in the media who believed in ethical values and applied them in their lives'. They would be responsible for the honesty of their output. It would be a 'conscience-to-conscience activity' rather than an organization.

SARAJEVO

The conscience, says Porter, is the best guide to professional responsibility. He describes it as 'that remarkable piece of high technology that is inside us, albeit often covered over with the compromises of a lifetime, but which enables us to chose right from wrong, truth from falsehood'. As the British journalist and feature writer Graham Turner put it at that first gathering: 'If we are blowing the whistle on others, let us make sure our own whistles are clean.'

Since then the ICF has held 27 conferences around the world, involving over 2,500 media professionals from 114 countries. A marking moment was a forum in the Bosnian capital Sarajevo in

2000, held at the instigation of Bosnian TV journalist Senad Kamenica, who had been deeply disturbed by the bias in local media reporting. He said that journalists had contributed to ethnic tensions and so had been more responsible for deaths than weapons had during the Balkans conflict.

The conference saw the launch of the Sarajevo Commitment, a statement of professional and ethical practice which journalists are encouraged to sign. It is nothing if not inspirational: 'We shall combine freedom with responsibility, talent with humility, privilege with service, comfort with sacrifice and concern with courage,' it reads in part. 'We realize that change in society begins with change in ourselves.'

INFLUENCE OF MEDIA

Jay Rosen, Professor of Journalism at New York University and the father of 'community journalism', described the Sarajevo Commitment as 'a document of historic importance' and compared it with the Gettysburg Address and the UN Charter of Human Rights. He would use it with all his students, he said. Martyn Lewis, the former BBC TV news anchorman, was equally enthusiastic. It has since been translated into 17 languages. Roger Parkinson, President of the World Association of Newspapers, commented that

the ICF 'had put the issue of the effects of the media on society on the global agenda'.

Bill Porter came to his conviction about the influence of the media, for good or ill, out of his own journalistic and publishing background. Born in 1920, on a farm in an East Anglian village, he grew up in Lancashire. At university in Liverpool, his search for a spiritual base in life was 'backed into second place by my devotion to worldly success and pretty girls'. He served as an army lieutenant during World War II, in North Africa, Italy and India, which led to 'a lifetime love of India and its peoples'.

MIGHTY TREE

After the war, Porter was about to take up a job with a regional British daily paper when a distant cousin from Lancashire, involved in the post-war reconciliation work of Moral Re-Armament (MRA, now Initiatives of Change), persuaded him to write press releases and news reports for MRA. This also involved him in MRA's work to improve industrial relations, particularly in the French textile industry. He became a close friend of Maurice Mercier, a former militant communist and a leader of the wartime French resistance, who helped to found France's democratic trade union movement *Force Ouvrière*. He found in MRA 'a more complete and satisfying revolution than communism'.

Porter's work with MRA took him back to India for four years, 1955 to 1959, where he also freelanced for such newspapers as *The Scotsman*, the *Indian Express* and the International Labor News Service in the USA.

Returning to Europe, he broke his involvement with MRA over a disagreement

NOT EVERYONE CAN SAY THAT THE 15 MOST FULFILLING YEARS OF THEIR LIVES BEGAN AT 70

about aims and tactics, and what he regarded as too narrow objectives. But he also admits, in his autobiography *Do something about it—a media man's story* (John Faber with Caux Books 2005), that he found MRA's emphasis on sexual morality 'very restrictive, and I was looking forward to my freedom in that respect'. Peter Howard, MRA's leader at the time who had been an influential newspaper columnist, told him: 'You are meant to be a mighty tree, under whose branches many people can find shelter and purpose'. It was to be 35 years before Porter revisited the MRA centre in Caux and Howard's vision for him began to be fulfilled.

Porter spent the next three years as a freelance journalist. This took him to report on Tito's Yugoslavia, where he ended up in Rijeka, a key port on the Croatian coast. His city guide and interpreter was an attractive red-haired woman, Sonja Aleksic. 'My priorities steadily shifted away from the pursuit of the story to the pursuit of the lady,' Porter recalls. They married in 1962.

