

Charity, Activism and Social Justice: Revisiting Christian Aid's role in public campaigns for fair trade (1968-1973)

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Abstract:

The 1960s was the moment when NGOs established their role within the professional world of international development. There were new networks emerging and new approaches to development – but there were also longer-term trends and challenges that resurfaced about the role of charity, activism and social justice. Previous research has shown how Christian networks were instrumental in establishing local fair trade campaigns. This article investigates the extent to which Christian Aid contributed to fair trade campaigns by providing a moral social force in public debates about social justice, international development and global trade.

Writing in August 1968 to Leslie Kirkley, the Oxfam Director, Alan Brash outlined the challenges he faced as the newly appointed Director of Christian Aid, 'I am feeling certain pressures in the direction of defining objectives for Christian Aid, not only in terms of fund raising and of programme, but also in the field of certain politico-economic objectives concerned with world justice'.¹ Brash's assessment reflected the development sector in a moment of change, 'I am feeling these pressures from the growth of innumerable movements and organisations, some of them sprouting out of Christian Aid itself. I am feeling these pressures, also, among my own staff. Basically I am feeling them because they arise from the world situation which we know very well'.²

The world situation that Alan Brash described was the historical moment of 1968. The 1960s were a crucial period in the history of aid. This was the time of the UN's First Development Decade and the moment when NGOs established their role within the professional world of long-term development.³ There were new networks emerging, and new approaches to development – but there were also longer-term trends and challenges that resurfaced about the role of charity, activism and social justice. 1968 marked the start of the 'NGO moment' - the unfolding Biafran humanitarian crisis prompted a coordinated international response and the rise of a global development industry.⁴ Existing studies of 1968 have primarily explored the new radical movements connected to student activism,

¹ Christian Aid Archives, held at SOAS Special Collections (CA), CA/I/12/2, Oxfam, Letter from Brash to Kirkley, 6 Aug. 1968.

² Ibid.

³ Matthew Hilton, 'Oxfam and the Problem of NGO Aid Appraisal in the 1960s', *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development*, 9, 1 (2018), 2.

⁴ Kevin O'Sullivan, Matthew Hilton, and Juliano Fiori. 'Humanitarianisms in context', *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire*, 23, 1-2 (2016), 7.

the New Left and decolonisation.⁵ However, ‘Third World’ development networks were often funded, and supported, by more established agencies such as Christian Aid and Oxfam.

Enrico Dal Lago and Kevin O’Sullivan have argued that the history of humanitarianism should be read as ‘moments of acceleration’ with bursts of activity that refreshed the sector while carrying with them the baggage of what had come before.⁶ Christian Aid responded to this ‘moment of acceleration’ by promoting a more politicised dimension to their campaigning. However, this political moment was short-lived, before a ‘moment of deceleration’ and rebalancing that began in early 1970s. By revisiting Christian Aid’s role in public campaigns for fair trade the aim of this article is to establish three themes of enquiry that reveal tensions that were important in the development of Christian Aid’s work, but also shaped the character of the early fair trade movement. In part, this is a story of competition and conflict – but these tensions also presented new dynamics and opportunities. First, I will use the case of Christian Aid to illustrate the role of religion and competition with secular agencies in building campaigns for fair trade. I will argue that while fair trade represented an opportunity to give voice to theology in the economic realm there was little evidence that fair trade was espoused as a form of public theology.⁷

The second theme relates to the tensions between charity and politics. This was not only an issue for faith-based organisations - the development sector as a whole was under greater scrutiny as incomes increased and charities took on a more visible role in initiatives such as the Freedom from Hunger Campaign. Partly this was an agenda led by the Charity Commission, focused around the regulation of registered charities, but there was also increasing interest from charity supporters about what was considered ‘charity’ and how their donations were being spent. This prompted wider debates about the effectiveness and value for money of aid and longer-term development programmes.⁸

The final theme concerns the role and responsibilities of the state and those of the individual. Alan Brash, Christian Aid’s Director from 1968 to 1975, argued that relief and development could not be tackled by agencies alone. The objectives of ‘international economic justice’ required the contributions of all – in particular governments and inter-governmental organisations.⁹ Research by Peter van Dam has shown how the fair trade movement in the Netherlands established a dynamic transnational campaign that enabled

⁵ Hans Righart, ‘Moderate versions of the “global sixties”: A comparison of Great Britain and the Netherlands’, *Journal of Area Studies*, 6, 13 (1998), 82-96; Robert Skinner, The dynamics of anti-apartheid: International solidarity, human rights and decolonization. In Smith A. & Jeppesen C. (Eds.), *Britain, France and the Decolonization of Africa: Future Imperfect?* (London: UCL Press, 2017), 111-130.

⁶ Enrico Dal Lago and Kevin O’Sullivan. ‘Introduction: Towards a New History of Humanitarianism’. *Moving the Social*, 57 (2017), 5-20.

⁷ Mark Dawson, ‘Church Action for Fair Trade as Public Theology: Learning from the Experience of the Mainstreaming of Fair Trade in the United Kingdom’, *International Journal of Public Theology*, 13, 1 (2019), 55-71.

⁸ Matthew Hilton, ‘Oxfam and the Problem of NGO Aid Appraisal in the 1960s’, *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development*, 9, 1 (2018), 1-18.

⁹ CA/I/12/2, Oxfam, Letter from Brash to Kirkley, 6 Aug. 1968.

space for state and civil society co-operation whilst articulating different visions of development policy.¹⁰ For agencies such as Christian Aid, this involved striking a careful balance between a limited focus on ‘relief and charity’ and a more active political approach that could be seen as ‘too radical’.

Christian Aid provides a valuable case study to explore the dynamics and identity of the early fair trade campaigns in the UK.¹¹ Started in 1945, ‘Christian Reconstruction in Europe’, the precursor to Christian Aid, grew up as the aid and development division of the British Council of Churches.¹² From 1949, the movement became the Inter-Church Aid and Refugee Service; this marked a broadening of its stated purpose to include longer term development. In 1957, Inter-Church Aid and Refugee Service held a door-to-door collection in 200 towns and villages across the UK. This was the first Christian Aid Week and in total raised £26,000. The concept of Christian Aid Week proved a very effective way of raising not only funds, but awareness. Reflecting the widespread public recognition of Christian Aid Week, in 1964 the organisation changed its name to Christian Aid. By 1968, Christian Aid accounts showed a total income of £1.9 million, with £957,972 raised during Christian Aid Week.¹³

The focus of this study is on understanding how Christian Aid positioned its contribution to fair trade campaigns in relation to other humanitarian agencies and NGOs. In this context, correspondence with Oxfam was of particular interest. Utilising the Christian Aid archives held at SOAS Special Collections, the research approach was to actively work ‘against the grain’ in considering the catalogued records and documents.¹⁴ This meant going beyond published campaign material and official histories to consider how key constituents understood Christian Aid’s work, and how this was framed in correspondence with supporters, Government and other development agencies.

