



A Man and his Mission

By Diana Cornack

How would you feel if your child came home from school delighted at being allowed to use the only book in the class? In parts of South Africa this is not unusual, indeed millions of children there have no books at all.

Trying to supply books to these children would be a daunting task, yet there is one man living in East Finchley who is prepared to do it. Denis Goldberg of Huntingdon Road spent 22 years in an apartheid prison having been sentenced, alongside Nelson Mandela, to four terms of life imprisonment for treason. When Justice De Wet sentenced him, Denis shouted to his mother, "Life! Life is wonderful!" (Certainly better than a death sentence).

Denis was one of the first people to be released as things began to change. He arrived in East Finchley in 1985, following his family who had already escaped, and from London he continued his cause, getting support from all over the northern world as well as from the United Nations. After the first free elections, Denis was invited to Pretoria for Nelson Mandela's inauguration. He goes back frequently and, though things are difficult, they are beginning to happen. "Nelson doesn't have a magic wand" he says.

Heartbeat

But President Mandela does have the support of this big hearted man. Having given most of his life to South

Africa, he is still fighting to help the under-privileged there.

In April 1995 at South Africa House he launched a charity called "Community HEART" (Health Education and Reconstruction Training for Southern Africa) on the anniversary of the first free elections. Funding is used for such things as community clinics, mobile and dental clinics, rape crisis counselling, veterinary help for drought stricken farmers, sport and art projects and career guidance in secondary schools.

As if that wasn't enough, Professor Goldberg has set himself another target - he aims to collect a million books to send to children in South Africa!

"We want to send the kind of books parents and grandparents, uncles and aunts give to their own children. Stories and novels, books about how things work, about sport and adventures, about homes and coun-

tries, all are needed", he says. "Dictionaries and encyclopaedias will be especially valuable. But, in this project, we are not collecting school books".

So not text books, but reading schemes and the like would be useful for children up to the age of about sixteen years. Whatever books are collected, they must be in a good condition, with all their pages and covers tightly in place; not scribbled in or damaged, not smelling or musty with age. They should make the children want to read!

If you would like to contribute any books, contact Kathy Mehta, the practice nurse at Doctor Healy's surgery at 26, Southern Road. Telephone her there on 0181-444-7478 or at home on 0181-889-7895. It is most important that with each book you also give 10p (or more) because that is what it will cost to ship books by the container load to South Africa then trans-

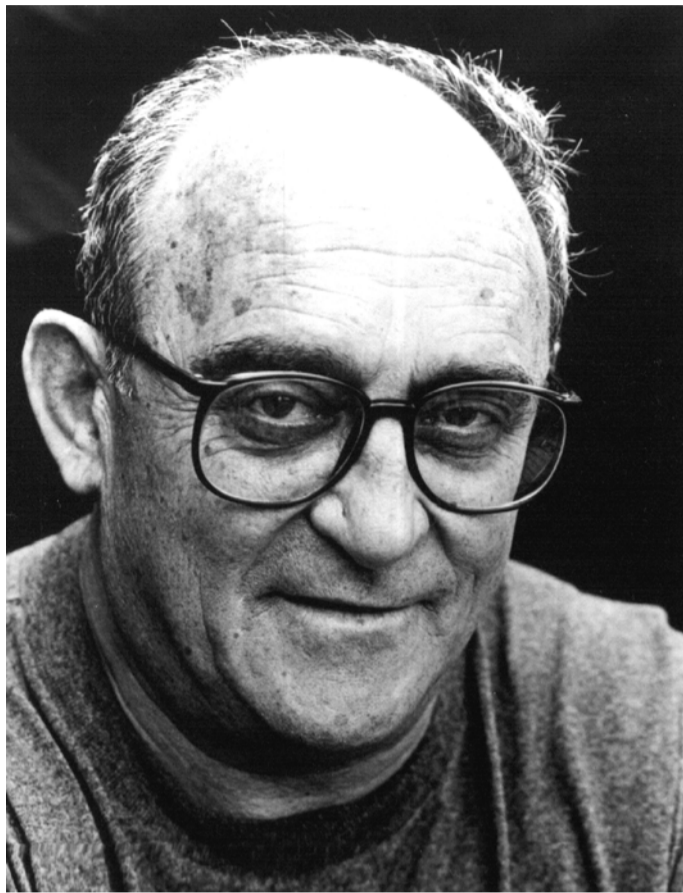
port them by road.

Volunteers are also needed to sort and pack the books. Money is needed to keep the office running, you can sponsor a box of books or send a donation. Denis has been offered free shipping for computers if he can get any. He would like 386 or 486 with Windows. He is trying to find 15 computers for the only school of journalism there.

Schools, groups, voluntary organisations and any other interested parties can get details from:-

Community HEART, PO Box 6504, London N1 8HU
Telephone number 0171-359-3163.

Denis is able to come and address meetings and assemblies where his enthusiasm and involvement are sure to impress. He obviously still believes that life is wonderful and I think that he is rather wonderful too!



Denis Goldberg. Photo: Jill Furmanovsky

SHOP OF THE MONTH

Kokos Shoes

By Claire Wilmans

What do a pram, an antique director's chair, a shotgun case and a tortoise have in common? The answer is they are all leather goods that the team of craftsmen at Kokos have been called upon to repair (the tortoise was a pouffe). Another interesting commission was for Channel 4 tooling the words "Porkpie" into the leather soles of the shoes worn by the character of the same name in the TV show.

The young George Stavrou wanted to be a professional footballer but playing as a Crystal Palace junior and training for Arsenal and Spurs did not result in the big break that he dreamed of. So, as one of a long line of shoe repairers, George decided to use the skills learned from his father and go into business for himself, buying the East Finchley Boot Repair Company with a £5,000 loan from Barclays. So it was that 20 years ago Kokos (Greek for George) started trading.

Boots And Saddles

Two years on Kokos started to sell shoes as well as repair them and now the team numbers 14 with the original craftsman still going strong after fifty years in the trade. The range of goods for sale also include items like wallets and clocks which are worth checking out before slogging over to Brent Cross! Although there

have been good times, getting through two recessions was no mean feat. An independent indication of quality of service came in 1996 when, nominated by a supplier, Kokos won membership of the Guild of Master Craftsmen after an inspection of premises, staff and workmanship by the Guild.

George's main motivation, apart from providing the best for his family, is the delight on a person's face when he has done a nice job for them, like overhauling an aged jewellery box. So don't be embarrassed to drag those leather items you know you should have treated better down to Kokos. Non judgmental staff, interested in the salvage operation, will see what can be done to give such things a new lease of life.

Kokos Shoes can be found at 72 High Road, East Finchley (tel 0181 883 0876).

Where are they now?

A name which featured prominently in the Archer a couple of years ago was Daniel Atrill. From arts to the alternative Archer there was always something by Daniel in our pages.

The question is, where is he now? The answer is not far away. Daniel now resides in trendy Islington where, amid a busy schedule including a degree course in English and involvement with the Almeida Theatre, he continues to write.

Involvement in theatre has led to Daniel writing a number of plays. His first play, In The

Alley, was performed at the Canal Café Theatre, Little Venice, at the end of 1995.

This year should see him back on the stage with a new play, One Day You'll Be Mine, which was completed during 1996. In the meantime a career in television writing is in the offing with several major long running series showing interest in Daniel's work.



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