Sonja's Bosnian mother came from an aristocratic background, while her father, a colonel, was Montenegrin. Sonja herself was made of stern stuff having been twice sentenced to death in her late teens and early 20s, first under the occupying Nazis, and then under the Yugoslav communist regime for being 'an enemy of the people'. So accused, she prepared herself for nine nights running to face death by firing squad. On the tenth morning she was suddenly released, thanks, she believed, to the influence of a Jewish friend who was an official in the Belgrade city government. These traumatic experiences gave her a fierce independence of spirit. 'To survive such an experience without bitterness, to keep an open heart and a positive and cheerful outlook is a triumph of the human spirit,' writes Porter, who describes his nearly 30 years with Sonja as 'the deepest experience of my life'.

LAPSED AGNOSTIC

Porter brought his new bride to London, where he became the Marketing Director for John Grant's Eurobooks Ltd, travelling to bookshops and university libraries all over Europe. But when Grant gave Porter the sack, largely over a misunderstanding, it led to a fortunate break.

Porter, then nearly 50, was taken on by Kluwer, Europe's largest law publisher based in the Netherlands. Porter headed their expansion into Britain as Managing Director of Kluwer Publishing, which eventually widened into 14 sister companies and imprints. In 1984 Porter became Deputy Chairman of Kluwer UK. The following year he was appointed Chairman of the Law Panel of the (UK) Publishers Association.

Three years after leaving Kluwer he founded the ICF. He marked his 85th birthday at the 27th ICF conference in Caux last July. Not everyone can say, as he does, that the 15 most fulfilling years of their lives began at 70. The tragic death of his wife, through undiagnosed hepatitis, had been the spur. But Porter, who likes to describe himself as a 'lapsed agnostic', also adds: 'When I decided to take this road, I experienced a sense of inner compulsion that has never left me. Where does it come from, if not from some superior guiding force in the universe?' ■

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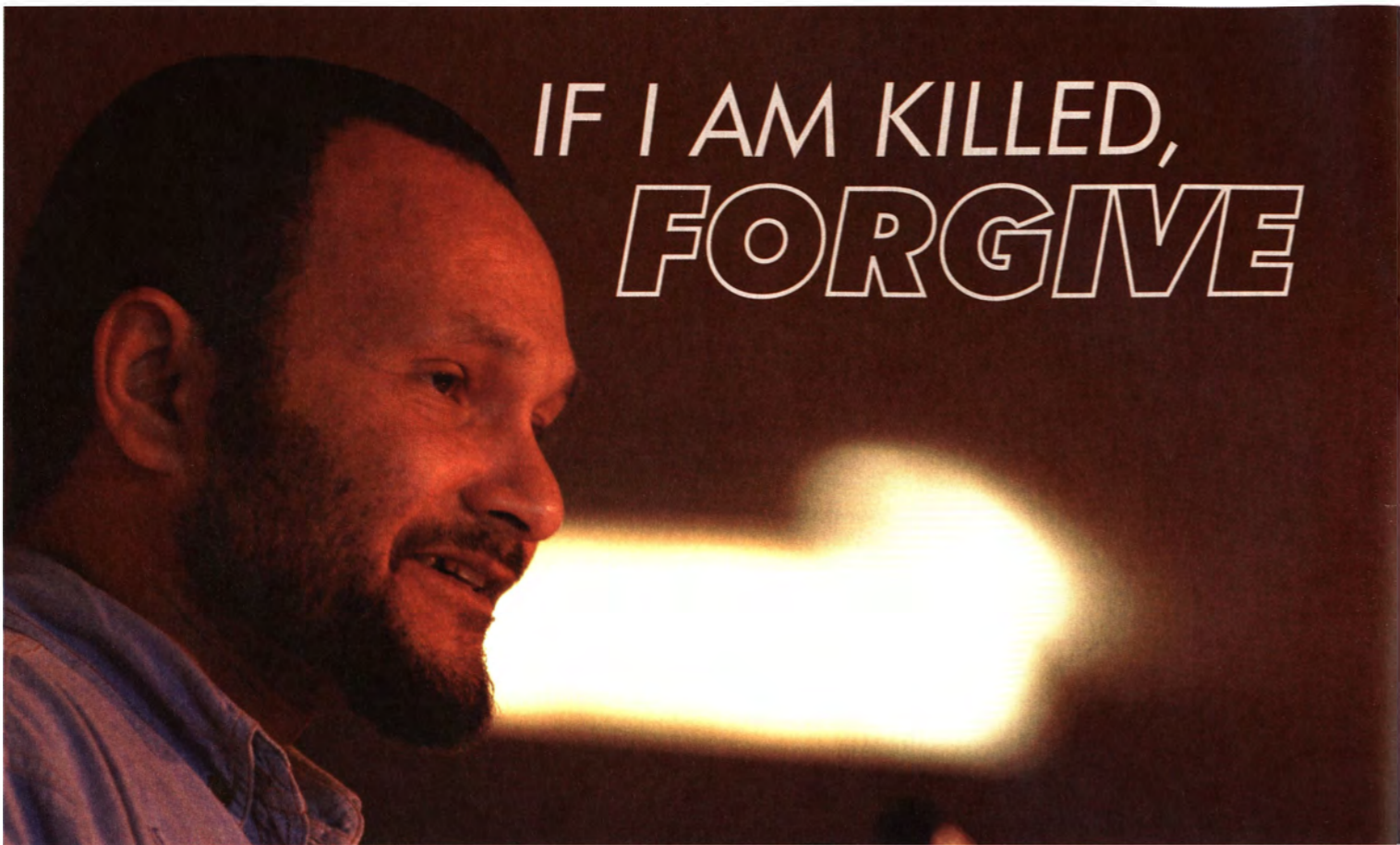
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IF I AM KILLED, FORGIVE