The experience of Christian Aid during the late 1960s informed the character of fair trade campaigns in modern Britain and the options available to local campaigners. Previous research has shown how Christian networks were instrumental in establishing local fair trade campaigns.¹⁵ Churches across Europe helped to promote fair trade activities by

¹⁰ Peter van Dam, ‘Attracted and repelled: Transnational relations between civil society and the state in the history of the fair trade movement since the 1960s’. In *Shaping the International Relations of the Netherlands, 1815-2000* (London: Routledge, 2018), 183-200.

¹¹ Christian Aid was a founding member of the Fairtrade Foundation in the UK alongside CAFOD, Oxfam, Traidcraft, Global Justice Now (formerly the World Development Movement), and the National Federation of Women’s Institutes.

¹² The main Churches in the BCC were Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, United Reform and Church of Scotland. Roman Catholics were not part of the BCC until 1990, when they were formally admitted. In 1999 the BCC adopted the name Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.

¹³ CA/J/1, Christian Aid year’s report, October 1967 to September 1968.

¹⁴ Matthew Hilton, Emily Baughan, Eleanor Davey, Bronwen Everill, Kevin O’Sullivan, and Tehila Sasson. ‘History and Humanitarianism: A Conversation’, *Past & Present*, 241, 1 (2018), e1-e38.

¹⁵ See: Alice Malpass, Paul Cloke, Clive Barnett, and Nick Clarke. ‘Fairtrade urbanism? The politics of place beyond place in the Bristol Fairtrade City campaign’, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 31, 3 (2007), 633-645; Ken Peattie and Anthony Samuel. ‘Fairtrade towns as unconventional networks of ethical activism’, *Journal of Business Ethics*, 153, 1 (2018), 265-282.

offering financial grants, access to church buildings and volunteer support from amongst the local congregation.¹⁶ This article investigates the extent to which Christian Aid contributed to fair trade campaigns by providing a moral social force in public debates about social justice, international development and global trade.

UNCTAD II: Trade not Aid

The 1960s was a period of intensely fought discussions as the NGO sector debated new approaches to advocacy, reform, and the demands of the Third World.¹⁷ Following the second UNCTAD conference in New Delhi in 1968, the phrase ‘trade not aid’ quickly gained popularity as a way of expressing the demand for Member States, ‘to take full account in their trade and development policies, of the needs of the developing countries’.¹⁸ New organisations emerged with a radical reform agenda that looked to build on the demands of UNCTAD and overturn the existing political and economic order. In Britain, three organisations were established in rapid succession supporting ‘Third World-ism’ and identifying with the politics of the New Left: The Haslemere Group (1968), Action for World Development (1969)¹⁹ and Third World First (1969)²⁰. These organisations, although too small to bring about change on their own, provided new ideas and a dynamic network of young professionals that looked to shape the internal debates within more established NGOs and change government policy on aid and development.

The Haslemere Group was formed in January 1968 to discuss the social and economic crisis facing the ‘developing countries’ and the failure of rich industrialised countries to recognise the crisis and their responsibility for finding ways of changing it. Most of the participants worked for overseas aid organisations including: Oxfam, the Overseas Development Institute and Christian Aid; however their involvement in the campaign was in an individual capacity rather than as organisational representatives. The Haslemere Group aimed to bring about ‘radical changes in the political and economic structures of the world so that the poor are helped not hindered.’²¹ The Haslemere Declaration

¹⁶ Peter van Dam, ‘Handel im Tempel? Fair Trade und Kirchen in den Niederlanden seit 1945’. *Neue Soziale Bewegungen als Herausforderung sozialkirchlichen Handelns*, ed. Wilhelm Damberg & Traugott Jähnichen. (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 2015), 279-296; Paul Arnold, ‘Went v'r jet dunt dan dunt v'r jot!’ De geschiedenis van de Kerkraadse Stichting Steun Onderontwikkelde Streken, later S.O.S. Wereldhandel, 1959-1986’, *Studies over de sociaal-economische geschiedenis van Limburg* (2001) 46, 2-43; Ruben Quaas, *Fair Trade: Eine global-lokale Geschichte am Beispiel des Kaffees* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2015).

¹⁷ Kevin O'Sullivan, ‘The Search for Justice: NGOs in Britain and Ireland and the New International Economic Order, 1968–82’, *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development*, 6, 1 (2015), 173-187.

¹⁸ Proceedings of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Second Session, New Delhi, 1 February - 29 March 1968. http://unctad.org/en/Docs/td97vol1_en.pdf (Last visited 1 July 2019).

¹⁹ Action for World Development was set up in 1969 as a coordinating body for local groups involved in collecting one million signatures on a petition about world development. The World Development Movement was formed the following year. And in January 2015 the World Development Movement changed its name to Global Justice Now. See: Chris Cook, *The Routledge Guide to British Political Archives: Sources Since 1945* (London: Routledge, 2012).

²⁰ In 1997, the Third World First network voted to change the name to People & Planet.

²¹ Jonathan Power, *Development Economics*, (London: Longman Group, 1971), 136.

presented a wide ranging critique of the international policies and politics that had resulted in the economic domination of developing countries by the industrialised countries and allowed them to maintain control of trade in commodities such as textiles, coffee, cocoa and sugar.²²

Echoing the words of Dr Paul Prebisch, the Secretary-General of the UNCTAD, the Haslemere Declaration spoke of a revolution that was underway in the ‘Third World’ and represented a new political force. They declared the need to build links with this new movement, not out of charity, but in a common effort to change world society. While ‘the value and humanity’ of work done by overseas aid charities was recognised – they set out a challenge to move beyond merely the salving of consciences.²³ There was clear frustration at the limited success of campaigners and limited action by government: ‘we cannot continue to be merely polite, respectable and ineffective lobbyists for “more and better aid” when we have lost all faith in the ability of our governments to respond realistically to the desperate human need of the poor world’.²⁴ The new approach called for a political campaign, ‘to ensure that the voice of the exploited poor world is represented whenever and wherever Government spending are discussed’.²⁵

In response to the challenges raised by the Haslemere Group, Christian Aid published a series of eleven booklets on overseas aid, tackling some of the big questions of the day: Why is aid needed? What can we do? What kind of aid? Should trade barriers fall? These booklets were an opportunity for Christian Aid to reflect in an official capacity the types of discussions that had been taking place within the Haslemere Group and communicate its position to supporters on key issues of trade, aid and development. Of particular interest in understanding Christian Aid’s involvement in early fair trade campaigns are three booklets: ‘What can we do?’; ‘The role of trade?’; ‘The Commonwealth and the Common Market’.

