

diarydiary

DECEMBER

- 18 International Migrants Day
21 Carols for Peace, City Chambers, Glasgow. 3pm
25 Christmas Day
28 Holy Innocents Day

JANUARY

- 4 Feast of the Epiphany: Justice and Peace Sunday.
Bishop Moran's letter to be read out at all Masses and a collection to be taken up for the work of Justice and Peace. Please ensure this is happening in your parish.
31 - 'Voices from the Edge' Poverty and Homelessness
8 Feb Action Week
31 Working for a Just Peace for Palestine and Israel - how to become more effective advocates. Details Newsbriefs

FEBRUARY

- 1 Homelessness Sunday
8 Poverty Action Sunday
25 - 9 March, Fairtrade Fortnight

MARCH

- 6 Women's World Day of Prayer

Full details and links on the events page on our website
www.justiceandpeacescotland.org.uk/events.shtml

A Challenge for the New Year 2009

*The year is over.
We stand at a new moment in time.
We can choose to go on as before,
raping the globe, threatening the
planet, making specimens of people.
Or we can melt into the grace of the
universe and become what we were
created to be.
A family in harmony with itself.*

*Joan Chittister,
'Living Well',
Orbis, 2000*



Christmas Wishes

Bishop Peter (President), Ellen Charlton (Chair) and Grace Buckley (vice Chair) join with Carol, Margaret and Tim in thanking all our readers for their continuing support. We also wish all our readers a renewed energy from the season of Christ's Nativity; and a deeper sense of the Peace on Earth promised to those who work for God's Kingdom.

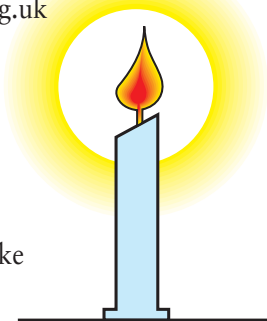
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ISSUE 6: 2008

Justice
& Peace
Scotland
Ceartas agus Sith

THE CHRIST CHILD APPEARS UNRECOGNISED IN MANY DIFFERENT GUISES



A Palenstinian woman sits with her child
on the rubble of her house

Photo : Maureen Jack

st. andrews

solidarity day at dungavel



The following statement was read out on behalf of Bishop Devine at Dungavel on Sunday 30 November

First, I want to express my appreciation for the announcement by Scottish Secretary Jim Murphy that from the beginning of next year there could be a pilot project for failed asylum seekers. Those awaiting removal would be housed in former council houses in Glasgow instead of at the Dungavel detention and removal centre, with access to basic amenities, before being sent back to their country of origin.

Mr Murphy said: **'This is a trial based on the concerns raised in particular by churches in Scotland.'** Both myself and Bishop John Mone are proud that we were able to lend our voices to a long campaign by our Justice and Peace Commission to stop the contravention of the UK's responsibilities under international law by the detention of children. Our opposition is firmly based on the social teaching of the Catholic Church.

Scots have not warmed to a policy which in effect imprisons children whose only fault is to be members of families who have not had their claims for asylum accepted. The near criminalising of families, who have often experienced great hardship and repression already, is not something we can be proud of.

Since 2004 (earlier figures are not available) almost 700 children have been detained, including many for whom Scotland was the only or main culture and life they were aware of. And so far, we have only the announcement of a pilot project which fails to rule out the future imprisonment of children.

From January 2009, it seems that up to four families at a time will be housed in former council accommodation

in Glasgow in the two weeks before their repatriation. They will have access to basic household amenities, including a fridge, washing machine and television. It is unclear how continuity in education, health and social contacts will be maintained. We expect the government to give these families the right to stay within their communities, accessing local health, housing and education services and that it would be quite unacceptable to 'quarantine' them in any way.

If such a project avoids the detention of children it is better than nothing.

But not much. Although they will be monitored by officials from the Borders and Immigration Agency, only families that are deemed unlikely to abscond will be selected to participate in the 18-month trial. But weren't we told that the only reason for detention in the first place was that there was a risk of absconding? So why take them away from home at all? Is it perhaps to disengage the families from any kind of 'home comforts' – replaced by basic amenities? Or even more, is it to get away from the embarrassing publicity that has accompanied 'Dawn Raids' on family homes? The Westminster government (no doubt with an eye on some voters) is being careful not to take any risks, particularly the risk of compassion.

We will be following this project carefully to ensure that it offers something more than political opportunism, or merely attempts to defuse legitimate public criticism of policies which lack humanity. The root issue remains not what is politically convenient, but what respects the dignity of people who have already been uprooted and whose lives are spent in apprehension and fear.

"Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free..." says the poem on the Statue of Liberty. The US discovered that hospitality to refugees often brings a bonus in talent and skills as well as a richer humanity. It would be good to go home, knowing that humanity had prevailed and that Dungavel was no longer needed. Until it does I commend those who, on our behalf, stand witness to the need for that greater humanity and the common good.

asylum, migration & refugees

- On 2 July the UK and Scottish Governments published an update to the UK Action Plan on Tackling Human Trafficking. Measures include granting residency permits of one year to victims and the plan also sets out progress towards ratifying the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.
- The Governments also announced the results of the UK-wide operation against human trafficking, Operation Pentameter 2. During the six-month operation, 35 suspects were arrested in Scotland for a variety of offences. The Operation identified 15 people considered to have been trafficked for sexual exploitation in Scotland.