When Matthew Waletofea decided to work for peace in his country, he knew he was putting his life at risk. He talks to **Caz Hore-Ruthven**.

IN 1998 CIVIL WAR turned the paradise of the Solomon Islands into a living hell. Five years later, Australian peace-keeping troops brought an end to the killings, but the conflict and its consequences still lie heavy on the land and its people. Throughout the fighting, businessman and peacemaker Matthew Waletofea risked his life again and again.

'I told my wife and six kids that there was a possibility that I, or even one of them, could be killed,' Waletofea told participants in the final conference at Caux in August, 'but I wanted them to know that I had forgiven the perpetrators of any wrongdoing, and that if I were to be killed, I hoped that they too in time would find the grace to forgive.'

The theme of the conference, organized by Agenda for Reconciliation, was 'A world in crisis: learning from one another how to be peacemakers'. Among those who heard Waletofea's story were a large delegation from Somalia, including a minister from the Transitional National Government, who were meeting privately at Caux to wrestle with the issues that afflict their war-torn country.

The conflict in the Solomon Islands flared up after people from one of the two main islands, Malaita, migrated to the other, Guadalcanal, in search of work. The indigenous Guadalcanal islanders felt that in doing this the Malaitans had transgressed ancient tribal land law rules. They rose up in arms and caused the mass eviction of 30,000 Malaitan settlers.

People were killed, women were raped, and property was destroyed. In response, the evicted Malaitans formed their own militia, took over the police and mounted a coup, which overthrew the government. The institutions of state collapsed.

Matthew Waletofea, who is a Malaitan, has been an advisor to two of his country's prime ministers. He has his own accountancy firm, runs a

number of schools, including skills training in rural villages and plays a leading role in the South Seas Evangelical Church.

As a committed Christian, in a country where 95 per cent of the population are Christian, he felt that the churches should take a leading role in trying to stop the fighting and human rights abuses. With them, he set up the Civil Society Network, which mediated between the warring factions.

TIT-FOR-TAT KILLINGS

As Waletofea began his mediation work he suffered abuse from both warring factions, who questioned his impartiality. He was punched and kicked and gun-butted on several occasions by both militias, but in the end he won their trust by not rising to the bait.

Meanwhile the violence escalated. When the headless body of a Guadalcanalan was thrown into the capital's central market, most islanders were anguished. But a couple of days later there was another beheading—this time by the other side, and a day later there was another tit-for-tat killing. It was a turning point for Waletofea. 'Islanders were beginning to accept that beheadings and delimbings were a normal part of trying to resolve differences. I started to speak out against these kinds of abuse, and the more I spoke, the more I was hated by both the militias.'