What can we do?

Christian Aid’s second booklet in the series titled *‘What Can We Do?’* opened by arguing that ‘divisiveness is at the source of many of the problems behind the headlines’.²⁶ Inequality between the world’s rich and poor was growing, and despite the extent of global challenges, governments in industrialised countries seemed to be doing less about it – between 1961 and 1965 Western aid reportedly fell by 28 per cent.²⁷ Christian Aid’s analysis echoed many of the arguments made in the Haslemere Group’s declaration.²⁸ In particular, Christian Aid highlighted the tensions caused by aid conditionalities, ‘by 1980, if present

²² These products that would later become an important focus for fair trade consumer campaigns.

²³ CA/J/1, The Haslemere Declaration (Haslemere Committee, 1968).

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ CA/J/2, Christian Aid, ‘Overseas Aid: What can We Do?’ (1967, revised 1969), 3.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Jonathan Power was the author of several Christian Aid booklets and was a founding member of the Haslemere Group.

trends continue the total amount of aid received by developing countries will be cancelled out by interest being paid back on past aid. We are giving with one hand and taking back with the other'.²⁹

The booklet questioned how the UK Government could be influenced to reallocate funds to better enable developing countries to stand on their own feet? Christian Aid argued that, 'we have only one advantage – a moral one, and that we must use. We must seek to awaken the conscience of this country'.³⁰ The next question was how to awaken the public conscience to the plight of the developing countries? There was a recognition that letter writing, lobbying and conferences - were not enough, at least not on their own. As part of this discussion, the sit-ins and marches employed by the civil rights movement in the United States were acknowledged for their power to dramatise humanity's moral responsibility and confront inequality. But Christian Aid stopped short of proposing direct action in the UK, 'it is not the task of Christian Aid as such to mount a campaign like CND. Our purpose is to offer an idea that may take root and form as the "lobby for justice" develops, and to provide opportunities for people to meet in groups large or small, in order to examine the facts and decide on their own action'.³¹

Beyond a suggestion that individuals donated 1-2% of personal income to voluntary agencies, Christian Aid avoided being too prescriptive about what was considered the right type of action. There was broad support for local campaigns, where members of World Poverty Action Groups were encouraged to engage local government, trade unions, chambers of commerce, schools, colleges, universities, local press and radio. It was hoped that from a local level, public concern would spread and that local and national institutions would be encouraged to face the issue of global poverty. Christian Aid offered support for local study groups to discuss complex issues about trade and inequality in the world.³² Returning to the question of 'what can we do?', Christian Aid expressed a hope that 'a growing number of people will accept their personal and public responsibility to raise these urgent questions in places where they live and in areas where they have influence in local and national life, in the ways in which they think will have most influence'.³³

The role of trade

Christian Aid's booklet on '*The Role of Trade*' opened with a brief overview of the economics of comparative advantage, but primarily the focus was on reviewing the progress made over the four years since the first UNCTAD and four months since the second

²⁹ CA/J/2, Christian Aid, 'Overseas Aid: What can We Do?' (1967, revised 1969).

³⁰ Ibid., 10.

³¹ Ibid., 12.

³² There are parallels with Fairtrade Towns campaigns that emerged in the UK in the early 2000s. See Roberta Discetti, Matthew Anderson and Adam Gardner, 'Campaign spaces for sustainable development: A power analysis of the Fairtrade Town Campaign in the UK', *Food Chain*, (Forthcoming).

³³ CA/J/2, Christian Aid, 'Overseas Aid: What can We Do?' (1967, revised 1969), 14.

conference.³⁴ The picture presented was bleak when it came to the prospects for developing countries. Christian Aid's analysis highlighted a series of trade policies by industrialised countries that would further distance the rich world from the poor world, these included the US quotas on sugar and cotton that had become more restrictive; the EEC's plan to export heavily subsidised sugar beet; the lack of new commodity agreements and the pressure applied to the international coffee agreement due to interventions by the US.

The booklet outlined three areas where progress needed to be made: firstly, market access for both agricultural and manufactured products from poor countries to rich countries; secondly, the instability of commodity prices; and finally, the trend of falling world prices for commodities produced by developing countries. Christian Aid argued that, 'No longer can farmers in the rich world be protected, if the price to be paid is the backwardness of 80% of the world'.³⁵

The booklet ends with a quote from Julius Nyerere, President of Tanzania, 'The objectives of the people of the underdeveloped countries can, I believe, be summed up in the trade union phraseology: fair pay and conditions for a fair day's work. . . We welcome the comradeship of those who join us in this struggle; we are grateful for those who contribute to our strength while we fight; but whether alone or in company we must go forward to prosperity'.³⁶

Commonwealth and the Common Market

Britain's responsibilities for the Commonwealth and the possible conflict arising with the accession to the European Economic Community (EEC) also came under scrutiny. Christian Aid's booklet on '*Commonwealth and the Common Market*' stated that, 'It is some gauge of the declining national interest in the developing countries that the concern for the future of the Commonwealth, if we went into the EEC, is much less apparent than it was when the Macmillan Government applied for membership in 1961. . . We should ask ourselves seriously if going into the Common Market will be just another nail in the coffin of the Third World'.³⁷ The position of India was given as an example of the possible impacts of Britain's entry to the EEC. It was estimated that the loss of Commonwealth preferences would cost £10 million a year immediately and the losses would likely increase.³⁸

³⁴ CA/J/2, Christian Aid, 'Overseas Aid: The Role of Trade' (First published January 1968, second edition July 1968).

³⁵ Ibid., 16.

³⁶ Ibid., 20.

³⁷ CA/J/2, Christian Aid, 'Overseas Aid: The Commonwealth and the Common Market' (1968).

³⁸ Ibid.

