

diarydiary

JUNE

- 24 Last chance for a strong Scottish Climate Change Bill.** A mass lobby of the Scottish Parliament organised by Stop Climate Chaos Scotland 12 – 2.30pm
- 26 International Day in Support of Victims of Torture**

JULY

- 4 International Day of Cooperatives**
- 9 Hearts and Minds:** Building Public Support to Tackle Poverty and Income Inequality in the UK
- 16 1st atomic bomb detonated** in New Mexico, 1945
- 17-23 Take One Action Film Event,** Filmhouse, Edinburgh
- 19 Have a Big Fairtrade Lunch!**

AUGUST

- 6 Atom bomb dropped on Hiroshima, 1945**
- 8 Atom bomb dropped on Nagasaki, 1945**
- 9 International Day of the World's Indigenous People**
- 27 Death of Dom Helder Camara, 1999**

SEPTEMBER

- 13 Racial Justice Sunday**

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

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Prayer for Reconciliation

*In the midst of conflict and division,
 We know
 it is you
 Who turns our minds to thoughts of peace.
 Your spirit changes our hearts;
 Enemies begin to speak to one another,
 Those who were estranged join hands in
 friendship,
 And nations seek the way of peace together.*

*Let your spirit be at work in us.
 Give us understanding and put an end to
 strife,
 Fill us with mercy and overcome our denial,
 Grant us wisdom and teach us to learn
 From the people of the land.*

Call us to justice.

www.justiceandpeacescotland.org.uk

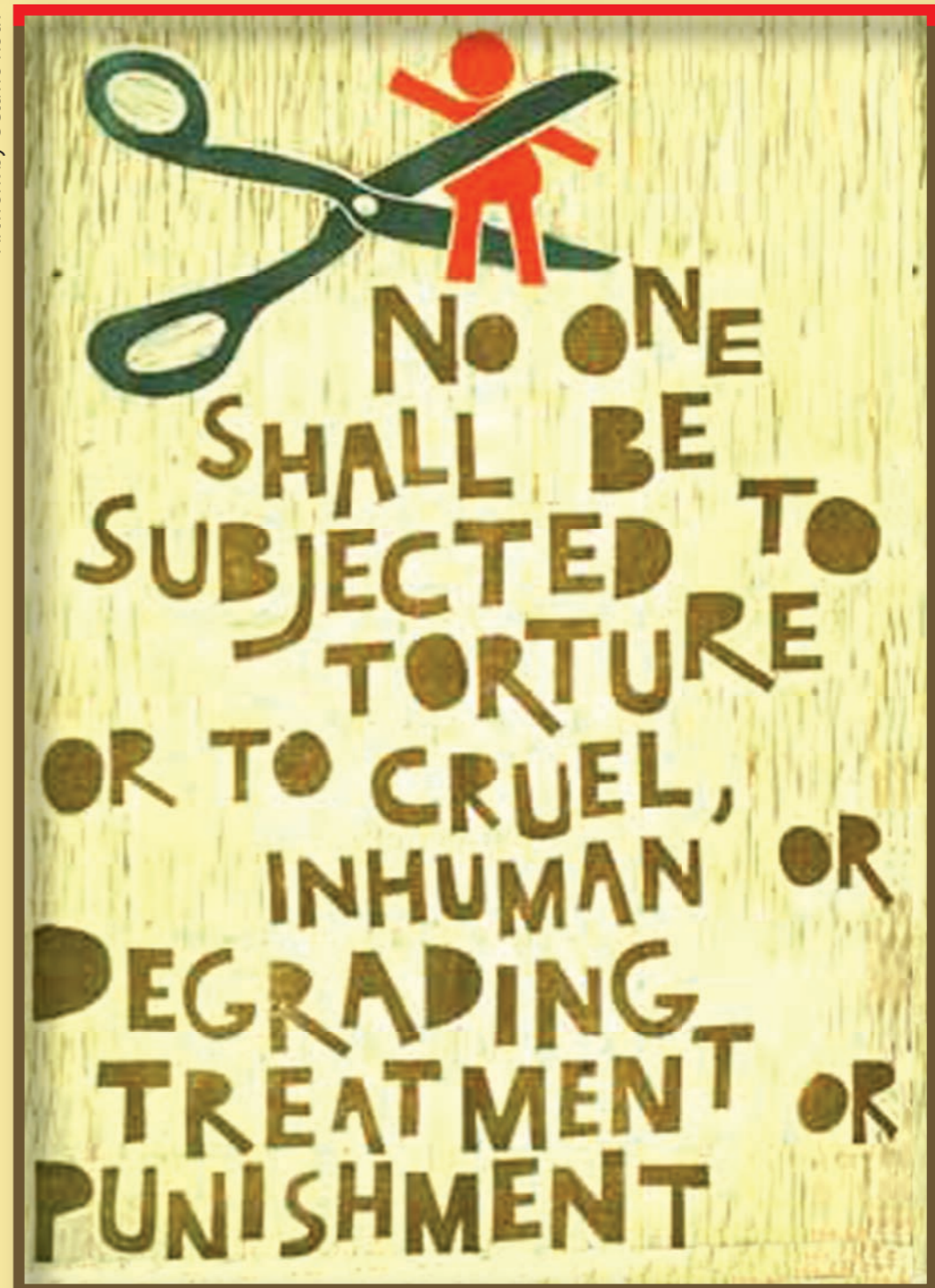
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26 JUNE 2009

INTERNATIONAL DAY IN SUPPORT OF VICTIMS OF TORTURE

Artwork by Octavio Roth



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30 years & going strong

Not the most propitious of years 1979. Ayatollah Khomeini returned to Iran after 15 years in exile. Saddam Hussein became President of Iraq. Rhodesia became Zimbabwe and Sony introduced the Walkman.