He was attacked a number of times, his



office was vandalized, and the bishops he was working with were threatened. 'One night the militia looted our house, mistook my brother for myself, and cut his body open. He didn't die. But they didn't touch me, or any of my family.'

'After they left I had to carry my brother to hospital, but to get there I had to cross three roadblocks of the particular militia group who had attacked us. So I prayed, and just walked. I decided that if they asked me to stop, I would. But they didn't. On that night they took everything from our house—from our vehicles to the kids' toys, everything we had.'

Even at such a time of despair, Waletofea found deep inner consolation. 'I remember praying that night. I thought I was doing God's work—speaking out when nobody wanted to speak. And I told God that I would rather he took me and not the militia. Afterwards, I had a strange sense of being liberated. The next morning, when we all began to take stock of what had happened, we all shared this feeling. It felt like a form of emptying—that now I was free to serve with little else to lose.'

'WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS FELLOW?'

Indeed, right from the beginning of his peace-building work, Waletofea had a tremendous sense of being protected. 'I had an awesome sense of security; a strong calling that this is what God wants me to do, and that he will keep me and my family safe. It gave me great serenity.'

This serenity was put to the test time and time again. Perhaps the worst moment came one Saturday morning, when his wife was away in Australia and three men burst into his home. 'Four of my kids were there at the time,' he said. 'The men kicked and punched me for a while and one of them pulled out an assault rifle and put it to my chest and pulled

HE PULLED THE TRIGGER. I THOUGHT I WAS GONE. BUT IT DIDN'T FIRE.'

the trigger. I thought I was gone, I really did. But it didn't fire.

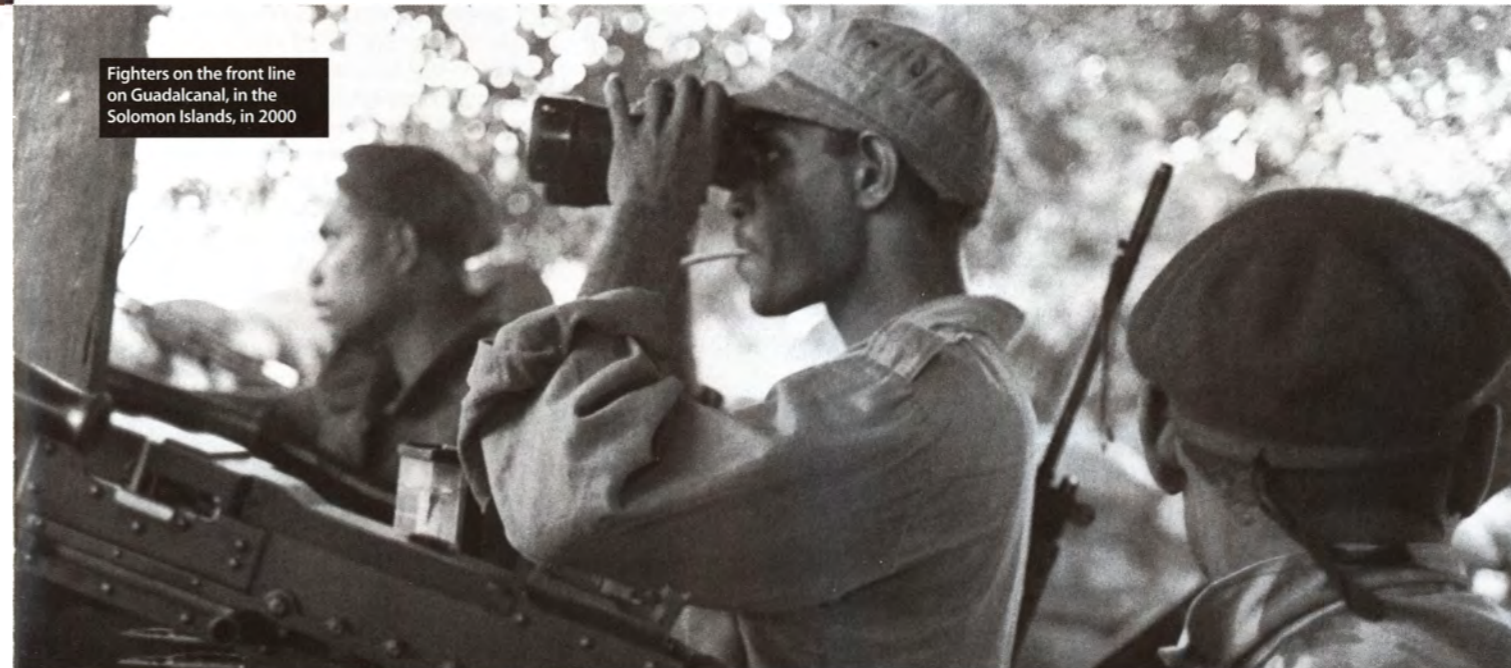
'He took out the magazine, put back one bullet, then pulled the trigger again, but it didn't fire. We're