Christian Aid's analysis centred on a comparison of the impacts of the Commonwealth and the Common Market for developing countries. The controversial position of the eighteen developing countries that had been granted 'associate status' at the signing of the Treaty of Rome in 1957 was outlined in some detail.³⁹ The group of 'Eighteen' were African nations - former colonies and dependencies of France, Belgium and Italy. Despite opposition from Germany and the Netherlands, the French proposal of preferential treatment for imports from associated overseas countries was accepted and as a result, half of the African land surface was associated with the EEC.⁴⁰

Despite some amendments at the Yaoundé Convention in 1962, the main pillars of the Agreement remained. Christian Aid argued that the structure of the Agreement presented some serious limitations for the economic prospects of developing countries. For instance although there were beneficial tariffs for commodities such as cocoa, other industries with potential for significant development, such as textiles, were exempted from the overall preference system; and agricultural products where there was potential competition with European farmers, such as sugar, were heavily restricted.⁴¹ Christian Aid argued that the EEC preferential tariffs only benefitted one group of developing countries (the 'Eighteen') at the expense of another group of developing countries (the rest).⁴²

The booklet concluded by considering how Commonwealth countries might respond if the UK joined the EEC – how many countries would refuse to follow? Reflecting on the Macmillan's bid for entry in 1961, it was noted that 'many African Countries announced their refusal to seek associate status on the charge that the EEC was a neo-colonialist structure'.⁴³ However, by 1968 no dissenting voices had been raised 'a sign that whatever the ideological arguments against associate status, the economic question is overriding'.⁴⁴ Ultimately, Commonwealth countries in Africa had little option, if they rejected associate status they would be discriminated against in favour of former French, Belgian and Italian colonies in markets for tropical raw materials. With, or without, Britain the Common Market offered little of great significance to the developing countries, 'All the signs are that it is a rich man's club. British entry would merely make the club even more exclusive'.⁴⁵

The Church and Economic Justice

The 1960s has been characterised as 'a period of decisive change in the religious history of the Western world'.⁴⁶ On the one hand, the decline in national church attendance

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Following the recognition of Indonesian sovereignty in December 1949, the Dutch had very few overseas territories and Germany was building trading links with South America.

⁴¹ CA/J/2, Christian Aid, 'Overseas Aid: The Commonwealth and the Common Market' (1968), 9.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., 14.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 15.

⁴⁶ Hugh McLeod, *The Religious Crisis of the 1960s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 1.

prompted some observers to claim that the modern Christian Church had been permanently side-lined.⁴⁷ However, at a transnational level, Church agencies from the mid-1960s were increasingly prominent in coordinating global campaigns for social justice, international development and fair trade. Christian agencies moved from the side-lines to engage with global issues and challenges raised by the moment of '1968'.⁴⁸ During Christmas of 1968, 3,000 people went to Southwark Cathedral to show their support for Christian Aid's new policy statement adopted by the British Council of Churches in October 1968. The new statement brought the aims of the World Poverty Campaign into the mainstream of Christian Aid's work: 'Christian Aid has a responsibility to participate strenuously in the wider community for economic justice in the world and is ready to work with other church and ecumenical agencies, and with all who share this most urgent concern of our time'.⁴⁹

Writing in March 1968, Max Kohnstamm, Vice-President of the Action Committee for the United States of Europe,⁵⁰ argued that the Churches development thinking needed to respond to the serious difficulties jointly faced by the European Economic Community, the Bretton-Woods monetary system and the UN development structures.⁵¹ Kohnstamm, argued that, 'Structures can be conducive to, others destructive of neighbourly relations. As Christians, we must therefore study such structures and use our findings to guide our action'.⁵² By the late 1960s, the weakness of international structures meant that the situation of North-South relations - between the strong and the weak - had entered a new phase of charity, or enlightened self-interest. For Kohnstamm, this was a particularly unsatisfactory phase because it represented 'charity without justice'.⁵³ Kohnstamm argued that ethical thinking within Churches had focused almost exclusively on person-to-person relations and there was a need to move beyond one dimensional ideas to discover the 'fitting act'. This required a rational analysis of the structures that govern economic and political action, rather than a moral judgement of people operating within that structure. Kohnstamm warned that, 'unless the Churches are ready to undertake such analysis, and submit to its discipline their re-entry into world affairs could well make these affairs even more complicated'.⁵⁴

⁴⁷ Callum Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularisation 1800–2000* (London: Routledge, 2001), 3.

⁴⁸ Gerd-Rainer Horn and Padraic Kenney, eds. *Transnational Moments of Change: Europe 1945, 1968, 1989* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004).

⁴⁹ CA/J/2, Christian Aid, 'Overseas Aid: What can We Do?' (1967, revised 1969), 15.

⁵⁰ The Action Committee for the United States of Europe was founded by Jean Monnet in 1955. The Action Committee's objectives were to implement the Common Market treaties and to expand the Community to include Great Britain.

⁵¹ Max Kohnstamm, 'Some Remarks About Structuring International Effort', *The Ecumenical Review*, 20, 3 (1968), 245-254.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 246.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 251.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 254.

Research by Jeffrey Klaiber provides an explanation of how the term ‘liberation theology’ was coined almost simultaneously in different places and in different contexts.⁵⁵ In 1968, Gustavo Gutierrez delivered a talk titled ‘Toward a Theology of Liberation’ to the newly formed progressive priests organisation, ONIS (Oficina Nacional de Información Social) meeting in Chimbote, Peru.⁵⁶ That same year in St. Louis, USA, Richard Shaull delivered a paper entitled ‘A Theological Perspective on Human Liberation’ at the annual CICOP (Catholic Inter-American Cooperation Program).⁵⁷ But it was Gutierrez’s book *A Theology of Liberation* published in 1971 that popularised the term and made the concept a topic of debate amongst Catholic and liberal Protestant intellectuals in both the ‘First’ and ‘Third World’.⁵⁸

Gutierrez argued that liberation theology was best understood not as a new theme for reflection but ‘a new way to do theology’.⁵⁹ He described it as ‘a theology which opens itself – in the protest against trampled human dignity, in the struggle against the plunder of the vast majority of humankind, in liberating love, and in the building of a new society of justice and fraternity – to the gift of the kingdom of God.’⁶⁰ At the 1969 Joint Committee on Society, Development and Peace (SODEPAX) conference in Cartigny, Switzerland, Gutierrez gave a paper on the meaning of development.⁶¹ He argued that charitable support given by wealthy nations for limited projects left the distribution of resources basically untouched. Gutierrez challenged Christians in the rich world to make a genuine commitment to justice in the South.