- Amnesty released a report entitled **"Scotland's Slaves"** which revealed that there had been no convictions for human trafficking in Scotland while 54 people have been convicted of trafficking for sexual exploitation in England and Wales.
- Figures released by the Registrar General showed that last year Scotland's population rose to its highest level since 1983, estimated at 5,144,200 in mid-2007. This was a rise of 27,300 people on the previous year. The increase was mostly due to migration but the birth rate was 1100 higher than the number of deaths. More than 63,000 people left Scotland - but nearly 90,000 arrived, mostly from the rest of the UK.

SCPO Parliamentary Update

RAINING CHAMPIONS

A report from the chair of the Motherwell Diocesan Core Group on a recent demonstration where the weather failed to dampen the spirits.

The poster said: 'How would you spend £4 billion of public money every year?' The People's Budget for Peace aims to highlight how this money can be better used to move towards a culture of peace in Scotland.

On Saturday 25 October 2008, in George Square, Glasgow, we were promised food, music, stalls and guest speakers. The reality was a windswept George Square with a sparse gathering of faithful fanatics who had braved the torrential rain. The stalls were being dismantled before they blew away, there was no sign of food or music.

We had come to listen to key speakers and see the proposals from organisations and individuals on how they think the money spent on nuclear weapons and overseas wars could be put to better use. The vehicle with the running LED display of alternative ways of spending the money from various agencies was the only thing unaffected by the weather and it made a fine display. We were tempted to sing a few verses of 'Our God Rains' as we huddled together under an outsize umbrella.

Bruce Kent had been cornered by the press, but when he spotted the Justice and Peace banner he came over and spoke to us. He said he was delighted to be here and he could always tell when he was over the border as not only the weather but the atmosphere was different. The previous day he had taken in some of the sights of Glasgow and was amazed to find a Faslane caravan in the Transport Museum. 'It would never happen in England as there would be a public protest from some Tory M.Ps' he said. He then expressed amazement the Catholic Observer had a photograph of Cardinal O'Brien, Alex Salmond and a representative of the Church of Scotland along with a CND symbol on its front page. All were saying get rid of nuclear weapons. He then added 'you certainly live in optimistic times up here'.

Everyone made their way to Laurie's Bar in King Street (the contingency plan) where at least we were warm and dry for the speeches. Bruce Kent's speech was what he had said to us in George Square. The other key speaker

was actor David Hayman. He said he had addressed a group of 500 people in the Concert Hall about the war in Iraq. First he asked how many had been against the war in Iraq. All hands went up. Next he asked how many had written a letter or demonstrated against the war. No hands went up. He then told them that they were the reason the war went ahead. 'But,' they insisted 'Two million people protested'. He answered 'Where were the other 54 million?' How would he spend the 4 billion? He would nationalise rail, water, gas and electricity and charge a fair price for these services.

The meeting ended with music. As we all sang the chorus **"Let's drink and be merry for we may never ever meet here again"** we hoped that the next time might be to celebrate the scrapping of Trident not another protest against its replacement.

Margaret McGowan

Commission Chair Ellen Charlton penned the following after attending the demonstration – guess the tune!?

Oh we aw came doon fae Motherwell.
The numbers in the Square we hoped to swell.
We were drookit wet as you can tell
...and we were glad we'd worn oor troosers.

The Budget for Peace was a great idea.
Cardinal O'Brien's suggestions were very clear.
Feed the weans, gie us hoooses, love LIFE, don't fear
... and we were glad we'd worn oor troosers.

The day was dreich, the rain poured doon.
There were gey few folk about the toon.
So we repaired to Laurie's Bar for the afternoon
...and we were glad we'd worn oor troosers.

endpiece

One sunny day in January, 2009 an old man approached the White House from across Pennsylvania Avenue, where he'd been sitting on a park bench. He spoke to the U.S. Marine standing guard and said, "I would like to go in and meet with President Bush."

The Marine looked at the man and said, "Sir, Mr. Bush is no longer president and no longer resides here."

The old man said, "Okay", and walked away.

The following day, the same man approached the White House and said to the same Marine, "I would like to go

in and meet with President Bush."

The Marine again told the man, "Sir, as I said yesterday, Mr. Bush is no longer president and no longer resides here."

The man thanked him and, again, just walked away.

The third day, the same man approached the White House and spoke to the very same U.S. Marine, saying "I would like to go in and meet with President Bush."

The Marine, understandably agitated at this point, looked at the man and said, "Sir, this is the third day in a row you have been here asking to speak to Mr. Bush. I've told you already that Mr Bush is no longer the president and no longer resides here. Don't you understand?"

The old man looked at the Marine and said, "Oh, I understand. I just love hearing it."

The Marine snapped to attention, saluted, and said, "See you tomorrow, sir."

human rights day - and all the others

This 10 Point Plan, originally set out for Human Rights Day on 10 December, is just as valid the rest of the year.

- **Accept personal responsibility for change, no matter how small** - Don't assume that someone else will do it. Don't be complacent. Even small things like refusing to laugh at a racist joke can make a difference.
- **Reflect on your own behaviour** - Reflect on the cultural practices or beliefs that you find confronting or difficult. It is healthier to name and discuss the issues that you find difficult than to try and be saintly.
- **Identify what you have got to give** - It may be time. It may be specific expertise. It may be a shoulder to cry on or a sympathetic ear. It may be money. Everyone can do something and this may change at different times in your life.
- **Act in your own context** - For example, has anybody in your workplace raised the desirability of a workplace code of values and ethics? If not, perhaps you could do it. Once people have discussed desirable ways in which people should treat each other in the workplace, it is a short step to raising human rights more broadly.
- **Collaborate** - There is strength in partnerships and strategic alliances.
- **Join. Network. Lobby. Advocate** - Tell politicians what you think. To recycle an old slogan: 'Keep the SOBs honest.' Sign petitions.
- **Write letters** - If you can, make use of the internet and email to reach people.
- **Treat everyone with respect** - Respect is more important than compassion or sympathy, because respect is based on familiarity and understanding. And respect ensures that people retain dignity.
- **Be inclusive** - Once you have a good relationship with people, it is easier to think about how social justice and human rights issues can be raised.
- **Maintain your rage** - Also maintain your hope, your optimism and your sense of humour.
- **And finally, celebrate your successes** - This makes you feel good and it also energises you for more work.