very superstitious in the Solomon Islands—so I said to him you can try one more time, but you can guarantee it will fire out the other end! He pulled his rifle back and left.'

Throughout the conflict, Waletofea held fast to his belief that forgiveness is a vital part of building peace. 'Each militia was made up of several warlords,' he says. 'As they inflicted trauma on us, I made the point of going to them, to tell them that I forgave them for sending their men. I went to one particular warlord a number of times, and told him I wanted him to achieve his objectives, but that violence was not the way to do it. The first two times I met him he was angry with me. The third time he said, 'What's wrong with this fellow?' The fourth time he ordered his men to stop because he didn't want to see me any more.'

Waletofea's work has continued since peace was re-established in 2003. He has pioneered, with others, the setting up of a national branch of the anti-corruption group, Transparency International, and is working to establish human rights and truth and reconciliation commissions. He has also decided to address the critical problem of ethical leadership head-on, by founding the Solomon Islands Democratic Party.

The Solomon Islands face huge challenges: corruption, land issues, unsustainable logging, unemployment, illiteracy, poverty and demographic change (75 per cent of islanders are under 25, and the population is set to double in the next ten years). Waletofea is under no illusions about the size of the task before him, but he has a lot of hope. 'It really depends on a leadership with integrity, credibility and ability,' he says. ■



Fighters on the front line on Guadalcanal, in the Solomon Islands, in 2000



Africa needs its women

The Caux Lecture of Bineta Diop, the founder and Executive Director of Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS), was a call for women to play a greater part in Africa's affairs, and in peace-making in particular. 'Women are the first victims of violence, and they are the first to rebuild and to work for reconciliation,' she said. 'That is why their voice needs to be heard in negotiations.' Senegalese-born Diop, who now has Swiss nationality, noted that the continent has no women heads of state, and only two women foreign ministers.

READY AND ABLE

MIKE BROWN (6), PAMELA JENNER (1)



Pamela Jenner takes part in a conference organized by young Eastern Europeans

Above: Three of the conference organizers: Ljena Kaskarjova (Ukraine), Tatyana Minbaeva (Russia) and Zoryana Borbulzych (Ukraine)

Do good leadership skills have to go hand in hand with experience of life? While young people complain about not being given a chance to show initiative and leadership, many of the older generation say they feel marginalized by an increasingly 'ageist' society.

These views and the problems created by the generation gap were just some of the topics tackled at the 'Service, Responsibility and Leadership' conference, which opened the summer at Caux. It was run by a group of East Europeans who proved that being young is no barrier to organizing a highly successful, week-long event.

At the welcome session, Ukrainian Kostyantyn Ploskyy, one of the organizers, talked about the struggle for young people to make their own decisions, find their own way and realize their own potential.

On a wider level, he described how ordinary Ukrainians realized they could influence events in their country, when they stood in their thousands in the central square in Kiev in December to demand a recount in the presidential elections. 'Is it only possible in extraordinary situations for people to wake up?' asked Ploskyy. This was a question that was to be heard many times throughout the week, particularly in relation to terrorism, since the London bombings occurred on the first day of the conference.

DIVERSITY AND HOPE

'We do have a high level of freedom in Ukraine but there are still too many hopes which are not realized,' said Sasha Kopyl, who was also part of the organizing team. She added that the country still operated



Left to right: Milica Djordjevic, who works with street children in Belgrade, and Sarrah Shahawy from Los Angeles



POLITICS SHOULD NOT BE AT THE SERVICE OF ECONOMICS

very much by old methods, principles and values, although people were much more aware of what was going on in government.