In Scotland attention was focussed on the campaign for devolution which had led to a referendum on 1 March. Despite a 51.6% Yes vote, this failed to reach the condition of 40% of the registered voters imposed by parliament, effectively counting abstainers as No voters. In the wake of the repeal of the Scotland Act, the SNP voted against the government in a vote of confidence at the end of that month, prompting a general election which brought the government of Margaret Thatcher to power with a majority of 43.

The political problems of the time included the stationing of Cruise and Pershing missiles in Britain and Europe; Irish terrorism which, ten years into the Troubles, had recently been responsible for the death of Airey Neave MP; an unjust apartheid regime in South Africa still in full swing; and the countries of Central America savagely oppressed by their own governments aided by the US.

Into this interesting world came a new church body – the Scottish Catholic Justice and Peace Commission. Fr Bob Bradley of Glasgow archdiocese, now retired, was involved in setting up the new body. He is modest in his assessment of his own part in this stage, but he remains one of the founders and sustainers of the Commission. He acknowledges the contribution of the first President, Bishop James Monaghan, a wise and canny operator with long experience of Catholic Social Teaching, a deeply rooted spiritual integrity and a wry sense of humour. One time, presented with a draft of a statement on a nuclear freeze by Commission members, the Bishop said: 'What left-wing nonsense am I expected to put my name to now?' Before long, Fr Willie Slavin was energetically carrying forward an agenda with the help of committed volunteer representatives, who were developing justice and peace not only at parish and diocesan levels, but also building up the structures of the new Commission nationally. This resulted in the constitution and the establishment of a lay chair.

But if structures are to be of any value they need to be enabling. There was no lack of issues to be tackled. So how did we fare? The April 1982 statement of the Scottish Bishops condemning deterrence as well as use of nuclear weapons was a pioneering statement which it took the rest of the church over 20 years to catch up with. It was all the more powerful coming from the church in a nuclear armed state, even if the architect of UK nuclear policy during the period was Sir Michael Quinlan, a noted Catholic and latterly Chairman of the Tablet Trust, who died earlier this year. And yet the western nuclear build up was less about defence and more about bankrupting the Warsaw Pact, which allowed Ronald Regan to pose as

saviour of the world when Strategic Arms Limitation Talks preceded the breakdown of the Soviet Union.

A similar strategy of economic sanction and stress probably had more to do with the end of apartheid in South Africa than the moral stance on anti apartheid which was a prerequisite of a social activist. Perhaps one could seek solace in St Paul's metaphor that they seek a perishable crown while we strive after an imperishable crown (1Cor 9:25), but sometimes it seemed that the world went on regardless.

The guiding spirit of the age was Margaret Thatcher. Fuelled (quite literally) by North Sea oil revenues, she changed the base of the UK economy from manufacturing to services. No one should be nostalgic about going down a pit or working at a blast furnace; but she ripped the heart out of communities and dealt a mortal blow to the consensus of social responsibility and solidarity which had created and sustained the Welfare State. Her selfish theology was summed up in her view of the Good Samaritan's virtue residing in having the money to pay the innkeeper for the injured man.

That legacy is twofold. First, there are the middle aged beneficiaries – not just politicians – of a working life cushioned by performance pay and bonuses, and accustomed to perks and expenses. There is also the manipulation of budgets and targets covered by managerial and administrative hogwash, where services are 'products' to be 'delivered', emphasising the basic materialistic outlook. This materialism underlies the imaginary recycling of debt in credit default swaps and unreal property speculations which left a national mortgage whose value is unknown for future generations.

Second, a generation of Thatcher's children has now grown to adulthood, the majority never wanting for anything (although it's worth remembering that poverty rates remained at about 20% throughout). Their belief in instantaneous gratification has been fed with the notions of celebrity culture. A far higher proportion of the population tuned into the final of Britain's Got Talent than voted in the Euro elections. Again, an apparent triumph of fantasy over reality.

There was an unintended consequence of Thatcherism. It was so repellent to many in Justice and Peace that it sent us back to the legacy of our Christian tradition in Catholic Social Teaching. Issues like unemployment, the Poll Tax and the right to a Scottish Parliament (celebrating its tenth anniversary in July) were argued on the basis of social teaching, and thereby extended much of the common debate. But social teaching also brings a spiritual responsibility and openness to growth. Whether we appear to succeed or not in our work for social justice, it is important to celebrate and give thanks for God's energising. So to activists past and present, still here or moved on, we give thanks for thirty years of work for that necessary dimension of the gospel that is justice and peace.

Tim Duffy

26 JUNE 2009 - INTERNATIONAL DAY IN SUPPORT OF VICTIMS OF TORTURE



" This is a day on which we pay our respects to those who have endured the unimaginable. This is an occasion for the world to speak up against the unspeakable. It is long overdue that a day be dedicated to remembering and supporting the many victims and survivors of torture around the world. "

craighead course: year II

There will be another opportunity for people who wish to sharpen their interpersonal and group skills, deepen their knowledge of the church's social teaching and locate this in a practical, scripture based spirituality. The SCIAF funded course covering social and pastoral ministry offered through Justice and Peace and delivered by the Craighead Institute is looking for participants for its second year, starting in October.