Lowitja O'Donoghue
www.ncca.org.au/natsiec/resources

news from vocation for justice

Vocation for Justice is a newsletter that focuses on justice, peace and ecology issues from a missionary perspective. Started 22 years ago, it is produced three times a year by the Faith and Justice Team of the Columban Missionary Society in Britain. The current team, based in London, is Fr Peter Hughes, Fr Frank Nally and Ellen Teague. Peter, the Coordinator, worked in Chile for 27 years, Frank was based in the Philippines for 13 years and chiefly works now on the mining issue in that country. In fact, a new report on the devastating impact of mining for human rights and the environment in the Philippines is being launched in February 2009 and will feature in the newsletter of that month. Ellen worked in Nigeria as a teacher in the 1980s with the Volunteer Missionary Movement and then for CAFOD, a partner agency of SCIAF, for eight years. She has been part of the Columban Faith and Justice team since 1990.

The newsletter, on its distinctive yellow paper, was started as a Columban contacts newsletter for justice and peace activists in 1986 by Columban priests Ed O'Connell and Mike Kelly. The mailing list is around 9000, and around 2,000 copies go to contacts in Scotland. In recent years, former coordinator Fr Eamonn O'Brien spent a great deal of time in Scotland, collaborating closely with Scotland Justice and Peace and building links with dioceses, parishes and schools.

Key campaigning issues covered in recent issues include Climate Change, Debt, Mining and Migration, which are Columban Justice and Peace priorities internationally. Existing UK justice campaigns are supported, such as the 'Get Fair'

initiative which is a national coalition campaign calling for an end to poverty in the UK, and the campaign for the abolition of nuclear weapons which is so strong in Scotland. Our London office is shared with Pax Christi, so we keep in close contact with them. We have a 'Spirituality' page which focuses on the spirituality around justice and peace work, particularly the preferential option for the poor which originated in Latin America where many Columbans work. A few years back there was a special issue to commemorate 20 Years of the newsletter and articles were secured from J&P activists around England, Wales and Scotland.

We value the warm collaboration over the years that we have had with Justice and Peace Scotland, who have sent our newsletter out with their own mailing. Tim Duffy's expertise on Catholic Social Teaching has been called upon more than once! But all of us have been concerned that many people also receive it direct, and so were receiving two copies. This duplication must be addressed in these times of conserving resources. So, from now on, *Vocation for Justice* will only be mailed direct. If you know of anyone who would like to receive it then do let us know, and we are always happy to receive feedback from our friends in Scotland who share our mission to promote justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

Peter Hughes, Coordinator

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all i want for christmas...

First, forget the two front teeth; they're about the only ones of my own I have left. Next, forget the Santa wish list of utopian desires which only exist in politicians' pledges. And while we're at it, could we perhaps forget those bidding prayers that begin 'Lord, grant wisdom to our political leaders...'. Then again, since politics carries the full weight of unredeemed human corruptibility - which is to say original sin - we should probably be praying even more earnestly.

Whether it is Barack Obama or Tony Blair, Sarah Palin or Margaret Thatcher, Alec Salmond or Gordon Brown back from the grave, the human capacity to grant politicians messianic status is a tribute to human gullibility. Particularly since, in this misty eyed investment of all our hope in politicians, we disempower each other and ourselves. Along with this projection usually goes a large dollop of comfort zone thinking: better the devil you think you know... The current unravelling economic crisis is the equivalent of a stroke to the body politic, which stumbles around, glassy eyed, desperately hanging on to the notion of business as usual again soon.

Thirty years of humming and hawing about relieving the largely imposed debt of the developing countries, while allowing interest to accumulate. Yet the same amount and more can be taken without asking from taxpayers in a fortnight to plug the bad debts of the developed world by the very people who have shored up and benefited from the corrupt system.

So what can we do? First, perhaps we might look at re-empowering our economic choices. Dorothy Day spoke of sinful media 'instilling the paltry desires to satisfy that for which [we] must sell [our] liberty and honor ... newspapers, radios, television, and battalions of advertising people (woe to that generation) deliberately stimulate [our] desires...'. Consumer concupiscence is probably far more prevalent than sexual concupiscence. So do we make discerning choices about what we buy and what we save? Are our banks and pension funds ethical? Have we considered changing to eg the Co-operative Bank or Triodos? Could we be involved in setting up or belonging to a Credit Union or a LETS - Local Exchange Trading System in which people exchange skills? And particularly at this time of year, we might want to look at what we consume at all levels. Not to be killjoys certainly: on the contrary the pointless but expected rituals of excessive consumption mask the real meaning and enjoyment.



"My idea of Christmas, whether old-fashioned or modern, is very simple: loving others. Come to think of it, why do we have to wait for Christmas to do that?"
Bob Hope, American film actor and comedian.