Sasha Shimina, an International Law student from Ukraine, pointed out: 'When young people try to take part in decision-making we are challenged and encouraged to take initiative and try to make changes, but when we do that we are seen as not experienced.'

The third day of the conference was an open day, which drew visitors from around Switzerland, including diplomats. Dr Mario Soares, former President of Portugal, described his humble background, his early life under a military dictatorship and his experiences in prison and in exile fighting for democracy. He was sceptical about a liberal globalization that did not take into account values of solidarity and social justice: 'Politics must not be at the service of economics. Economics should serve politics, should serve people.'

Rev Dr Samuel Kobia, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, said: 'Caux is a fountain of great moral energy. We come from diverse situations but it is this diversity that makes it possible for us to tell each other stories, inspire each other and give each other hope.'

Milica Djordjevic, of Serbia Montenegro, spoke in the Service, Responsibility and



Clockwise from top left: Mario Soares; Hassaan Shahawy; Mountain House; Samuel Kobia; Sasha Shimina



Leadership conference about her work with child prostitutes, drug addicts and other vulnerable children on the streets of Belgrade. 'I feel my calling is to bring change to the social care system in Serbia Montenegro through NGOs,' she said. The outreach projects she works with include creating the first drop-in centre for street children in Belgrade.

Volodymyr Krutko described his work with the homeless in Moscow: 'Fear destroys trust and leads people to take up arms,' he said. 'By compassion and understanding others we can destroy our fear.'

DREAM FOR EUROPE

Frenchman Michel Koechlin spoke passionately about his desire for a strong and united Europe and his huge disappointment when France rejected the draft European constitution. He described the trauma of being forced to leave his home during World War II and said: 'My dream is for a peaceful Europe, a Europe which takes its responsibilities seriously concerning the entire world.' This was echoed by Jacqueline Mayiugi, wife of the Vice President of Burundi, when she spoke on the open day: 'People are dying of hunger every day. We need the help of your countries and a sense of international solidarity.'



Other speakers and participants in the conference provided sources of inspiration for the future through creative workshops, international dancing and a variety show; showcasing a surprising array of talent.

It is the huge diversity of people at the Caux conferences that makes them so nurturing. Eleven-year-old Hassaan Shahawy was probably the youngest person to take an active part in the conference. He has been coming to the conferences all the way from Los Angeles with his mother Eba Hathout and sister Sarrah, nearly 15, since he was six years old. 'I like the atmosphere here; it's very peaceful,' he said. Eba Hathout, said: 'As a child I came here with my parents—I almost grew up here,' she said. 'I was in a school below Caux and I call this "my mountain".'

OTABEK HASANOV (2)



PEACE, CONFLICT, HAKUNA MATATA!

José Carlos León Vargas from Mexico took part in a month's course on conflict resolution at the Caux centre



4 am: suddenly my roommate's alarm starts to sound. Still in the mist of my dreams and the excitement of the first day of classes, I notice him spreading a mat on the floor to commence his morning prayers according to his religion, Islam. From this moment on, I know that this summer in Caux will bring a new experience. With a smile on my face I say good morning to Altaf, from India, and go back to sleep, hardly able to wait to meet everyone else.

From mid July to mid August, the Caux conference centre hosted the Caux Scholars Programme 2005; an intensive course on peace building and conflict transformation that helped me to understand the roots of conflict, its causes and consequences. Yet, going beyond all my expectations, the programme also built an honest and solid friendship with 20 people from 17 countries on five continents.

Monica, a Colombian living in Canada, led one of our first morning meditations. She asked everybody to stand in front of each of the other students for a short period, to break the ice among us. I had never looked into the eyes of a Nigerian, a German and an Uzbek, one after the other, until now. As some of us stated during the exercise, the colours and shapes were very different but we could all see our own image in the eyes of the other. The person we were staring at was someone like us, full of dreams, thoughts and fears.