The first year of this specially developed course has proved very successful and popular, albeit demanding in commitment and energy. Participants, many with long experience of working in justice and peace issues, have commended the course for the way it has allowed them to learn new skills, refine old ones and to see their work in a more coherent context. In particular they have enjoyed and learned from working together in 'base groups' between modules.

Two items will be emphasised in the social justice element of this year's course: poverty in Scotland

and climate change. There will also be opportunities to develop other interests within the framework of the course.

SCIAF funding allows this course to be offered free of charge to participants.

The dates of the four modules are as follows:

- Module 1: 3-4 October 2009**
- Module 2: 21-22 November 2009**
- Module 3: 16-17 January 2010**
- Module 4: 13-14 March 2010**

Some background in justice and peace work will be an advantage, but is not required. Places will be limited, so if you are interested it would be worth registering as soon as possible. The location of the course may depend on where most of the applications come from. For further information contact the J&P Office at 0141-333-0238 or office@justiceandpeacescotland.org.uk

A prayer for peace for Palestine Israel

Living God, today we pray for all the people in Palestine Israel, that they may discover the courage and humility to build peace together.

We pray for those with power and influence, that they will seek a just path of reconciliation.

We pray for those who are in dire need today, that their human rights to food and shelter and medical care will be urgently met.

We pray for international aid agencies as they work to bring hope to devastated communities.

We pray for all those in the land who have suffered over the years of struggle: for those who are grieving for their lost loved ones; for those whose lives have been changed forever because of injuries, mental and physical; and for those who bear the lasting scars of being displaced and dispossessed.

Living God, their pain is so great today.

Bring your healing; bring your peace, to Palestine Israel.

For our Muslim brothers and sisters in Palestine Israel this day, we pray Assalamu Alaikum.

For our Jewish brothers and sisters in Palestine Israel this day, we pray Shalom Aleichem.

For our Christian brothers and sisters, the Living Stones, in Palestine Israel, this day, we pray The Peace of Christ.

Taken from World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel

The United Nations have designated 2009 as the International Year of Reconciliation

justice & peace annual conference 2009

This year we are looking forward to a Conference which will both inform and entertain. The title is *Just Human Rights* and we have been fortunate to secure as our keynote speaker Charles Kennedy MP. Elected to represent Ross, Cromarty and Skye as the youngest sitting MP in the 1983 election (and which he continues to represent in its new form as Ross, Skye and Lochaber), he went on to become leader of the Liberal Democrats. He is currently the President of the European Movement in the UK, a group that coordinates councils and other bodies that seek a federalised Europe. In the morning, Charles will give his thoughts on human rights and respond to questions.

After lunch there will be a departure from the normal format for conferences. Ian Davison is a pioneer singer and composer of the Scottish folk revival. His songs

cover the range of human concerns, but he is noted for writing songs which make a comment on social justice. Ian has agreed to sing a number of his songs and to give a commentary on how they came to be composed. The day will conclude with mass.

The conference will take place in the Ogilvie Centre, which is next door to St Aloysius church in Rose Street in Glasgow, on 5 September. Further details are included on the booking form, which is enclosed with this magazine (also downloadable from the website). Limited space means that registration in advance will be required. Unfortunately, it won't be possible just to turn up on the day. All the more reason then to book early and to ensure a place at what promises to be a fascinating day.



world against child labour

This day each year (12 June) is meant to focus world attention on the urgent need to eradicate child labour, remembering the children and commemorating those who work to bring about a world without child labour. The enormity of the problem, however, means that it is one more piece in the great jigsaw of structural injustice.

On this day, UNICEF and the International Labour Organisation have also highlighted the need to focus attention on trafficking in children, wherever it occurs and in whatever form, in order to stop the practice. It is estimated that the global trade in human beings is beginning to rival the illicit trafficking of arms and drugs, with an estimated revenue of \$12 billion a year. Far from home or in a foreign country, trafficked children are disoriented, without papers, excluded from any protective environment and can be forced to endure prostitution, domestic servitude, early and involuntary marriage, or hazardous and punishing labour. Although no definitive data exists on child trafficking, some estimate that 1.2 million children are trafficked each year. Getting and keeping all children in school, would dramatically improve their protection, but 120 million children still never go to school, the majority of them

girls. The ILO estimates that 246 million children between ages 5 and 17 are working in the worst forms of child labour, including slavery, trafficking, debt bondage and other forms of forced labour, forced recruitment for armed conflict, prostitution, pornography and other illicit activities. As many as 8.4 million children are trapped in slavery, forced labour or bonded labour. Child labour reinforces a cruel cycle of deprivation. On one hand it is symptomatic of widespread and deeply entrenched global poverty. On the other hand, because it usually keeps children out of school, in poor health and subject to psychological and physical abuse, it reinforces this poverty by keeping yet another generation from fulfilling anything close to its potential.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child Treaty spells out the basic human rights that all children have: the right to survival, to develop to the fullest, to protection from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation, and to participate fully in family, cultural and social life.

More information at: UNICEF www.unicef.org International Labour Organisation www.ilo.org



in the beginning...

Mary Cullen, who was the second Chair of Justice and Peace, reflects on the beginnings of J&P through the lens of her local group

Dumbarton J&P group was an early attempt to bring the teaching of the Second Vatican Council into parish life in Scotland. We had just moved to Dumbarton with three small children and I spoke at our parish UCM group about justice and peace. Dumbarton J&P group, with six women, began in autumn 1978.