At this time of year too we are reminded of the roots of our Judeo Christian tradition in the 'Holy Land'; the place not only of divine revelation, but of seemingly unending conflict and oppression. The great Scottish biblical scholar George Adam Smith, tells in his *Historical Geography of the Holy Land* (1894) of finding an inscribed stone, recording the presence of Roman legions near the village of Gadara on the south of the Sea of Galilee. Here was a land that was occupied he says - violently possessed in the same way as the demoniac from Gadara who was cured by Jesus (Lk 8:26-39). From this experience he gained a new insight into being 'possessed by demons'; and when we read Maureen Jack's accounts of some of the settlers in the occupied territories of today, we can feel something of what that wise old man meant.

There is much in our world that impoverishes, oppresses and diminishes life. Usually it comes from a selfish desire to monopolise resources regardless of the cost to others. Those who are deprived and disempowered are subjected to a curfew on their lives as surely as if they were living under an occupying power. It does not even require someone else: we are quite capable of imprisoning ourselves in selfish and illusory desire.

The liberation from this occupation is found in Christmas. God enters into the human condition and shows that we need not be imprisoned. Not by the condition of the greedy rich, the grasping, the comfortable or the power-seeking:

Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves, each looking out not only for their own interests, but for those of others. Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus, Who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness
(Philippians 2:3-7).

None of which prevented Jesus from having a full life rich in relationships with others, with creation and with the God he spoke to intimately as Father. That fullness of being and richness of relationship is what I truly want this Christmas, and in the immortal words of my Tiny namesake: 'God bless us every one!'

Tim Duffy

holy land ?

For a number of years now, Maureen Jack has been working with Christian Peacemaker Teams near Hebron in the occupied territories in Israel /Palestine. Here is a recent report from her. The area described is in the south east corner of a very useful map <http://tiny.cc/5Faaw>

A colleague and I had an encounter with a young adult male settler the other morning, this time at the place near the village where the soldiers stop accompanying the children to school. It was a foggy morning and this young guy came walking down the hill. 'Shalom,' we both said. 'Nazi. Go back where you come from. F*****g pigs,' he replied. In the face of that kind of response it's difficult to know where to start.

Wednesday 29 October was a terrible day for the people of Umm Al Kheir, a Palestinian village two or three miles up route 317. The village has had built right by it the Israeli settlement of Karmel. The settlement essentially surrounds the village, and there is a road through the village that the settlers and army use. The villagers live very simply. There is a communal cooking area. There are no toilet facilities. There is no water in the village . . . they have to buy it from the Israelis and transport it to the village by donkey. The village had a handful of houses made of stone and some constructed of metal roofing-type panels. Other families live in tents, some sewn together from sacks.

On Wednesday, just after 9.00 am, the army came. With a bulldozer. They demolished seven homes, housing ten families. Most of the stone and metal houses (that is, most of the more permanent structures) are now rubble. A villager said that the entire operation was directed not by an army officer but by a settler. A settler who had offered money to buy the Palestinians' land some time ago and had his offer refused. So now he came back to direct the houses' destruction. The homes were built without permission, but it is impossible for Palestinians to get planning permission. In fact, it turns out that one of the stone houses they demolished predated 1967 and so should not, even in Israeli law, have been demolished.

The village looked as if it had been hit by an earthquake. People were walking around in shock. 57 people were made homeless that day, almost half of the small community; the oldest made homeless was 65 years old and the youngest just one week old. They were made homeless just like that. Israeli settlers watched and took photographs from the comfort of their own homes as their army demolished the homes of their Palestinian neighbours. The villagers' possessions were piled up near where their homes had been. One older woman stood by her wooden dressing table.

One young woman, a Social Work graduate who spoke good English, told me that her mother had been out grazing her goats when it happened and still did not know that she no longer had a home. The young woman wept on my shoulder. I wept with her. Then the rain came. Heavy, hard Palestinian rain. People rushed to get their possessions under the cover of their neighbours' tents. In the middle of all this they served us tea. They took us into one of the tented homes so that we would not get wet. They sat us on the most comfortable mats. And they served us tea. As we left the village we could not help but notice the large luxurious-looking house being built by Israelis on the edge of the settlement.

Now, why did this happen? Why were there these demolitions? The Israeli authorities would no doubt say that the houses (apart from the one they demolished accidentally)

were illegal as they were built without permits. But why demolish them now?

Just over a week ago the Israeli authorities evicted Noam Federman and his family from the illegal outpost they had built in Hebron. He is a former head of the Kach party. In anyone's book he is an extremist. Some years ago he was charged with supplying the explosives for an attempt to blow up a Palestinian girls' school in East Jerusalem. He was not brought to court. I was in Hebron when he was released. I watched as settlers paraded him on their shoulders, singing and dancing. I asked a young soldier who he was. 'He is like a terrorist,' the soldier replied. Last week he was arrested again, this time for assaulting police and soldiers who came to demolish his house. He was freed after some military personnel gave evidence that he had been handcuffed at the time of the alleged assault.

After the Federman demolition some Israeli settlers in Hebron went on the rampage. They slashed the tyres of Palestinians' cars. They destroyed yards of the security fence around the settlement of Kiryat Arba. They attacked Palestinians in their homes. One family we know phoned Rabbi Arik Ascherman of Rabbis for Human Rights at 11.00 pm. Arik drove down from Jerusalem and spent the night with the family. CPTers and other internationals have since been part of a rota staying with the family. The father in the household has not slept or eaten for days. The suggestion here is that the demolitions of Palestinian homes are an attempt by the Israelis to placate the settlers following the Federman evacuation.

Since I returned home the situation has if anything been even more difficult. In Hebron the Israeli authorities have at long last served an evacuation notice on Israelis illegally occupying a Palestinian house. There are threats of Israeli violence, with settlers moving into Hebron to support the squatters against the Israeli army and police.