NO WORRIES

The weeks passed rapidly, and our long list of readings, lectures and meetings with experts in conflict resolution from all over the world were interspersed with moments of leisure. Emanuel from Kenya, George, our six-foot 'gentle giant' from Uganda, and Maurice, an American with Jamaican roots, teach the group a beautiful song, *Hakuna Matata*. This phrase, which means 'no worries' in Swahili, becomes the official motto of the Caux Scholars 2005. To my surprise, the sentiment is much appreciated by Sushil, from Nepal. His country is in political and social turmoil at the moment, but he promotes non-violence and a spirit of comradeship wherever he goes. Rather than a denial of reality, *Hakuna Matata* reminds us that there is a chance for peace and reconciliation if we approach conflict in a spirit of positive enquiry. And Vidjia, a young lawyer

from Cambodia, believes that appreciation and optimism are essential to transform a conflict.

Throughout the summer in Caux I feel I am discovering more from this international group than from many of the books I read back in college. Harper, an American student of political science, runs at least 20 kilometres every day—and sometimes twice a day. I learn from her that determination is crucial and that there is no time to lose in the construction of a hate-free, fear-free society. Some days later, Lillit explains to me the history of Armenia, Syria and Lebanon, the countries where she was born, raised and lives. Talking to a polyglot globetrotter like French/Australian social worker, Christina, I find out that neither money nor possessions are the real treasure, but discovering who we are by understanding someone else. For her, life is like a song, and we have to sing it loud from the bottom of our hearts.

DOWN THE MOUNTAIN

A bonfire up the hill above Caux lights up the night and reminds those of us who live in countries without war of how lucky we are. As a musical background, Emily performs a song she has composed. It says that the perceptions and feelings of people need to be transformed if we want to deal with the problems in our societies. Indeed, my own stereotypes towards Americans are starting to fade away thanks to Sarah, an American graduate working and teaching in Croatia, who is always cheering us up. I do not have a specific religion, but I deeply appreciate and feel her Christianity in the way she cares about people. This is the kind of leadership that our world needs, not only words but day-to-day actions.

The Caux Scholars Programme has strengthened my commitment to change, and my belief that no matter when or where a conflict arises there is still space for reconciliation and mutual comprehension. In a world in which prejudices tend to dominate, the gap between cultures can be reduced if we respect the other and share our feelings openly. After 30 days, it is time to go down the mountain and carry out this task in our own communities, for no change can be achieved if we do not walk our words and our thoughts. ■

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LETTERS

The UN

From Archie Mackenzie, Loch Lomond, Scotland

Having spent many years working at the UN I appreciated greatly Sir Richard Jolly's evaluation of its 60-year record (FAC, Aug-Sept). Too often these days it is dismissed as a broken reed. But he demonstrated that the UN system as a whole, including its Specialized Agencies, has done an immense amount of good for humanity.

The Special Summit in New York in September will be a chance to improve its capacity to function properly in the 21st century. But whether the Summit succeeds or fails, I believe that in our unsettled world we need to go on supporting the UN and pressing for change—morally, politically and technically.

Let us never forget: the UN is not them. It is us, all of us.

From Tony Sursham, Cambridge, UK

Sir Richard Jolly's exploration of the whole field of the UN's aims and aspirations, especially of the four principles of the original 1949 UN Charter, is enlightening and inspiring.

The advances chronicled in every decade since highlight the enormous value—despite the long stalemate of the Cold War—of the UN's work. Some of these are illustrated by the decisions and targets of the recent G8 Summit in Gleneagles.

With best wishes for your magazine, which so ably explores the news and aims of the UN and many other world bodies.

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'We shall not make the same mistake again'



DAVID CHANNER

Nearly 50 years ago I participated in a wreath-laying at Hiroshima and saw for myself the inscription on the memorial to the first atom bomb. I was amazed at the lack of blame, and, with the passage of time, one can only marvel at the generosity and wisdom of the city's mayor in his choice of words.

There had been considerable pressure on the authorities that the inscription on the memorial should be one of blame of the United States. Instead, anxious that the citizens' feelings not be exploited to make Hiroshima a platform for divisiveness, Mayor Shinzo Hamai chose something quite remarkable: 'Rest in peace. For we shall not make the same mistake again.'

It was the wish of Hamai, who was himself injured in the bombing, that 'everyone visiting and praying before the cenotaph takes part of responsibility for the past evil by means of making an apology for it, and taking a pledge never again to repeat the same sin, from the bottom of their hearts.'