In Brazil, Archbishop Dom Hélder Câmara called for a church that would unambiguously declare its solidarity with oppressed peoples and would accept the probable loss of state financial support. In 1964, Câmara established ‘The Church of the Poor’ and eventually this Church grew to number 86 Bishops including 16 Brazilians.⁶² But Dom Helder’s efforts to utilise the Church to advance social justice within Brazilian society did not go unchallenged. Any attempts to do more than provide charity were met with severe criticism, both from the state and conservatives within the Church. Câmara stated, ‘when I feed the poor, they call me a saint; when I ask why they are poor, they call me a communist’.⁶³ In *Revolution through Peace* (1971) Câmara contributed to the widening debate about ‘Trade not Aid’. He argued, ‘it is not aid that we need ... If the affluent countries, East and West, Europe and the United States, are willing to pay fair prices to developing

⁵⁵ Jeffrey L. Klaiber, ‘Prophets and Populists: Liberation Theology, 1968-1988’, *The Americas* 46, 1 (1989), 1-15.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, Salvation* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1971).

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ SODEPAX, the Joint Committee on Society, Development and Peace, was set up in 1968 by the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Roman Catholic Church.

⁶² David Regan, *Why are They Poor? Helder Camara in Pastoral Perspective* (Münste: LIT Verlag, 2003), 89.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 5.

countries for their natural resources, they can keep their aid and their relief plans'.⁶⁴ This new theological understanding opened up the political and economic sphere of international trade and development to a religious and social critique that redefined ideas of economic justice. Increasingly these North–South links were envisaged in terms of solidarity and partnership, rather than charity.

In 1969 Dom Helder Camara travelled to the UK and delivered a lecture to the Haslemere Group. The title of the lecture was 'Violence and Misery'.⁶⁵ Dom Helder explored what he called the 'triple violence against the underdeveloped world'. He used Latin America as an example to consider 'internal colonialism' - the vast disparity in land ownership that resulted in 6 per cent of landowners owning 94 per cent of the land. He then addressed the issue of 'violence from the developed world' - including the international monetary and trade system, the myth of overseas aid, and the exploitation of material resources. His third theme was 'legally installed violence' that sustains the established order. He argued that controlled by privileged groups, and supported by the USA, Latin America risked being crushed by its own governments. In response Dom Helder highlighted the role of the Church in the underdeveloped world, and in the developed countries called on groups like the Haslemere Group to form a united movement to open a debate about the values, priorities and structures of society. Dom Helder ended his lecture by praising the work of the Haslemere Group saying, 'even if you do not regard yourself as practising any particular religious faith, I assure you that you will be carrying out a profoundly Christian work!'.⁶⁶

Repositioning Christian Aid's Identity

The moment of 1968 raised important questions about the identity of Christian Aid and its Christian foundations as it repositioned its role within emerging networks of development agencies. In this moment of political acceleration there was renewed attention on debates about the nature of charity and politics, and distinctions between famine relief and development. Previous studies have identified that from the late 1960s and early 1970s Christian Aid embraced a more political role, characterised as a 'double approach' that was both charitable and political.⁶⁷ The following section explores how this change happened and how far this represented a new identity for Christian Aid's campaigns and 'brand identity'.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Ibid., 184.

⁶⁵ Dom Helder Camara, 'Violence and Misery', *New Blackfriars*, 50, 589, (1969), 491-496.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 496.

⁶⁷ Matthew Hilton, James McKay, Jean-François Mouhot and Nicholas Crowson, *The Politics of Expertise: How NGOs shaped modern Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 114.

⁶⁸ Kevin L. Keller, 'Conceptualizing, measuring, and managing customer-based brand equity', *Journal of Marketing*, 57, 1 (1993), 1-22; Joseph M. Sirgy, 'Self-concept in consumer behavior: A critical review', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 9, 3 (1982), 287-300; Tarje Gaustad, Bendik M. Samuelsen, Luk Warlop, and Gavan J. Fitzsimons, 'The perils of self-brand connections: Consumer response to changes in brand meaning', *Psychology & Marketing*, 35, 11 (2018), 818-829.

The process of identity formation can be viewed through Christian Aid's interaction with three key constituents – the UK Government, in particular the Charity Commission; competing agencies operating in the development sector, most notably Oxfam; and Christian Aid supporters, crucially churches and local congregations. Each interaction uncovers a different dimension of Christian Aid's identity and reveals how it adapted and evolved during this moment of acceleration

Alan Brash, Director of Christian Aid, writing at the end of 1969 to Hugh Samson, longstanding public relations advisor, raised the challenges about the image of Christian Aid.⁶⁹ Brash's letter opened as follows, 'I remember very well that at the time when we started talking in September 1968 about the need to give a national and even political orientation to the work of Christian Aid, and to destroy its image purely as charity in the narrow sense, you were the one perhaps more than anyone else warned us that, while you absolutely agreed, there were dangers in this situation. Let me say immediately, I don't regret anything that has happened in the interval, but I have never forgotten your warning'.⁷⁰ Brash was concerned about damaging Christian Aid's image amongst 'the vast body of good church folk'.⁷¹ Brash's experience of meeting with local groups was that they had a varied understanding of Christian Aid's 'political dimension' and there was some confusion about the role of money-raising and the Christian foundations of their work. Brash did not want to withdraw Christian Aid support from campaigning activity, but he believed there was a need to protect their 'home-base'.

Hugh Samson, replied, 'So long as Christian Aid simply adopted a political stance in the form of a policy statement no-one cared a hoot. . . But once the policy is put into effect, that's a very different matter'.⁷² Support for new networks with an openly political slant such as Action for World Development was seen as an opportunity for Christian Aid to gain publicity at relatively low cost.⁷³ However, while this activity represented an exciting new initiative - it was also potentially dangerous. Samson referred to supporters' letters that revealed opposition to political involvement and unease about where Christian Aid was heading. In particular, supporters had a genuine desire for Christian Aid to provide 'the theological - as well as the economic – justifications'.⁷⁴

Samson recognised the appearance of an imbalance was partly the result of media attention on political campaigning such as the Action for World Development 'Sign-In', but there was also a need to look at internal staffing issues. Samson believed that, 'non-political material has gone unmet because of the heavy bias on politico-economic education'.⁷⁵

⁶⁹ Christian Aid was unusual in that for the first twenty years of its operation its public relations were managed by an external consultancy, Noble & Samson. See Wilfred Howard, ed. *The Practice of Public Relations*, (Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1988), 178.

⁷⁰ CA2/I/46/2, The current image of Christian Aid, Letter from Brash to Samson, 11 Dec. 1969.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Brash estimated that the cost of contributions to Action for World Development represented one sixth of 1% of Christian Aid's income for 1969.