In At-Tuwani Saturday 15 November saw fourteen masked settlers chasing three Palestinian shepherds and their flocks and attacking two UK CPTers. What is worse, they attacked two donkeys with a knife, slitting the throat of one (which survived) and slashing the other (which died) in the chest. When I heard of this my thoughts turned to a recent encounter with a Palestinian man on the Mount of Olives. He pointed fondly at his donkey: 'Taxi Jesus,' he said.



'I came here 25 years ago to live in the countryside and raise my family. We wanted to resettle the whole land of Israel. But now when I see how our soldiers treat Palestinians at the checkpoints, I am ashamed. I want us to get out of here. I want two states for two people. But I can't get any money for my house and I can't leave.'

- David Avidan, an Israeli living in the Jewish settlement of Rimoni. He is one of 280,000 Israeli settlers living on Palestinian lands in occupied West Bank territory (200,000 more Israeli Jews live in East Jerusalem, also captured and occupied since 1967.) According to Avshalom Vilan, an Israeli Parliament member from the left wing Meretz Party, "Half the settlers beyond the barrier are ideologically motivated and do not want to move. But about 40% of them are ready to go for a reasonable price." (Source: New York Times)

newsbrief . . . newsbrief

CLIMATE CHANGE: Keep an eye on the events page of www.stopclimatechaosscotland.org for upcoming events, and visit www.SCCSresources.org.uk for up to date news and articles on climate change from around the world. John Swinney MSP, announced that the climate bill - to be introduced to Parliament in December - would live up to campaigner's expectations. This is great news, but there's still more to do. Campaigners want Mr Swinney not to trade the emissions cuts but to reduce them in Scotland - something the Scottish Government has yet to commit to

FAIRTRADE: Starbucks Coffee Company have announced that by the end of 2009, all of its espresso coffee drinks in the UK and Ireland will be both Fairtrade certified and sourced to their own Shared Planet quality and sustainability criteria. This announcement follows on from the news that Starbucks is doubling its global purchases of Fairtrade Certified coffee in 2009, from around 20 million pounds (in weight) this year, to 40 million in 2009. This commitment is likely to benefit around 100,000 small scale farmers in Latin America, Africa and Asia. To find out more, visit www.fairtrade.org.uk

POLICE REPORT RISE IN RACIST ABUSE TOWARDS IMMIGRANTS: The economic downturn is being blamed for a rise in racist abuse directed at eastern Europeans living in the Highlands. The upturn is fuelled by "emerging tensions due to increased competition for jobs", according to a Northern Constabulary report on racism. Between April 1, 2007, and March 31, this year, 15 Polish nationals complained they were racially abused, compared with 12 in the previous year and four in the preceding 12 months. The figures are outlined in the force's race equality scheme, which reveals there were 396 racist incidents in the Highlands in the past three years. (Source: *The Press and Journal*, 27 November 2008)

CAAT LAUNCHES NEW CAMPAIGN TO END THE UNCIVIL SERVICE: Campaign Against the Arms Trade's new campaign 'UKTI: Armed & Dangerous' was launched on 8 November. UKTI (UK Trade & Investment) is a government department which exists to help business succeed internationally. As part of this innocent sounding mission, it is now using tax-payers' money to sell arms to conflict zones and repressive regimes, with little regard for the devastating global consequences of its activities. CAAT is calling for an end to government support of this deadly work. Find out more, sign their online petition and order campaign materials at: www.caat.org.uk/campaigns/ukti

LANDSLIDE UN VOTE IN FAVOUR OF ARMS TRADE TREATY: On Friday 31 October, 147 states voted overwhelmingly at the United Nations to move forward with work on an Arms Trade Treaty. 145 countries voted in favour, with 2 more countries adding their vote a few minutes after, bringing the total 'yes' vote to 147. This is an increase on the 139 states who voted to start the UN process in October 2006, showing increasing global support for the treaty. The vote was particularly strong in Africa, South and Central America, and Europe indicating strong demand for arms control both from countries severely affected by armed violence and from major arms exporters. Only the US and Zimbabwe voted against, ignoring growing global consensus for an ATT. More Details on J&P website.

A UNION IS A RIGHT, NOT A LUXURY: Earlier this year, hundreds of workers at the Turkish leather manufacturer DESA, which produces for the luxury brands, Prada, Louis Vuitton, Mulberry and Nicole Farhi, joined a union. The reaction of the company was fierce: 44 union members were sacked, and 50 more compelled to quit the union. Nevertheless, the workers have stood firm, holding daily protests outside the factory. Local police have been called in to arrest them, and bribes offered to union leaders to call off the demonstrations. Families have been threatened. Workers at DESA need a union urgently. They complain of poverty wages, long hours and terrible health and safety conditions. You can help by writing to DESA's customers, the luxury fashion brands. Visit the Labour Start website to find out more www.labourstart.org/desa

LABOUR BEHIND THE LABEL CAMPAIGN SUCCESS! Primark pulls out of PR spin conference 'Taking the drama out of a crisis'. Primark's PR chief, Geoff Lancaster was scheduled to share Primark's tricks of the trade on spinning its way out of allegations of human rights abuses. But last week Label behind the Label was informed by the conference organisers, Haymarket Events, that Primark had pulled out having learned that workers' rights campaigners were planning to disrupt the conference to express their outrage at Primark's presence at the conference. Read More at www.labourbehindthelabel.org/campaigns/

SCOTTISH PALESTINIAN FORUM: Working for a Just Peace for Palestine and Israel - how to become more effective advocates. One day conference, 31st January 2009, St George's West Church, Shandwick Place, Edinburgh. Keynote Speaker, Very Rev Dr Andrew McLellan. Cost: £10 per person (includes a light lunch). Register with and send payment to: Alison Phillips, Muiredge, Rannoch, Pitlochry, PH17 2QW. Cheques payable to: Scottish Palestinian Forum. e:mail: phillipsrannoch@hotmail.com

