



TURN THE SEARCHLIGHT INWARD

The 'UK Initiatives of Change Annual Review' coloured brochure is now available from 24 Greencoat Place. Illustrated with a range of excellent photographs, it contains reports of IofC's programmes and outreach over the last year, as well as profiles of some of those working in different parts of the world, summarised accounts of the Oxford Group and other information.

Introducing the review brochure, Oxford Group Secretary **Geoffrey Craig** writes:

The UK plays host to people from every corner of the globe. How do we respond to the present world crisis? Do we only want to ensure our security or do we also want to draw the best out of each other?

Initiatives of Change offers a way towards trust and community by challenging each of us to 'turn the searchlight inwards' to see where any change of attitude and practice is needed in our own lives. Building on this we can reach out

beyond our comfort zone to care for neighbours, for those from other cultures and other countries. A decision to search for and apply God's guidance gives a solid foundation for such commitment....

The description of IofC (in the brochure) summarises this approach, and evidence of IofC in action is given – action at all levels: personal, national and international. A section called *The Heart of IC* goes more deeply into the personal experience and commitment of some individuals. These are typical of the application of IofC

principles that underlies the effectiveness of all the actions.

This review is offered in gratitude for the dedication of so many who overcome all kinds of difficulties to build a trusting society.



A MAGAZINE FOR A CHANGE

Jessica Fleischer and Jose Carlos Leon Vargas

Here I am, sitting in front of a desk. My computer's screen is receiving messages without interruption. Photocopiers, faxes, scanners surround us, just as in any office.

Except that I am in London, thousands of miles away from my country, Mexico.

My name is **Jessica** and I am 24. I graduated with a degree in marketing last January. If someone had told me at that time that my life would have continued in a different continent I would have definitely thought that this was the craziest idea. But now I'm talking to my colleagues from Eritrea and Palestine, who help me to understand a little



Jessica Fleischer

bit more about Greencoat Place and Initiatives of Change. The atmosphere here is full of ideas and good vibes. More than colleagues we are a group that resembles a family. We feel free to talk about personal issues. It is not only a working experience that we are acquiring in London, but also a capacity to understand other people's feelings and ideas.

E-mails and letters arrive from

many countries everyday. Executive meetings are a permanent element in our agenda. This entire atmosphere is so stimulating for an international relations graduate like me. My name is **Jose Carlos**. Six months ago I was searching for a position in an NGO in Mexico or in my hometown,

Oaxaca, in southern Mexico. But the difficult economic situation in my country is reducing the employment opportunities every year. The vacancies available give you, in most cases, a big remuneration in terms of stipend, but the human or ethical aspect is always missing.



Jose Carlos Leon Vargas

When I first heard about IofC last February I never imagined that I would have become, with Jessica, the marketing manager of the socially concerned magazine *For A Change*.

Now, after one month in Caux and two in London, I understand that change starts when you believe that we all have a purpose in our lives, no matter what faith you profess. Hopefully we will stay here

for one year or more, being part of a team whose aim is not to sell a magazine, but to raise a public awareness towards global problems and foment a culture of respect and ethical behaviour.

A coincidence?

Many times people have asked us how we came across this organisation, but it was actually Initiatives of Change who reached us. Was it a coincidence? We do not think so. We see it more as a call, a call to make this world a little bit less unhopeful in the future.

We are both now finding our way down in London. Sometimes it is inevitable not to feel nostalgic. Homesickness is a recurrent feeling when you are overseas. Yet, we know that this is a precious opportunity to grow both at personal and professional levels. Turning back now would indicate that we are not ready to understand the meaning of change.

Journey beginning

It is always exciting to live abroad, to meet new people. But time passes so quickly that when you start getting used to it you are about to leave. Our journey has just begun. We came here with a pair of suitcases: one full of memories and expectations, the other one empty, but ready to be loaded with enriching experiences, ready to be filled with hope and change.

Photos: Ken Noble

JUST OUT

Special issue of 'For A Change' on Caux 2004, including:

- Caz Hore-Ruthven discovers that peace is more than the absence of war at the conference on 'Human Security through good governance'
 - Joanna Margueritte encounters unlikely heroes at a conference on 'Service, Responsibility and Leadership'
 - Hugh Williams has his ear to the ground at the Renewal Arts Forum – and Ken Noble meets a Vietnamese musician, who came to the west as a boat person, and his Japanese pianist wife
 - The Caux Conference for Business and Industry tackles economic justice and farm subsidies
 - Former MP Michael Bates describes his work to build bridges with North Korea
- And much more

Order now!

Special rate –

Single copies: £2.00 per copy including p&p

Five or more copies: £1.00 per copy (plus £1.50 p&p for 5-9 copies; £2.50 for 10-12 copies; please enquire for p&p for larger numbers or overseas) from FAC Marketing at 24 Greencoat Place, London SW1P 1RD (tel:020 7798 6024). Or email marketing@forachange.co.uk

Please make cheques out to 'For A Change'.

THE PLACE WHERE I STARTED OVER AGAIN

In 1972 MRA pioneer Bill Conner took a group of five British students to visit Egypt. Out of this came a series of exchanges between Arab and European students. This summer two of the original Egyptian students returned to Caux with some of the next generation to present a play. Since returning to Egypt they have written something of their experience and new convictions. We print some of these.

A glimmer of hope:

What did I learn from Mountain House in Caux? I just find myself acting in a different way towards people, towards my family and friends. My hate towards any country or religion started to fade away and I find myself loving and appreciating every human being for what they really are.

I realised that inequality is the main cause of hate and war. In Mountain House I never felt misjudged and I never felt that I was lower or higher than anyone. We were all equal, the Egyptians, Americans, British, Swedish - we were all one. This equality created inner peace inside me and made me more aware of the problems going on in the world. I felt my life had a meaning and I was motivated to help make the world a better place. I felt a glimmer of hope lighting up my life.

Before and after:

Before I went to Caux, I was careless. I didn't think much of how my role in society would affect it. After being there I discovered everybody has a role in society. I knew that I must have a role to change things for the better. I knew I should start working and stop being careless or indifferent. I learned to believe in myself and in others.

In Caux people learned to love each other. We served people and people served us. A mayor served us, a doctor served us, a professor served us. We were all equal. People were respected for who they really are, not for their money or degree. Being in Caux taught us how to change. It taught us how believing in God, in ourselves and in our society is the first step. It made me stop and think how I can be effective in society and how to change things for the better.

Understanding other people:

The trip to Caux had a tremendous effect upon myself and especially my opinion of people of different cultures. I have never seen a place in which so much love and caring for one another can be found. I learned through people from different religions that it is more important to truly believe in God and really act upon that in everything that one does than the name of the religion one believes in. Through seeing people from different religions from mine, I started

to understand my own religion even better. I started to realise that problems do not only exist in my own country. Instead of just forbidding bad or evil deeds we have to encourage good ones. Love should replace fear.

A miracle:

I had so much hate in my heart...

Caux was the place where I started over again.

Flowers are now blooming where there was no rain.

It's like a miracle that worked so fast.

Neither anger nor hatred in my heart at last.

Even the Jewish people:

I finally stopped cursing my country and decided to transform the blessed things I saw and gained, from Switzerland to Egypt.

Everyone rushed to help us, no matter what your colour, religion, sex or even culture. When a young Palestinian hugged me, I felt that we Arabs have something in common, the same problems and worries but above all we share love.

Then, when I was exposed to different people from all over the world, I found that they have my worries and fears. I realised that all mankind are confronting the same problems as me, searching for peace, unity, love and purity, hiding from war, hatred, greed and evil. Really it's not colour, religion or

culture... It's all about the human spirit.

The weirdest thing was that even the Jewish people I was able to talk to. This was because of a young man who said, "If you want to make peace, don't talk to your friends but talk to your enemies." So I decided to talk to the enemies and knock at their doors with the love and peace inside me.

A young man from Ghana told me, "I thought that the Arabs are dangerous, closed-minded and bloodthirsty." He taught me and also learned how unfair and insane it is to judge people when we don't know them.

To sum up, that journey opened my eyes on ideas and concepts I never imagined I could think of.

Why the hate?

At Caux I knew that we seek destruction because we hate people that we don't even know, people just like us, and they hate us too. We hate each other because we were born to find our countries fighting.

It was my first time out of my country Egypt. I was so afraid to meet new people. I started to talk with everyone. I made so many new friends and I learned a different lesson from everyone. Mountain House is a place which can teach you to love and can let you feel how it is to be loved.

Can we all be the big, huge picture of Mountain House?

BATTLE OF BRITAIN CHALLENGE

*The following letter from **Pat Ducé** in the Hastings Observer on September 17 is headed: "Better basis for living":*

Thinking about the forthcoming Battle of Britain Commemoration Service at Christ Church, Blacklands, brings to mind something my husband, who died a few months ago, wrote earlier concerning an unusual and impressive stained glass window. It's not in a church, but in the factory where he and many others worked during the war: the Rolls-Royce aeroplane engine works in Derby, source of all Hurricane and Spitfire engines.

The inscription reads, "This window commemorates the pilots of the Royal Air Force who, in the Battle of Britain, turned the work of our hands into the salvation of our country." At the unveiling, Marshal of the Royal Air Force Lord Tedder spoke of the inscription's continuing challenge. He warned of unfinished business: "The Battle of Britain was a great and vital victory. But the ultimate victory for the faith, for the ideals for which Britain stands, has yet to be won."

Throughout his long life my husband's love of Britain and his vision for it never diminished. He believed, as do I, that what's most needed is a peacetime "pathfinder" country to point the way – whose

people, by a convincing application of their "faith and ideals" to every aspect of life, show there is a better basis for living than has so far been seen.

How I wish we could be that country.

PIONEERS HONOURED

Obituaries of Charis Waddy, Hugh Elliott and George Walker appeared in *The Independent* in August and September. They bring to 34 the number of MRA pioneers whose lives have been publicly honoured in British national and regional newspapers since 1991. Some of these are now posted under the "Past Lives" section on the UK IofC website.

Mike Smith

INDIAN EDITION

Many of you will have ordered a copy of *Initiatives of Change in India* when it was published a year ago. Since then an Indian edition has been published containing a new colour cover and some additional material. Some copies have reached me and if anyone would like a copy, please let me know. A contribution of £2.50 towards postage and some publication costs would be appreciated.

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A FAMILY IN EGYPT

by Mary Rowlett

Republished by the Hornbill Press

“A FAMILY IN EGYPT is a fascinating reflection of life in Egypt over a period of a hundred and thirty years – culminating in the nineteen fifties and so, from the viewpoint of the early twenty-first century, a period piece. Episodic and idiosyncratic, it is also an oblique portrait of a woman – a person of humour, warmth, and infinite curiosity. Mary Rowlett did not set out to write about herself – far from it – but the text is infused with that bracing personality, so that she lifts from the pages quite as vividly as the Egyptians of whom she writes and the place that she conjures up.”

From the Foreword by Penelope Lively

Price £12 + £2p&p from

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

In London...

THE GREENCOAT FORUMS

towards an inclusive society

Autumn 2004

Tuesday evenings

Buffet refreshments from 6.30pm

Talk at 7.15pm, at 24 Greencoat Place,

London SW1P 1RD

12 October:

Britain's response to asylum seekers:

Felicity Dick and Mary Lean

(Chair and Vice Chair of the Gatwick

Detainees Welfare Group)

The group visit and befriend asylum seekers held in detention at Tinsley House at Gatwick Airport. 8,000 people pass through the detention centre each year. About a tenth of them ask for help from the welfare group, which is one of five winners of The Guardian Charity Awards 2004 – out of a field of 700.

9 November:

Excellence in music - luxury or necessity?

Penelope Thwaites,

well-known concert pianist, composer and broadcaster

Penelope Thwaites is a leading authority on the music of Percy Grainger, her eighth recording for Chandos being released this year. Her musical *Ride! Ride!* was first performed in London's West End in 1976 and continues to be produced world-wide. Her talk will include musical illustrations.

7 December:

Dolen Cymru – Wales' unique link with Lesotho:

Paul Williams and others

Launched in 1985, the Wales-Lesotho link is a unique experiment to bridge the gap across two continents and across the economic 'North-South' divide. A former Lesotho High Commissioner in London called it 'a new dimension in international relations'. It represents a specifically Welsh contribution to the ideal of one world. Paul Williams was Secretary of Dolen Cymru from 1985 to 2004. The evening will include colour slides.

FRIENDS OF WESTMINSTER PRODUCTIONS

Saturday, 16 October at 3 pm

The Barn Theatre, 24 Greencoat Place

Bishop Michael Marshall, Assistant Bishop of London, will talk about *The Spirituality of Franz Schubert*.

Michael Marshall is an author and gifted pianist who has played with many leading orchestras. He will illustrate his talk at the piano and on CD. (Reservation forms available from Friends of Westminster Productions, 24 Greencoat Place, London SW1P 1RD)

...in Sheffield...

Saturday, 27 November

Ranmoor Hall, Sheffield

A Time of Discovery

Day event for all interested in IofC – “a taste of the spiritual journey of discovery”. For any coming from a distance, accommodation is available overnight on Friday.

For more information, please contact David Curtis, tel: 01142 668 667, email: D.A.Curtis@btinternet.com

For bookings, please contact Brian Thirlaway, tel. 01978 364 499, email: brian.thirlaway@uk.iofc.org

...and in Switzerland

26 December – 2 January 2005

Mountain House, Caux, Switzerland

Winter conference on the theme:

Understanding Europe - Learning to live as Europeans

Young families are particularly welcome.

For more information please contact:

The Conference Secretary,

PO Box 4419, CH 6002 Luzern.

Tel: 0041 41 310 1261, fax: 0041 41 311 2214, email: confsec@caux.ch

THANK YOU

There was a big response to my cry for MRA books. Thank you to everyone who sent books for my collection. While I have been on *Action for Life 2* they have been flooding in. I now have a huge pile, all the classic titles and plenty of copies as well. The next step is to send the books to the teams around the world who have requested them. I am still looking into the best way to do that; sea-mail seems to be the cheapest.

Anyone who would like to contribute towards postage/packing could send cheques payable to me. My address is 25 The Fairway, New Moston, Manchester M40 3WS. If I raise more than is needed, I will contribute the rest to *Action for Life 3*, an IofC training programme that starts in October 2005 in India.

Thank you again for all your generous help. **Bhavesh Patel**

This issue was edited by Mary Jones and Janet Paine with layout by Blair Cummock.

Please send material for the November issue by October 23 to Ann Carpenter,

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