We began by thinking about our lifestyle and those who produced the food we cooked and ate. We met every month in each other's houses to pray and think about what we might do. Early attempts at raising awareness involved selling campaign coffee – an early version of today's delicious fairtrade options.

The following Easter, at a conference for Scottish J&P groups in the now derelict St Peter's seminary at Cardross, we were joined by women and men from other Dumbarton parishes, including Sisters of Notre Dame. Within weeks, Mrs Thatcher became Prime Minister and the justice and peace agenda began to take shape.

The *Brandt Report* on international development was published in 1980 and Trident was a big local issue. By 1983 we had begun to run annual advent talks in Dumbarton on issues like South Africa, disarmament

and overseas aid. By 1984 we were at Finlay's Tea AGM as shareholders to challenge their policy on workers wages and in the same year we ran a bus to Glasgow city halls to attend a packed debate on nuclear disarmament, with Bruce Kent and Gerry Hughes SJ.

We took part in peace demos at Faslane and annual Clydebank Blitz commemorations; and made links with local Women's Aid. Group members served on the district council's peace committee from 1984-88, and on the Alternative Employment Study Group supported by Strathclyde Regional Council. We went to hear all the inspirational people who debated issues of justice and peace in Scotland in the 1980s – Sister Regina Coll, Cardinal Arns, Professor Jill Raitt.

One of the legacies of our group, on which two of the original members still serve, is Dumbarton Credit Union, which has over 4,000 members, and loans out over £1 million year. It started life as an Advent talk. But perhaps the greatest legacy is the way J&P shaped our adult faith. Sister Anne Jane O'Rourke SND wrote on the tenth anniversary of the group: *"I have above all a sense of beginning to reflect together theologically on our own lives and our society and world – and we're doing it for ourselves."*

to mark refugee week a psalm for our generation

Lord, I'm bewildered and depressed by the injustice I hear about and see, day after day; I'm angry that it goes on and on and on and on;

What can one person do in the face of such great need?

I'm knackered through trying to address these issues and fed up that I'm powerless to make any difference.

But it's not me that needs you to intervene, it's the marginalized strangers, you know, the ones you implored us to welcome.

Lord, where's your care and concern for 'the least of these children of mine'?

Why does a civilised society, that supposedly champions the cause of freedom for the oppressed, allow those who flee to our shores for safety...

to go without a roof, without a bed, without a crust,

in the hope that they'll eventually get fed up and slope off home?

Where are you and your justice Lord?

Has someone stolen your scales?

But I know, or at least I hope, that you have seen the

story unfold for every individual who lies awake at night unable to sleep or rest because of the physical and emotional trauma they have experienced back home and the shock of exclusion and disbelief they have encountered here.

You – the tortured One – felt the brutal pain of their imprisonment, their beatings, their torture, their rape

You – the rejected One - you listen to the cries of those rejected today; you stand alongside them and offer solidarity, comfort and acceptance;

You – the despised One – know each fearful prejudiced thought that leads to mistrust and disbelief; and you know the truth.

The actions, words and thoughts of us all are weighed in your scales.

Bring justice Lord, and please don't let them wait another day.

Amen!

Written by Jeremy Thompson, Befriending Coordinator of Restore (Birmingham Churches supporting refugees and asylum seekers)

j&p chair's report

2008-9

Here, Ellen Charlton gives her account of the start of her second period of office as Chair of the Commission

The Last Year ...

1. This report begins half way through the year June 2008-2009. After the previous standing committee stood down in June 2008, there was a gap in office bearer representation. This was largely because of an influx of new Commission members with an understandable reluctance to step straight into office. This meant that for a period of time the Commission was without direction, a situation not helped by the absence of a National Secretary.
2. At the September quarterly meeting, myself and Grace Buckley were nominated respectively as Chair and vice chair, a decision fully endorsed at the December Commission meeting. In the meantime, a programme of meetings of a newly organised standing committee, coupled with meetings of the Chair and the Bishop President, set about arranging the Commission agenda and carrying through its decisions.
3. One immediate requirement concerned resourcing the first year of the SCIAF funded J&P and Craighead course on social and pastoral ministry. In the event there were 21 participants, 3 of whom had to withdraw subsequently on health grounds. Despite a late start to the course in December, subsequent reports from participants and those running the course have been very positive, emphasising not only the learning and formation, but also the benefits of working together in groups. Grace as vice Chair and Tim Duffy, Research Officer, represent the Commission in the joint work with the Craighead Institute.
4. A further refinement of the Commission's operations has been the limiting of business to the morning session of the quarterly meeting. There are formal diocesan reports twice a year. Far from downgrading in any way the importance of work undertaken by the diocesan groups, we hope it is encouraged and supported by the national commission on an ongoing basis. This morning business meeting leaves the afternoon free for a talk or reflection often with input from an outside agency, along with a chance for Commission members to exchange views and get to know each other better on the four occasions annually that they get together.
5. Grace, our vice Chair has carried out an extensive revision and overhaul of the Constitution and

Standing Orders, to take account of the existing situation without closing the door on possible future developments. This will be presented to the Bishops' Conference for ratification.

6. We initiated a meeting with Fr Keegans of Ayr, who had approached the bishops earlier this year unsuccessfully for support on a new campaign to release Abdelbaset Ali Mohamed Al Megrahi, the man imprisoned for the Lockerbie bombing. Fr Keegans was the priest in Lockerbie at the time, has followed the case and is convinced that Mr Megrahi is innocent (see his article in the April 2009 magazine). His involvement with the campaign stems not from legal argument, but from the wish to see Mr Megrahi, who is terminally ill with prostate cancer, released during the period of his appeal which has run since the end of April. He also hoped it would be possible to arrange a visit to Mr Megrahi in Greenock prison, but it was not possible to visit Mr Megrahi in the limited time available. Current political manoeuvring seems aimed at shutting down embarrassing disclosures about government and judiciary.
7. Successful meetings with the Commission for Social and Pastoral Care have led to a clarification of the role of these bodies; but also opened up the possibility of shared work in the future in the area of disability and supported needs for example.
8. Thanks to Tim and Carol who produce the magazine and website, which continues to provide commentary and information about the major issues of justice and peace as well as updates on campaigns. An email update is distributed bi-monthly. The magazine has recently moved up to being printed in full colour (for the same cost). Work on extending and archiving the website will be a focus of work in the near future.

Future Developments ...

1. We have been developing better contacts with the European Commission and have invited the Secretary and depute Secretary to visit early in July. This is part of a strategy to broaden contact which it is hoped will include attendance at the European Conference of Commissions in Seville in September.
2. The annual conference of the English and Welsh Justice and Peace Network takes place in mid July and it looks likely that I will attend with Carol. Bishop Peter has suggested that we might move towards a UK Network Conference.

newsbrief . . . newsbrief

WITH THIS MONTH'S MAGAZINE you will find a leaflet for the Jesuit Refugee Service 'Supermarket Vouchers Exchange' it is self explanatory. Please advertise this worthwhile venture in your parish. You could even photocopy it and leave it at the back of your Church.

STILL ARMING THE WORLD: Not only are many High Street Banks incompetent managers of our funds and mortgages, many of them are still investing in the arms trade. According to War on Want's John Hilary, 'if you bank with Barclays, HBOS, HSBC, Lloyds TSB or Royal Bank of Scotland your money is directly supporting weapons production'. (Ethical Consumer May 2009)

TRIDENT, JOBS AND SCOTLAND'S ECONOMY: A new report on Trident and Jobs which updates the 2007 report and shows how Trident is actually destroying jobs and services in Scotland is now available. Copies of the report can be ordered from Scottish CND <http://banthebomb.org/> Tel: 0141 423 1222

ENVIRONMENTAL MIGRANTS: The English J&P Network has brought to our attention the plight of environmental migrants. Environmental disasters are a bigger cause of population displacement than war and persecution, but it is not recognized as a basis for refugee status in international law. There are increasing calls for this to change. Further information on what is being done and a full version of the article www.justice-and-peace.org.uk

WHITE RIBBON SCOTLAND is a campaign for men in Scotland who want to end violence against women. It is part of a global campaign of men and boys committed to taking action to stop violence against women, a human rights scandal around the world. Here in Scotland, a domestic violence incident is recorded every 11 minutes. The focus is on involving men, but they welcome the support of women too. More information www.whiteribbonscotland.org.uk/

ANTI-SLAVERY AWARD 2009: The winner of the 2009 Anti-Slavery Award is SOS Esclaves. Slavery has existed in Mauritania for hundreds of years and is deeply rooted within society across the country. Over the past 14 years SOS Esclaves has been leading the fight for it to be acknowledged and addressed despite being continually harassed, threatened and intimidated. In 2007 new legislation was introduced to criminalise slavery, testament to the efforts of SOS Esclaves and a historic step forward for Mauritania. Further information at www.antislavery.org/homepage/antislavery/award.htm

HUMAN TRAFFICKING: In response to the Home Affairs Committee report on human trafficking, published on 14 May, Klara Skrivankova, of Anti-Slavery International, which submitted evidence to the Parliamentary Inquiry, said: 'The Home Affairs Committee is right to recognise that human trafficking is the equivalent of the modern day slave trade. As such it is imperative that trafficked people are recognised immediately as the victims of serious crime. For too long trafficking has been dismissed as an immigration issue and accompanied by a culture of disbelief amongst the authorities. Police and judges need to be better trained so that they can recognise trafficked women in sexual

exploitation, people trafficked to work without pay on farms and factories, and those involved in criminal enterprise against their will.' Full press release at www.antislavery.org/archive/press/latestpressrelease.htm

GET READY FOR THE SCOTTISH CLIMATE CHANGE MARCH: On Saturday 5th December 2009, Justice and Peace is supporting the march in Glasgow city centre, as part of the Stop Climate Chaos Scotland coalition. This will be the largest march on climate change ever to take place in Scotland. The march will take place just before the UN talks on global emissions reductions in Copenhagen. We need as many people as possible to turn out to ramp up pressure on the world's leaders to take radical action to tackle climate change. Watch this space for more information or email gail@stopclimatechaosscotland.org to be added to the mailing list.

FAIRTRADE SCHOOLS NEED YOU: Could you spare an hour or two a week (without even leaving your house) to help with the Fairtrade Schools scheme? Thousands of schools up and down the country are working hard to gain the prestigious Fairtrade Schools Award. We need your help to check their applications - full training provided. If you fancy getting involved, email schools@fairtrade.org.uk

HAVE A BIG FAIRTRADE LUNCH! On Sunday 19 July people across the UK will be taking to the streets to party with their neighbours! The Big Lunch is an opportunity to get to know others in your community by sharing food, entertainment and conversation. Why not get involved in a lunch or organise one in your street and make Fairtrade a part of it? More details www.thebiglunch.com/?dm_i=578831706

THE REAL COST OF CHEAP SUPERMARKET CLOTHING: The Clean Clothes Campaign's 'Cashing In' report reveals huge profits gained by retailers such as Tesco, Aldi, Lidl and Wal-Mart while workers continue to face exploitation. As the economic crisis worsens around the world, supermarkets giants squeeze suppliers and result in worsening conditions for garment workers. Researchers were told of working weeks as high as 90 hours; wages so low that families were malnourished; and strong resistance to any attempts at worker organizing.

NEWS FROM LABOUR BEHIND THE LABEL: Just miles from Primark's head office, two Manchester-based suppliers were found paying poverty wages of £3 per hour to migrant workers toiling 80 hours a week in cramped and unsafe workplaces. LBL has an Action pack of postcards on these and other abuses in the world of retail and these can be obtained from: Labour Behind the Label, 10-12 Picton Street, Bristol, BS6 5QA. www.labourbehindthelabel.org/

J&P EMAIL UPDATES. These are sent out in months between magazine publication, with occasional special editions. You sign up via our website. The system is entirely automatic, so if you change your email address you need to sign up again. If you have not signed up for the update, why not do so now.

j&p join climate lobby

Justice and Peace supporters joined over 500 people who gathered on Wednesday 22 April outside the Scottish Parliament to demand that MSPs deliver a strong Climate Change Bill.

The rally was organised by Stop Climate Chaos Scotland to show the strength and breadth of public support for these three key tasks for the Bill:

- **Statutory annual reductions in greenhouse gas emissions of at least 3% year on year starting now;**
- **The inclusion of emissions from international aviation and shipping from the beginning;**
- **Ensuring that the action to tackle climate change takes place in Scotland and is not 'bought in' from overseas.**

Our pictures show Mary Macpherson, Motherwell diocesan representative with Cardinal O'Brien and members of the Conference of Religious preparing for the lobby.

Full and up to date coverage of the progress of the Bill and other climate news can be found at the Stop Climate Chaos Scotland website:

www.stopclimatechaos.org/

A new You Gov survey, released for World Environment Day on 5 June 2009 by Christian Aid, reveals the extent of the British public's concern about climate change with a majority saying the government needs to show more leadership in tackling global warming. In summary, the poll shows that:

- ✿ **77 per cent believe the UK government ought to do more to reduce carbon emissions.**
- ✿ **57 per cent say a political party's climate policies would influence how they vote**



✿ **70 per cent want the UK government to take a leading role in international climate change negotiations.**

✿ **90 per cent have taken steps to reduce their own carbon emissions.**



All of which is grand no doubt. Except that although over 90 per cent of the scientific consensus agrees that human caused climate change is a real, present and growing threat to humanity, almost 60 per cent of people don't think there is a scientific consensus. And they mainly get their information from tabloids.

high street split over grocery watchdog

UK supermarkets are split over plans for a watchdog to monitor and penalise stores which treat suppliers unfairly, a coalition including cross-party MPs revealed on 20 May. Contact between the Grocery Market Action Group and supermarket chief executives reveals that Waitrose, Marks and Spencer and Aldi do not oppose further regulation, believing their good relationships with suppliers mean they have nothing to fear from independent scrutiny. However, the big 4 supermarket chains - Tesco, Sainsbury's, Morrisons and Asda plus Iceland have so far refused to support the scheme citing objections such as

its potential cost-raising effect on food prices. This is despite the findings of the independent Competition Commission and recent academic research which has shown that an ombudsman is likely to raise standards and, in some cases, lower prices for consumers. And in the case of Tesco, which recently reported record £3bn annual profits, less than 5 hours of trading profits would cover its full annual contribution towards the cost of the scheme. Full story at www.traidcraft.co.uk/news



3. Part of the agreement in the joint course with Craighead is that trainees should be identified. They will in their turn be able after training to deliver the course and broaden the awareness and formation of justice and peace supporters through these local initiatives. Trainees are only identified after the final module in June (and subject to their availability and agreement) but we would hope to see that aspect of the course developing.
4. We are in process of developing a slightly different Annual Conference in September with Charles Kennedy as keynote speaker and Ian Davison singing political and other songs in the afternoon. We hope that this different format might bring about wider interest in the work of the Commission; perhaps even early recruiting for the 2010-11 Craighead course.

Developing Priorities ...

1. Asylum and refugees continues to be well supported. e.g. at Dungavel Gatherings, during Refugee Week, responding in support of deportees etc. It is a focus of work in the Craighead course which has produced some excellent social analysis. The particular emphasis, dating back to Bishop Mone, of actively criticising the policy of detaining children of asylum seekers, particularly in Dungavel, contrary to international agreement, has continued. It is important to maintain this priority as times of economic recession lead to a tendency to find scapegoats, particularly among foreign migrants.
2. Much has been said about Trident, both by our own Scottish bishops and by the developing teaching from the Vatican. Members of the Commission continue to attend conferences, rallies etc. and we have a representative on Scottish CND's Scotland's for Peace campaign. Economic recession may necessitate reductions in the areas of nuclear weapons. Whether the proposed removal of the entire UK nuclear fleet to Faslane will carry through, however, remains to be seen. However we may

wish it otherwise, Trident remains a reality and one which must be constantly challenged.

3. Almost 1 in 5 Scots was living in poverty before the recession. Inconceivable amounts of taxpayers' money have since been used to shore up defaulting banks and the extent of losses remains unknown. Meanwhile, Westminster politics is going into meltdown over small change, because these are figures people can comprehend. The effects of this recession on employment, structural industries and government spending on social welfare are unquantified, but the outlook is hardly optimistic. The Churches can engage in practical and pastoral support and leadership in this area. Glasgow Archdiocese, for example, gives financial support to Faith in Community Scotland, for its work in priority areas.

4. **Climate Change:** We are represented on Stop Climate Chaos Scotland, and have had input to the Scottish Climate Change Bill. Failure to reverse the vested interest propaganda of climate change deniers and to produce sustainable policies which will not be hampered by e.g. long term debt repayment will be catastrophic. Environmentally, as well as economically, we are living on borrowed time. The churches have a unique capacity here for leadership.



Thanks to all the Commission members, the office staff Carol, Margaret and Tim, and volunteers for your commitment, hard work and support.

Ellen Charlton
Chair Justice and Peace Commission, June 2009

hearts and minds

Building Public Support to Tackle Poverty and Income Inequality in the UK

A joint seminar from the Poverty Alliance and Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Date: 9 July 2009, 10am-3pm Venue: City Chambers, Edinburgh

It has long been acknowledged that more needs to be done to build greater public support to tackle poverty in the UK. Campaigners across the UK have done much to bring groups and organisations together to lobby for policy change, but it is not clear far have we managed galvanise wider public support to tackle poverty and inequality. In times of economic crisis campaigners need to better understand how to engage the public, and what approaches are most likely to create support for progressive social policies.

This seminar will be an opportunity to explore

some of these issues. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) will shortly publish four new studies looking at these issues. This joint Poverty Alliance JRF seminar will hear from authors of the reports and will look at the implications for anti-poverty campaigners, policy makers and the media.

The seminar is free but places are limited. To find out more and to register for this event on-line please visit

www.povertyalliance.org.uk/events_detail.asp?event_id=7

an uncrushable spiritual strength

Maureen Brough and Steph Mayo describe a recent visit to an extraordinary project in Nicaragua

Familias Especiales

(Special Families) is an NGO based in Matagalpa, a town of approximately 100,000 people in Nicaragua's beautiful, green and hilly coffee country. FE supports families where there is a child with special needs with a particular focus on supporting the mothers; it also supports a number of young adults with special needs. In Nicaragua 'special needs' include physical, learning, psychological and developmental needs. FE was established in 1997 by a fruitful partnership formed between Sister Rebecca Trujillo, Sister of Notre Dame, Marlene Hernandez, a local woman, with a child with special needs and the Diocese of Matagalpa.

Working Together for Change, a Glasgow based NGO, has had a close connection with **Familias Especiales** since the year 2000, initially through WTFC's then Coordinator, Sister Mary Kilpatrick SND, formerly National Secretary of Justice and Peace, who had worked in Nicaragua in the 1980s after the Sandinista Revolution and who returned to work with FE from 2003 – 2008. Following the organisation of exchange visits in 2002 between women from Scotland and Nicaragua WTFC has fostered the links of friendship and solidarity that were formed, including accessing funding (currently from Lloyds TSB Overseas Fund for supporters to contribute to the growth and development of the vital work of **Familias Especiales**.

Nicaragua is the second poorest country in Central America and there are many people still without adequate access to clean drinking water, electricity, sanitation and other basic services. The impact of this is of course compounded where there is a person with a disability in the family.

Maureen Brough and Steph Mayo visited the project in Nicaragua on behalf of WTFC for 2 weeks in March 2009. They found **Familias Especiales** continuing to develop confidently and imaginatively as an organisation despite the very real economic, social and political problems in Nicaragua. The impact of global financial problems was very evident in rising levels of basic food prices: rice, beans and maize, and in a reduction in money coming in from overseas, both in remittances sent back to their families by Nicaraguans forced to go abroad for work and also in reduced funding from many NGOs and Charities e.g. for basic feeding programmes.

In this difficult context **Familias Especiales** continues to be positive and resourceful, employing around 90 people, mostly in full time jobs, paying them

at least the minimum wage of \$110 per month. The organisation finds and manages complex support funding from a wide range of overseas organisations (including from Scotland, WTFC, SCIAF and Rainbow Turtle Fairtrade Charity) as well as bringing in income from some of its projects e.g. growing sales of yoghurt and cheese, arts and crafts and recycled paper and card products. Access to the therapies, education, training and treatment for children and young people with special needs supported by **Familias Especiales** is still a remarkable and rare reality in Nicaragua.

The particular focus of WTFC's support to FE over the last few years has been on capacity building with the mothers of children with special needs, enabling them to have better access both to educational and training opportunities and to employment e.g. WTFC currently funds the employment of a psychologist and 4 mother assistants as well as the opportunity for some mothers to attend a basic literacy course and others to study for their Primary and Secondary Level Certificates.

To understand the reality of the lives of the women we met in all of the projects we visited, and perhaps more widely throughout Nicaragua, we need to fully grasp the meaning of a word we heard repeated throughout our visit: **'Aguantar'**

Simply stated, this word means endurance, but in reality it embodies a way of life that is

much more than just that. It is about dignity and caring. It is about working hard to look after your family and it is in essence an uncrushable spiritual strength that will not give in, however hard and long the road may be.

We first came across the term **'aguantar'** at Casa Materna, a project set up to support rural mothers with high-risk pregnancies and we were told that it is impossible to know when a Nicaraguan woman is going into labour as women rarely scream or cry out with the pain. They simply endure what must be endured. They are proud to show no sign of the pain and distress. This is just as well, since many women experience 5, 6 or more pregnancies. One woman told us how the men in their lives demand lots of children, hoping that one or two will survive and provide for their old age. The fact that those women's bodies are exhausted, worn out, and they may not live to see old age is not a factor that matters here. **'Aguantar'** is the theme and this is a big part of the script for a woman's life.

We were in Nicaragua on International Women's Day (March 8th) and we attended an event in Matagalpa. The overriding message was that the current mixture of Church and State in Nicaragua is very unhealthy for women. Fundamentalism in religion and in economics and politics is deemed a constant threat to women's

autonomy and such powerful forces are increasingly hard to fight.

'Aguantar' then symbolises the story of women's lives in Nicaragua. Many women's lives are far from satisfying; the grinding poverty and all that this entails weighs heavy on their bones, their faces and their hearts. The poverty is shocking, in many ways worse than what we witnessed in WTFC's visit to Soweto in 2007. How far this is due to the world recession and the rising price of grains is hard to say. One of the barrios we visited is called **'Nuevo Amanecer'** – **'New Dawn'** which is ironic considering that there was no water or electricity. The women living here had to rely on water for cooking and washing from the dried up river bed; water that was dirty and heavily polluted.

Women living in the barrios face a daily struggle to survive. Asked what their biggest problem was, the women responded, **"WATER!"** With no running water, no electricity, treacherous terrain under foot and flimsy houses made of cardboard covered over with black plastic, more reminiscent of garden sheds than homes, there is little hope. Yet ironically, in one of these poorly constructed houses we found on the wall a picture of the Mayor of Matagalpa. People can purchase water at 20 cordobas (60p) a barrel and lug it up the impossibly steep cliff face slopes. Nevertheless, they have had a lot of practice carrying the wheelchairs, their disabled child and all their goods and chattels up and down these almost vertical 'paths'. In the rainy season conditions are even worse as floods wash the houses away along with loose stones and dirt. They spend a huge amount of time collecting firewood, a hazardous task at any time, but made even worse by the threat of rape. One woman told us how her daughter with special needs had been attacked and raped; others told us how they would be attacked and beaten if they collected wood from another area.

However, these houses are homely. The women journey from the campo (countryside) in search of a better life and within a few hours of the house going up they have set up a cooking space, beds, a washing line has been rigged up and there's a place for the few clothes and possessions. All this is a marked contrast to the grandeur of the graveyard. One of the Mother Leaders said, **"The dead are better housed than the living"** and there was no doubting this.

We heard many stories of suffering, joy and faith, and not only from women. One elderly man Ciraco Blandon, living alone with his adult disabled daughter, Ana Julia, talked of the difficulties of doing the washing in the river along with the local women, the struggles of managing her health issues and was greatly troubled by fears about her future. His house had burned down and the project had helped him to find alternative accommodation. With so many burdens in his life, this man was so grateful that we had visited him – it was very humbling. And yet, as we were about to leave, an

elderly woman with a stick came hobbling along the path and he was quick to ask that the project help this woman.

Sister Rebecca, the wise, compassionate and energetic Director of the project, is quick to take action where she sees unmet needs and she is already working on ideas to establish a new area of work to focus on young disabled adults with accommodation needs. People like Sister Rebecca are another example of **'aguantar'**, taking forward the unrelenting passion to improve the lives of the poor.

In the Millennium Development Goals workshops we ran with the Mother Leaders, the number



Women making and using puppets to talk about local health issues at a workshop on the Millennium Development Goals facilitated by Maureen and Steph

one issue identified by the women attending was that of poverty and hunger. Yet despite the poverty they are joyful, delighting in the chance to dance and sing: holding onto love and living without bitterness. Lucia Palanco is the one and only woman we met who displayed classic signs of depression when we visited her at home.

However, she really came alive in the workshops enjoying the opportunity to connect with other women and to be creative. In the feedback session she said that she had enjoyed making puppets and discussing health issues. She stated that, **"...being together to learn from each other makes me grateful"**. The women are strong, resilient, resourceful and passionate about the need for change and these opportunities for peer learning are highly valued within and beyond the project. In these spaces of shared learning women were finding enthusiasm and joy. They found a deeper voice within – a voice that shouts, not whispers, **"No Aguanta"**.

Endurance implies sacrifice, no choice and people occupying a place of cynicism, disbelief and shutdown. However, what we experienced was far from this. We saw an enduring spirit, a positive force. People were stretched well beyond what is comfortable; yet the women were strong and their focus lay beyond themselves. Hardship can be endured, and like childbirth it is easily forgotten after the event and is in its own way empowering. If this force could be directed into creativity and action for social change there is no knowing how far it could go or how powerful that could be!

If you would like to support the work of Working Together for Change or Familias Especiales please contact WTFC's new Coordinator, Margaret Anne Gachagan or Development Worker Steph Mayo at

wtfc@btconnect.com or 07528 551929

and check out WTFC's website at

www.workingtogetherforchange.org.uk

for more information