A Reflection from Pope Benedict

My friends, I invite you to allow this fundamental truth to permeate your reflections: not only in the sense that the principles of solidarity and subsidiarity are undoubtedly enriched by our belief in the Trinity, but particularly in the sense that these principles have the potential to place men and women on the path to discovering their definitive, supernatural destiny. The natural human inclination to live in community is confirmed and transformed by the "oneness of Spirit" which God has bestowed upon his adopted sons and daughters (cf. *Eph* 4:3; *1 Pet* 3:8). Consequently, the responsibility of Christians to work for peace and justice, their irrevocable commitment to build up the common good, is inseparable from their mission to proclaim the gift of eternal life to which God has called every man and woman. In this regard, the *tranquillitas ordinis* (tranquillity of order) of which Saint Augustine speaks refers to "all things": that is to say both 'civil peace', which is a 'concord among citizens', and the 'peace of the heavenly city', which is the 'perfectly ordered and harmonious enjoyment of God, and of one another in God' (*De Civitate Dei*, XIX, 13).

From an Address to the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences in May 2008

choosing christ in the world

I recently had the pleasure of attending the annual weekend conference of the Epiphany Group. This is a group composed largely of spiritual directors and accompanists who describe themselves as follows: *The Epiphany Group is rooted in the Ignatian tradition of spirituality. In our wider ministry, we offer help and support to individuals, informal groups, churches and parishes, who wish to explore the spiritual aspects of life and faith in their own setting. We make ourselves available to accompany people who want to explore God's relationship with them. We offer spiritual direction, retreats, quiet days, training courses and supervision.*

This year's theme was *Choosing Christ in the World: Social Justice and Spirituality*.

There is still a tendency to see these issues as opposite rather than necessary and interlocking aspects of faith that reinforce one another. Those attending seemed well aware of this as a general principle. It was the task of our facilitator, Miriam McHardy, to draw out the implications of this for those whose work is spiritual direction. She chose to do this by taking us along the path of the four weeks of St Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises*, highlighting the integral aspects of social justice.

We began with a resume of the scriptural basis of social justice. Miriam spoke of how depleted the bible is once the texts on social justice are removed. Her touchstone text, as for so many of us, is the beautiful and challenging verse in Micah: *And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God* (6:8). In an inspiring image, she saw these three elements in a circle of mutual support guiding us in the fulfilment of what God desires for us.

We had begun with the insight that spiritual direction is not simply a private process concerned with merely

personal development and growth. It embraces the whole social context in which that development is being sought. From this, Miriam brought out the notion of sin as not merely personal, but as woven into the structures of our life, particularly in consumerism, finance and the environment. Without an awareness of this structural aspect, personal development is doomed to flounder.

Miriam's introductory sessions were well calculated to be the basis for reflection and group discussion among the participants; inevitably spilling over beyond the formal timetable.

Next we looked at the implications of choosing Christ in our lives and the sacrifices such choices often entail. For this our guide was John Dorman, also well known to many in Justice and Peace, who spoke unassumingly of his own life choices; what was laid aside and what was gained. Here it was the deepening of relationships rather than consolidation of personal prosperity or status which were the crucial elements, going to make up 'life in its fullness'. As a prelude to a consideration of our own lives this was helpful and I found the eventual discussion enriching, not least in hearing where the 'God of surprises' had been at work in the lives of others too.

In the final session we examined the place of hope in our journey. For me this was inspirational since hope is often a bit of a Cinderella virtue, squashed between big sisters faith and charity. And yet it is the enabling virtue for the others: the channel through which our beliefs are brought into action; and the resource which sustains and revitalises our efforts. Miriam brought us back again to the triple injunction of Micah, suggesting that it was a constant reminder of the way in which spirituality and social justice are interlinked. It was no less inspiring to hear the experience of others whose work is accompanying people making the journey of faith, with all its challenges and rewards and whose focus is the risen Christ.

What more natural then, than to conclude with a Eucharist which brought together these concerns in the central sacrament of our Christian belief. I came home, grateful to the Epiphany Group for using their annual conference for such an important issue. Grateful also to Miriam, for her able, but gentle guidance across the weekend; and for giving us a framework to reflect on our own experience and to seek more clearly, with others, what God wants of us.

Tim Duffy

voices from the edge

Alastair Cameron, director of Scottish Churches Housing Action, outlines some of the activities planned for Poverty & Homelessness Action Week 2009

2008 saw the first Poverty & Homelessness Action Week, linking Homelessness Sunday with Poverty Action Sunday, and bringing together Scottish Churches Housing Action with partners Church Action on Poverty and Housing Justice. The week is an annual opportunity to inspire churches, organisations and individuals to help Britain wake up to the poverty that exists in our land.

Too many people live below minimum wage levels; the minimum wage is not a living wage; homelessness is a constant part of our social landscape; poverty is the major cause of early death. In the present financial climate, many more will be at risk of homelessness and unemployment in the coming year.

This year's Poverty & Homelessness Action Week will run from 31 January to 8 February 2009; the title is Voices from the Edge. We encourage you to use the Poverty & Homelessness Action Week materials to plan events of all sorts – Sunday worship; poverty hearings; researching the issues in your area; meetings with councillors, MSPs and MPs; drama; school projects. For the first time, materials are free to download from the dedicated website; www.actionweek.org.uk. Printed copies can be ordered as usual if you prefer.