⁷⁴ CA2/I/46/2, The current image of Christian Aid, Letter from Samson to Brash, Dec. 1969.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

Samson argued that the most important people in Christian Aid were not head office staff, or the heads of the constituent churches, but the 300,000 rank and file volunteers. 'We cannot afford to leave them behind as we become more sophisticated in our understanding of world poverty and its causes. Local Christian Aid workers are nearer to the public and more representative of public opinion than we are'.⁷⁶ Samson concluded, 'If we are to carry them with us, our pace has to be rather slower than it has been'.⁷⁷

Charity Commission and Government Regulation

In July 1963, the Charity Commission wrote to Inter-Church Aid raising potential concerns about the registration and accounting of the organisation.⁷⁸ The impetus for this enquiry was a broader review of the principal participants in the Freedom from Hunger Campaign in order to establish the forms of accounting used for sums collected for overseas aid. The specific challenge raised in the letter from the Charity Commission related to charitable registration. Christopher Hill, Chief of the Charity Commission, wrote that, 'although we have registered the British Council of Churches as a charity under section 4 of the Charities Act - and the department of Inter-Church Aid is a subsidiary charity - we are really very doubtful whether either of these bodies is properly constituted as such'.⁷⁹ The initial correspondence was with Leslie Ellwood the Honorary Treasurer for Inter-Church Aid. Ellwood was able to offer some reassurance to senior colleagues at Inter-Church Aid by explaining that he had recently attended an 'Old Boys Dinner' with the Chief of the Charity Commission.⁸⁰ This 'insider status' allowed Inter-Church Aid a degree of preferential access, but they were still required to comply in full with Commission's ruling.

The Charity Commission correspondence was enough to prompt Inter-Church Aid to undertake a review, and by April 1964 a new constitution had been drafted and a new name proposed 'The Christian Aid Department of the British Council of Churches'.⁸¹ However, it would be a further four years until the final version of the constitution was agreed, and then registered the following year by the Charity Commission. During this period the status of NGOs working to ease poverty overseas came increasingly under the spotlight. Principles agreed between the Charity Commission and the Inland Revenue identified the advancement of religion and of education and the relief of poverty as charitable purposes in whatever part of the world they were carried out. However in the case of poverty the Inland Revenue stated that 'Charities must be satisfied that the poverty to be relieved actually exists in observable cases and is not merely inferred from statistics, and that the measures designed to relieve it, e.g. irrigation, will have a reasonably direct result'.⁸² This

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ CA2/D/1/1, Letter from Hill to Ellwood, 19 Jul. 1963.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ CA2/D/1/1, Letter from Ellwood to Lacey, 25 Jul. 1963.

⁸¹ CA2/D/1/1, 'The British Council of Churches - Christian Aid Department (formerly the Department of Inter-Church Aid & Refugee Service) Constitution', (April 1964).

⁸² 'Charities Warned on Schemes to Ease Poverty Overseas', *The Times*, (4 September 1964).

question of ‘observable poverty’ would re-emerge when the Fairtrade Foundation applied to register as a charity in the early 1990s.⁸³

Writing in December 1964, Norman Pooler, working for solicitors on behalf of the British Council of Churches reported on ‘a trying afternoon at the offices of the Charity Commission’.⁸⁴ The meeting had covered Christian Aid’s proposed new constitution. The Charity Commission challenged the proposed functions that did not clearly align with charitable objects of either the advancement of religion, or the relief of poverty. The functions that were questioned and considered ‘not at law charitable’ included: ‘Stimulating a sense of Christian responsibility’, ‘Promoting international friendship’ and ‘Assisting the growth of ecumenical consciousness in members of Churches’.⁸⁵ Pooler’s frustration with this verdict was apparent, ‘I would have thought it possible to meet most of the Commissioners’ objections without producing a document totally unacceptable to the present non-existent Council, but of course so far as time is concerned we are at “square 1”’.⁸⁶

Christian Aid’s revised constitution was finally adopted by the British Council of Churches on 24th April 1968. The revised primary object was defined as ‘the furtherance of charitable purposes which relieve or combat malnutrition, hunger, disease, sickness or distress throughout the world’.⁸⁷ The secondary object was ‘the furtherance of charitable purposes which advance or assist such other charitable work as may be carried on by or with the support or approval of the British Council of Churches’.⁸⁸ The following year, Christian Aid was successfully entered on the central register of Charities.⁸⁹

Jack Bowman, Christian Aid’s Regional Supervisor for the South West of England, opened a brief, but interesting discussion, in July 1969 when he questioned whether the constitution could be amended to include ‘campaigns to influence the government to increase aid to such an extent that the charitable purposes would no longer be necessary’.⁹⁰ Bryan Dudbridge, Deputy Director of Christian Aid, made it clear that such an amendment to Christian Aid’s Constitution was not feasible and would undermine their charitable status. Dudbridge argued that such a move ‘would cross the knife edge; I believe that if such an amendment were passed the Charity Commissioners would not be prepared to continue to include Christian Aid on the List of Charities unless it were taken out again’.⁹¹ He explained that Christian Aid’s work in ‘what is loosely called the political field’ was in

⁸³ Matthew Anderson, *A History of Fair Trade in Contemporary Britain: From civil society campaigns to corporate compliance* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

⁸⁴ CA2/D/1/1, Proposed Constitution, Letter from Pooler to Slack, 10 Dec. 1964.

⁸⁵ CA2/D/1/1, British Council of Churches Re: Constitution, Letter from Pooler to Slack, 9 Dec. 1964.

⁸⁶ CA2/D/1/1, Proposed Constitution, Letter from Pooler to Slack, 10 Dec. 1964.

⁸⁷ CA2/D/1/4, The British Council of Churches, Constitution for the Christian Aid Department, 24 Apr. 1968.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ CA2/D/1/4, Christian Aid Charity Registration, Letter from Dudbridge to Banwall, 23 May 1969.

⁹⁰ CA2/D/1/4, Christian Aid Constitution, Letter from Bowman to Brash, 17 Jul. 1969.