Over the years there has been an 'inscription dispute' over the appropriateness of the wording. This year, on the eve of the observance of the 60th anniversary, the stone, which lists 230,000 victims of the bomb, was defaced by an ultranationalist who felt the inscription

obscured American responsibility.

In 1949, on Hamai's initiative, Hiroshima was proclaimed a 'City of Peace' by the Japanese Parliament. In 1952 the Memorial Cenotaph with its challenging inscription was completed. A later mayor, Setsuo Yamada, explained that the subject of the inscription is all humankind: 'The message shall serve as a lesson to the whole human race.'

Every year since, the city has been the focus of peace activities; this year some 60,000 people thronged the Peace Park to remember the dead and to protest against the spread of nuclear weapons.

In 1950 Mayor Hamai attended a conference in Caux, along with nearly 70 other Japanese leaders. They met Frank Buchman, the inspirer of this centre of reconciliation, who challenged the Japanese to make their country 'the lighthouse of Asia'. They were confronted with the simple idea that if you wanted to rebuild your country or the world you had to start with yourself.

These men and women took this challenge to heart in what became 'Japan's decisive decade', as Basil Entwistle makes clear in his book of the same name (Grosvenor, 1985). Parliamentarians in the group apologized in the US Congress for 'the tragic trouble we have caused to the people of the United States'. The *Saturday Evening Post* responded, 'The idea of a

nation admitting it could be mistaken has a refreshing impact. Perhaps even Americans could think up a few occasions of which it could be safely admitted: we certainly fouled things up that time.' And the *New York Times* editorialized, 'For a moment we could see out of the darkness when all men may become brothers.'

On their way home the party was interviewed by CBS on the fifth anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing. Hamai said, 'We people of Hiroshima hold no bitterness towards anyone because we have realized this tragedy is naturally to be expected from war. The only thing we ask of the world is that everybody becomes aware of what happened in Hiroshima, how and why it happened, and exerts every effort to see it will not have to happen again in any other place. We need to remove the boundary lines we have wilfully drawn in our hearts—the lines of race, nationality and class.'

'They can be removed by a change of heart. Dr Buchman has said that peace is people becoming different. This hits the nail on the head. I, for one, intend to start this effort from Hiroshima. The one dream and hope alive left to our surviving citizens is to re-establish the city as a pattern for peace.'

Michael Henderson is the author of 'Forgiveness: Breaking the Chain of Hate', Grosvenor Books, 2002, ISBN 1-85239-031-X. Visit his website at www.michaelhenderson.org.uk

REFLECTIONS

CHRIS LANCASTER

Don't give it up, make it sacred



THE WORD 'SACRIFICE' is used in many different ways—often to mean 'giving up something'. So people 'sacrifice' their time, or their money, or even their lives as martyrs for a religion or cause.

People of faith have often thought in terms of sacrificing one's life for God's purposes. For some it has meant putting aside cherished plans for study and careers. For others it has meant spending years far from their homelands and their families and friends. For many it has involved living with little financial security.

But how else might we understand the idea of sacrifice? The word's Latin derivation means 'to make holy, to make sacred'. This changes the perspective. We are called not so much to give up what means most to us, but to make it sacred, to transform it. So we sacrifice our time by using it for the highest purpose, not squandering it on worthless things. We sacrifice our money—this might mean parting with it! And we sacrifice our lives for the service of others.

We are not called to lay aside who we most deeply are, in order to devote our time and energy to something which is supposedly more worthy. Rather, we are called to 'sacrifice' who we most deeply are—by embracing it and living it out for the good of the world around us. If you are a politician, then sacrifice that position: through what it gives to society. If you are a teacher, then sacrifice that position: in the way that it affirms the life and worth of every child. If you are an artist, then sacrifice it: in the way that your art touches the deepest truths of what it is to be human.

Once we move away from the notion of giving something up, we are freed to realize that none of these things—our time, our resources and our very lives—were ever ours to 'give up' in the first place. The only things we can and must give up are those that prevent us from faithfully sacrificing all of who we are: our self-centred fears, desires, prejudices and insecurities.

This is our opportunity to live the freedom for which we were created.

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