In an exciting development, we have commissioned Actors for Human Rights, a drama group with a great track record of challenging work, to produce a new documentary play called Voices from the Edge for Poverty & Homelessness Action Week 2009. This will present the stories of people experiencing poverty in the UK, in their own words. We aim to hold at least ten professional readings of the play during the week – one of them will be in Edinburgh. The script will be on the website so anyone can use it, or selections from it, in their own events.

We encourage productions in other locations. The reading will be straightforward to put on. What you will need is: A suitable venue. The space need not be an actual theatre – a church or hall will work; 4 actors and a director; Event coordinator or steering group; Publicity materials. We prefer the event to be free, or for any charge to be small, best taken on the door to avoid needing to organise advance booking. Of course, that does not mean you can't seek donations from those attending!

You won't be on your own – the Poverty & Homelessness Action Week team will be on hand to offer guidance and support. There is a full set of guidelines for people planning to organise local events at www.actionweek.org.uk. Please contact us now if you think you might be putting on a show.

Scottish Churches Housing Action has recruited a volunteer, Joe Cassidy, to help track what is happening in Scotland during Poverty & Homelessness Action

Week. Joe is keen to help advise on your event, and let you know who else is thinking of doing what in your area. You can contact him through the Scottish Churches Housing Action office, or direct on joe.cassidy@tesco.net.

Whatever you plan to mark Poverty & Homelessness Action Week, please let us know about it. Let's make this year make an impact. *Please see flier and order form which is enclosed with the magazine.*

The following poem is from the Action Pack for Poverty & Homelessness Action Week

YOU DID IT TO ME

I WAS HUNGRY

You saw me – I know you did.
Out of the corner of your eye.
You'd just been out for a meal.
Oh, don't get me wrong – I don't begrudge it.
I'm always eating out.

I WAS THIRSTY

God, so thirsty.
So it was a fountain in the park.
Why did you have to move me on?
Just a mouthful was all I wanted.

I WAS A STRANGER

My client does not speak English.
He was put in a detention centre then placed
in a bail hostel.
This man has fled repression, violence and fear.
He is not a criminal, yet he was put in prison
when he arrived in this country.

I WAS NAKED

He looked right through me.
I felt like I was nothing
Did he think I wanted to be there?
I couldn't sleep all night,
It wasn't just the cold.
I was thinking he had a warm bed and didn't deserve it.

I WAS SICK

The cough just wouldn't go away.
Can't say I'm surprised
- her bedroom's got mould up one wall
We forgot about wallpaper ages ago.
I can't have her in my room – the baby sleeps with me.
...She's eleven, she deserves some space of her own.

I WAS IN PRISON

They offered me a choice – fine or prison.
Pay a fine? I was up for begging –
what did they think I could pay with?
Still, I'm out now.
...back where I started.
From The Trampled Vineyard

the worldwide legacy of frank buchman

Alec Porter reflects on a previous economic downturn and the response it brought forth.

Among my early memories was the sight of long queues of the unemployed outside the yellow labour exchange in Cork and also of dozens of men digging in a grassy field near our home to grow vegetables to feed their families. This was the depression of the 1930s. Now the failure of market capitalism threatens a similar disaster.

As governments struggle to plug the leak with vast loans, a global economic conference is planned to create a new Bretton Woods to regulate world economies. Those involved in Justice and Peace know from hard experience that the IMF and World Bank did not work all that well for the poorest of the world.

Could it be that the common failing in all these systems is the human factor? Everyone agrees that this crisis was caused by human greed on a massive scale.

In throwing out the two great commandments of God we saddle ourselves with two million man-made rules and regulations and they are simply not enough. God at work in the human heart is the greatest force for change in the world. In a new book* we get a glimpse of a new world through tackling human nature: it is not a blueprint but it may point the way. The 19 chapters are written by more than 30 people from every continent so it is not a biography but a series of snapshots of a life that altered the story of the 20th century in country after country and continues today.

Frank Buchman was a fighter for the poor and the outcast. In his twenties he founded a hospice for homeless boys in the poorest part of Philadelphia. Soon 300 benefited from it but the governors told him to cut back on the food. He was forced to resign. He did so in frustration and with bitterness towards those responsible. For months he carried those feelings until one Sunday in a small church in England, he realised the cost of that bitterness and how it separated him from Christ. He asked God to change him. He wrote letters of apology to the governors and asked them to forgive him for the ill will he had nursed towards them. He was a new man and soon others wanted what he had found.

Mahatma Gandhi said, 'Be the change you want to see in the world'. The book describes how Buchman inspired hundreds of others — ordinary people and national leaders — to do just that. This expanding group of people in time became known publicly as the Oxford Group (simply because many of the earliest members were students at Oxford); then in the war years and post war years as Moral Re-Armament (MRA) and now as Initiatives of Change (I of C). Buchman had the gift of putting his experience and his ideas in simple terms, such as:

'There is enough in the world for everyone's need, but not for everyone's greed.'

If everyone cares enough and shares enough, won't everyone have enough?

In a small but real way Galashiels experienced this. Stuart Sanderson and his wife had a woollen mill there. In the 1930s the market for the cloth they produced collapsed. They decided to keep their employees at work and stock the cloth. To be able to do this they sold their big house and went to live in a cottage on the mill property. When the war came the cloth was needed. Sanderson was one of the first in a long line of employers who found a motive beyond profit for being in industry.

Tom Keep, a London dockers' leader and a communist for more than 20 years said, 'I have seen employers change and workers change. This can bring to an end the longest war that has ever been fought — the class war'. Frank Buchman was probably one of the most significant peacemakers of the 20th century.