⁹¹ CA2/D/1/4, Christian Aid Constitution, Letter from Dudbridge to Bowman, 25 Jul. 1969.

fact ‘the advancement of education’.⁹² Dudbridge believed that it was essential that these campaigns were considered as educational work. This broad understanding of ‘the advancement of education’ allowed Christian Aid to ‘go a very long way in bringing the facts before groups and persons concerned with the work of Christian Aid so that they can weigh them up and take such action as they think fit as citizens’.⁹³

Oxfam and Competition in the Development Sector

Writing to Lesley Kirkley in August 1968, Alan Brash set out what he described as ‘a very serious proposal’ for joint working between Christian Aid and Oxfam.⁹⁴ Brash proposed that the two organisations should work on a ‘joint statement of objectives or targets for the next five or ten years as apply to international relationships and political action’.⁹⁵ Brash believed this should be ‘a brief statement of points, clear and economically defensible (sic)’ but still ‘sufficiently radical’ so that they would demand a serious change in the national policies and intentions.⁹⁶

This was not the first attempt align the objectives of Christian Aid and Oxfam. Despite areas of potential collaboration around famine relief and longer-term development projects, there were tensions about overlapping campaigns that targeted potential supporters (and donors) particularly those that focused on local churches. Challenges surfaced around specific national campaigns, most notably Christian Aid Week, but also less structured fundraising such as local church initiatives at Christmas. Oxfam’s perspective was that it engaged with the whole of the general public, and this meant all groups - including churches. Christian Aid saw this as a direct challenge to their role as the official agency and partner of the churches.

When Janet Lacey wrote to Oxfam in January 1957 to explain Christian Aid’s plans for the new Annual Week, there was little indication that this might cause conflict between the two charities.⁹⁷ However, by April 1959 Lacey was responding to letters from local Church Councils unhappy that churches in their district had been contacted directly by the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief, without consultation with the Council, to participate in house to house collections on behalf of refugees. Lacey replied that ‘the Oxford Committee is an excellent organisation, but it does not necessarily have a special concern for the Churches’.⁹⁸ Lacey explained that they had been working with the Oxford Committee on the World Refugee Year Committee and ‘they have known for months the date of our Christian Aid Week’.⁹⁹

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ CA/I/12/2, Oxfam, Letter from Brash to Kirkley, 6 Aug. 1968.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ CA/I/12/1, Letter from Lacey to Kirkley, 25 Jan. 1957.

⁹⁸ CA/I/12/1, Letter from Lacey to Tate, 2 Apr. 1959.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

Leslie Kirkley, responded on behalf of the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief, stating that he was sorry to learn that 'there had been a few difficulties recently with regard to appeals in the London area'.¹⁰⁰ However, Kirkley downplayed the incident arguing that overlapping campaigns would occur from time to time and directed responsibility back to Christian Aid, 'Quite naturally, as your Christian Aid Week brings in more and more towns, our Organisers will have increasing difficulty in preparing a full programme for themselves'.¹⁰¹

The Freedom From Hunger Campaign presented an opportunity for Oxfam and Christian Aid to work together and demonstrate their contribution to this UN-sponsored campaign. Writing to Leslie Kirkley in April 1962, Janet Lacey commented that, 'in view of further competition it would help both of us if we could arrive at an understanding of what is your area and what is ours'.¹⁰² Lacey raised the issue of an Oxfam advert placed in *The Telegraph* that outlined a fundraising campaign to provide tractors for developing countries. Christian Aid were also running similar campaigns at the time, however what struck Lacey was the direct call for church workers, which she described as 'stupid competition'.¹⁰³ She clarified this by explaining, 'When I say stupid, of course I only mean it is stupid from the point of view of the missionary societies and their workers and the church people'.¹⁰⁴ Despite these criticisms, Lacey ended, 'I do feel that we have got to find some way of working together because I believe together, from a policy point of view we could really make the country hum'.¹⁰⁵

Leslie Kirkley, responded with a proposal to define the respective areas of concern and responsibility of Oxfam and Christian Aid, with the aim of giving 'practical expression to our desire to collaborate and our respective constituencies actually see that we are doing so'.¹⁰⁶ Although Kirkley recognised that both organisations were interested in short term and long term programmes, he suggested that it might be possible to more clearly attach priorities to their respective appeals. Kirkley suggested that 'the public image of Oxfam is basically famine relief, emergency aid, it might be feasible for that side of both organisations programmes to be our responsibility, on the understanding that we include the World Council of Churches among our channels of distribution'.¹⁰⁷ In return, Christian Aid appeals would emphasise 'the long term programmes on the understanding that we tackled some projects jointly and give precedence to your project'.¹⁰⁸ This level of coordination would potentially increase the total contributions to both charities.

¹⁰⁰ CA/I/12/1 Letter from Kirkley to Sexton, 3 Jun. 1959.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² CA/I/12/1 Letter from Lacey to Kirkley, 26 Apr. 1962.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ CA/I/12/1 Letter from Kirkley to Lacey, 27 Apr. 1962.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

In October 1963, Oxfam was preparing to celebrate its twenty-first anniversary. Oxfam chose this moment to write to all churches and acknowledge the broad support they had received from the Anglicans, the Free Churches and the Roman Catholic Church. 'From the beginning, the committee has consistently appealed to all men of good will, whatever their religious attitude, and has aimed at giving help wherever the need is greatest. . . although in actual fact a very large proportion of its grants have been channelled through missionary societies working overseas'.¹⁰⁹ The letter ended by asking churches and congregations to 'remember this work with prayer and thanksgiving, as part of the international Freedom from Hunger Campaign'.¹¹⁰ The response from Janet Lacey at Christian Aid was short and direct, 'Oxfam is a nuisance and it clearly wants to make a take over bid'.¹¹¹

The following year Janet Lacey wrote a short report on 'Relationships between Oxfam and Christian Aid' as a briefing note for a discussion with Leslie Kirkley. The document reveals the level of competition and challenges facing Christian Aid at the time. In 1964, there were about 450 local Councils of Churches affiliated to the British Council of Churches. Affiliated Church Councils were expected to co-operate with the various Departments of the BCC including Christian Aid. However, Lacey noted that 'in the last two years more Churches have been supporting Oxfam instead of Christian Aid rather than both'.¹¹² This raised financial pressures, but also challenged Christian Aid's role in ecumenical education – considered a major part of the Department's work.¹¹³ Lacey reflected that the main question was 'what Oxfam and Christian Aid says to the local Church when raising money and how they say it in regard to mutual cooperation. . . . Until we can solve the problem of over-lapping in the churches I do not see that we can go very far with co-operative enterprises'.¹¹⁴

Tensions re-emerged during Christian Aid Week of 1969. The BBC had broadcast a series of four programmes on world poverty featuring Christian Aid, Voluntary Service Overseas, Brothers to All Men, and Oxfam. Following the programmes Bishop Sansbury, General Secretary of the British Council of Churches, wrote to ask for an explanation about why the BBC had allowed Christian Aid Week to be 'exploited by Oxfam'.¹¹⁵ Sansbury's complaint was that Revd Nicholas Stacey, Deputy Director of Oxfam, had taken the opportunity to publicise his own agency, 'which of course is not constitutionally related to the churches and totally irrelevant to Christian Aid Week'.¹¹⁶ Penry Jones, Head of Religious Broadcasting at the BBC, showed little interest in becoming involved in a dispute between Christian Aid and Oxfam, 'I regret that inadvertently we seem to have involved

¹⁰⁹ CA/I/12/1 Letter from Oxfam to Church Councils, Oct. 1963.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ CA/I/12/1, Letter from Lacey to Lord Bishop of Rochester, 8 Oct. 1963.

¹¹² CA/I/12/1, Janet Lacey, Relationship between Oxfam and Christian Aid, (1 October 1964).

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ CA2/I/46/2, Christian Aid Week, Letter from Sansbury to Jones, 21 May 1969.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

ourselves on this occasion in the rivalries of different organisations with the same object'.¹¹⁷ Jones concluded that 'it may be better in the future to concentrate on the object, that is, compassion for the hungry people in the world.'¹¹⁸

Conclusions

Christian Aid's progress report for spring 1969 concluded that 'all this adds up to some progress, but it has not yet changed the situation. We are only at the beginning of a task which will demand the perseverance, energy and ingenuity of all of us for a very long time'.¹¹⁹ For early fair trade campaigners, Christian Aid's booklets and campaign material offered a guide to help them navigate the emerging, and challenging, politics of the New Left, student activism and anti-imperialist movements of the Third World. However, the optimism of the First Development Decade was short-lived, and this moment of political acceleration was soon followed by a 'moment of deceleration' that ushered in the 1970s.

Throughout the 1960s, Christian development agencies across Europe were involved in a dialogue with their membership about the role of Christians in supporting international aid and development. Frank Prochaska, commenting on the limited literature on Christian voluntary organisations, has stated that, 'whenever one thinks about the ongoing debate on secularization, the role of charity in the equation remains something of a mystery'.¹²⁰ Prochaska's opinion was that Christian voluntary organisations would maintain the upper hand over state assistance, 'only so long as Christianity provided a compelling explanation for the ills of society - and the capacity and commitment to combat them'.¹²¹ Historical reviews of the development sector have argued that for Christian Aid, by the 1970s, its distinctiveness as a faith-based organisation was no longer apparent.¹²² Christian Aid was increasingly viewed as just one of several good agencies working in the international development field.

Christian Aid maintained a pragmatic distance between its campaigns and the more radical aspects of liberation theology. Although liberation theology seemed to address many of concerns raised by the Haslemere Group about global poverty and injustice, it represented a politicised form of religion that did not align with an individual commitment that many Christian Aid supporters valued in their religious belief. As a result, Christian Aid largely remained a spectator rather than an active participant in this new way of doing theology. This was perhaps a missed opportunity for the ideas and theology of the Global South to be represented at the centre rather than the periphery of campaigns for fair trade and development.

¹¹⁷ CA2/I/46/2, Letter from Jones to Sansbury, 4 Jul. 1969.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ CA/J/2, Christian Aid, 'Overseas Aid: What can We Do?' (1967, revised 1969), 16.

¹²⁰ Frank Prochaska, *Christianity & Social Service in Modern Britain: The Disinherited Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 25.

¹²¹ Ibid., 13.

¹²² Hilton et al., *The Politics of Expertise*, 225.

Christian Aid's discourse about sustainable consumption in the 1970s was often framed in terms of 'simpler living'. Petitioning the European Community Commissioners in 1973, they called for reforms of its trade relations with the 'Third World' and support for 'an international environment where the basic needs of the majority of humankind get the highest priority'.¹²³ Recommendations included stricter limits on the operations of multinational companies (MNCs), greater support for international commodity agreements, and reform of the Common Agricultural Policy.¹²⁴ But this economic critique was also communicated as a call for simpler living. Christian Aid argued that little progress would be made in reducing the gap between rich and poor, 'unless the EC [European Community] are prepared to sacrifice the unrestricted advance in their living standards and increased consumption of resources'.¹²⁵

The focus of fair trade campaigns in the 1970s began to move away from governments and international trade policy to consider the role and power of multinational corporations. Most clearly illustrated through consumer campaigns such as the boycotts of Nestlé.¹²⁶ This did not necessarily represent a depoliticisation of campaigning – but a new form of politics and a change of language from citizen to consumer, and ultimately 'citizen-consumer'.¹²⁷ For Christian Aid, this represented a rebalancing that was consistent with the advice Hugh Samson gave Alan Brash in 1969, 'I still believe that we have to be a great deal more conscious of that very substantial core of active workers in the constituency. We cannot afford to leave them behind as we become more sophisticated in our understanding of world poverty and its causes. . . . If we are to carry them with us, our pace has to be rather slower than it has been'.¹²⁸

Although the pace of campaigning slowed in the 1970s, Christian Aid maintained its supporting role in the emerging fair trade networks and local groups across the UK. This attention to local supporter networks gained a renewed momentum with the launch of the Fairtrade Towns scheme.¹²⁹ Contemporary studies have recognised the importance of campaigning at a local level in building networks of ethical activism.¹³⁰ This approach, sometimes termed 'glocalization', linking global issues of international trade to local politics, has led to notable successes particularly in relation to public procurement.¹³¹ A

¹²³ CA2/D/11, The European Community and the Third World letter to EC commissioners (25 April 1973).

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Tehila Sasson, 'Milking the Third World? Humanitarianism, Capitalism, and the Moral Economy of the Nestlé Boycott' *The American Historical Review*, 121, 4 (2016), 1196-1224.

¹²⁷ Matthew Anderson, 'Fair trade and consumer social responsibility: Exploring consumer citizenship as a driver of social and environmental change'. *Management Decision* 56, 3 (2018), 634-651.

¹²⁸ CA2/I/46/2, The current image of Christian Aid, Letter from Samson to Brash, Dec. 1969.

¹²⁹ See <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/get%20involved//In-your-community/Towns> (Last visited 1 July 2019).

¹³⁰ Ken Peattie and Anthony Samuel, 'Fairtrade towns as unconventional networks of ethical activism', *Journal of Business Ethics*, 153, 1, (2018), 265-282.

¹³¹ Roland Robertson 'Glocalization: Time-space and homogeneity-heterogeneity'. *Global Modernities*, 2, 1 (1995), 25-44.

detailed examination of the role of place and locality has much to offer scholars interested in understanding the formation of transnational fair trade networks.