

Right man, right time

The debate on global poverty needed a bit of glamour. Bono supplied it.

When a celebrity finds a cause, cynicism is the first reaction. There are exceptions, of course, like the work of Paul McCartney and Heather Mills on land mines. But often, we suspect that we are being **conned** – that film stars and musicians have calculated that supporting some **benighted** group is a way of **redoubling** our reverence for them. And we know that some causes – Tibet, HIV/AIDS – are frankly more fashionable than others. **Offhand**, I can't think of one celebrity who has dedicated time and money to reducing the number of deaths from diarrhea, a killer throughout the developing world and one easily treated by simple, low-technology interventions.

Call me a fan, but Bono **stands out**. In the past three years, in talking with politicians, aid workers, activists, and the United Nations and development-bank officials, I have never heard a simple suggestion that the U2 singer was involved with the **plight** of the world's poor for anything other than genuine reasons. In part, that's because he has convinced the professionals that he does his homework. It's one thing to hear celebrities talk about "doing something" for a cause. It's quite another to hear a rock star give a **lecture** on "**HIPC** conditionality," the terms under which the most highly indebted countries of the world are forgiven their **loans**.

Bono also wins **plaudits** because he's not easily **typecast**. Asking for more government funding for the developing world is a quick way to get applause from liberal constituencies. But Bono **stresses** a more **subtle** point, and one that often **raises** opposition on the political left. For many nations, exporting agricultural **commodities** and cheap T-shirts is the best way to raise **standards** of living, **yet** as soon as they try to do so, protectionist **lobbies** in the First World – French farmers, American textile firms – **scream** bloody murder. Bono isn't **swayed**. "There is no justification," he says, "for denying the very poorest countries market access".



Antonio Gaudenzi/Corbis

Reading comprehension

1. The title of the article is a reference to Bono, U2's band leader. Such a reference is a:
 - a) praise.
 - b) criticism.
 - c) plight.
 - d) political endeavor.
 - e) breakdown.
2. According to the author's opinion:
 - a) every time a famous person adopts a cause, suspicions are raised.
 - b) nobody believes in causes found by celebrities.
 - c) celebrities are cynical about social causes.
 - d) the first reaction of a celebrity in finding a cause is criticism.
 - e) cynicism is quite common in a celebrity.
3. The author states that:
 - a) artists calculate the benefits of a cause before they adjourn their support.
 - b) Tibet, HIV/AIDS are causes which have poor appeal in media.
 - c) media actors look forward to reverence no matter their actions.
 - d) more fashionable than helping people with diarrhea is helping them to find a job.
 - e) AIDS provided to the needy by artists are a sort of self-promotion.
4. We can infer from the text that:
 - a) the author met Bono three years ago and since then has been his fan.
 - b) Bono has talked about the poor with politicians, aid workers, activists and UNO.
 - c) the U2 singer is involved with the poor for genuine reasons.
 - d) the author has been observing Bono's attitudes towards the poor for three years.
 - e) Bono started his campaign in defense of the poor people three years ago.
5. In the sentence "... he has convinced the professionals that he does his homework", the underlined statement, according to the text, means that he:
 - a) has been a good student.
 - b) is a hard-working man in "doing something".
 - c) gets personally involved in the task of helping poor people.
 - d) makes all kinds of efforts to get help from the rich to give to the poor.
 - e) makes some shows whose cash is wholly delivered to the poor.
6. The "subtle point" stressed by Bono:
 - a) meets consensus in liberal constituencies.
 - b) defends market access for the very poorest countries.
 - c) displeases all nations in the First World.
 - d) pleases the political left.
 - e) increases protectionist lobbies.

7. The word **so** in the sentence "... yet as soon as they try to do so" (3rd paragraph) refers to:

- protectionist lobbies in the First World.
- French farmers and American textile firms.
- exporting.
- cheap T-shirts.
- commodities.

8. When the author states that farmers and firms "scream bloody murder" (3rd paragraph), he means that they:

- make protest against each other.
- make a lot of noise and fuss because they don't agree.
- shout words of order in riots.
- insult their business partners when they lose control of a situation.
- protest against people who try to help peasants.