Robert Schuman, Foreign Minister of France wrote in the foreword to the French edition of Buchman's speeches, 'To provide teams of trained people, apostles of reconciliation and builders of a new world — that is the beginning of a vast transformation of society'. In 1948, Konrad Adenauer the Chancellor of West Germany came to the MRA International Conference in Caux, Switzerland. He asked Buchman to work in Germany. Later referring to the agreements which eventually led to the European Union he said, 'In recent months we have seen the conclusion after some difficult negotiations of important international agreements. Here Moral Rearmament has played an unseen but effective part'.

In the Catholic Church there was some uncertainty and misunderstanding about Moral Rearmament due no doubt to its Protestant origins and its openness to people of other faiths. After the Second Vatican Council, as Michel Sentis relates in Chapter 2 of this book, a different mentality began to operate. For example, Cardinal Franz König, Archbishop of Vienna, became a regular visitor to MRA's HQ at Caux.

In earlier years leading Catholics, who had seen the results of MRA in industry in their dioceses, warmly welcomed it. Archbishop Montini of Milan (the future Pope Paul VI) received Buchman in the chair of his cathedral for the Solemn New Year Mass in 1956. Cardinal Liénart of Lille described Moral Re-Armament as, "a positive alternative for the sincere Marxist and a crack of the whip for Christians who have lost their mission."

There were many spin-offs from people encountering the Oxford Group and MRA. Many refound their faith. The founders of Alcoholics Anonymous decided to form a separate organisation but they were always careful to stress that they owed their experience, their impetus and their method to Buchman.

****The Worldwide Legacy of Frank Buchman is compiled by Archie Mackenzie and David Young and was published by Caux Books, June 2008. Available price £5.00 from www.iofc.org or 24 Greencoat Place, London SW1P 1RD, Tel: 0207 798 6000. Online version available at www.iofc.org/frankbuchman***

asylum is a human right ! making room at the inn for asylum

John Wilkes, the Chief Executive of Scottish Refugee Council, reflects on his first year.

I joined as Chief Executive of Scottish Refugee Council in March 2008 after a career spanning 20 years in the field of equalities and human rights. Working in asylum seemed the next obvious step on that path.

Asylum is, after all, a fundamental human right and, in accordance with the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights, everyone has the legal right to seek asylum from persecution in a safe country. Despite this, asylum seekers in Scotland and across the UK face much discrimination and restriction when trying to exercise that right.

Looking back on my time at Scottish Refugee Council this past year, there has been much to celebrate. After many years' of hard work and campaigning from us and other partners, the UK Government agreed to pilot an alternative to detention in Scotland and signed up to fully protect the rights of refugee children under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

It was also the year that resulted in many asylum seekers in Scotland who have been caught in limbo for years getting a resolution on their case and finally being able to move on with their lives. And although immigration and asylum is a reserved issue to Westminster, the Scottish Government have, where they have been able, made a big difference to the lives of asylum seekers in Scotland in terms of their welfare, health and education.

But amongst the highs, there have also been some lows. Faster decision-making under the new asylum model has not always meant fairer decisions and we still regularly see people from countries in conflict being refused asylum. And despite there being over 14 million refugees worldwide, only 6,540 were granted permission to stay in the UK in 2007.

And the future promises even greater challenges to the rights of asylum seekers. The draft Immigration and Citizenship Bill, due to be laid before the Westminster Parliament early next year, promises increased border controls, making it even harder for people fleeing persecution to reach our country.

Border controls already in place include enhanced visa requirements for people travelling from refugee-producing countries; immigration officers posted abroad to prevent asylum seekers from reaching our shores; new technologies to detect migrants in transit; and fines for airlines who carry people without the necessary travel documentation. And the new Bill promises to strengthen them.

Crucially, none of these controls distinguish between people fleeing persecution and other migrants trying to

come to the UK. They

clearly say: 'There is no room at our inn.'

Keep away'. There are diminishing opportunities for refugees in the UK's immigration policy. By increasing controls, the UK Government is undermining its obligation — enshrined in the 1951 United Nations Convention on Refugees — to protect people seeking asylum. And the consequences are tragic.

With barely any legal migration routes into the UK and EU, asylum seekers are forced into irregular means of travel, opening themselves up to exploitation at the hands of smugglers and traffickers. People are dying in their thousands. No one knows the true cost, but the European Council of Refugees and Exiles puts the number of people who died trying to cross the Mediterranean from Africa from January to July 2006 between 3,000 and 25,000.

There is plenty of room at our inn. There are currently 3,500 people seeking asylum in Scotland from countries in severe conflict such as Iraq, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia and Eritrea. The UK accepts just 2 per cent of the world's refugee population. Compare that to 2 million Iraqi asylum seekers currently in Syria and Jordan, with the majority of the rest of the world's 14 million refugees taken care of by poor countries such as Iran and Pakistan.

Instead of increasing controls, the UK Government should be creating new, legal channels for those fleeing persecution to travel to the UK. It should lift visa requirements for people from countries experiencing conflict and offer humanitarian visas to allow those in need of protection to access it. Instead of slamming the doors shut, it should be fulfilling its legal obligation to protect those in need of it.

This month (December) marks the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which enshrined Asylum as a Human Right. As we move in to 2009 and beyond, we hope that the UK Government will remember that and open its doors to a more humane asylum policy.

Scottish Refugee Council is an independent charity which provides advice and information to asylum seekers and refugees living in Scotland. We also campaign for fair treatment of refugees and asylum seekers and to raise awareness of refugee issues. To find out more about our work or to help us make a difference by your support and donations, please visit our website at www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk

