



I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

what's inside

Editorial.....	2	Refugee Festival Scotland.....	3	Dungavel .....	8
For the Election ...	2-11	'My kingdom is not of this world'.....	4-5	New Fairtrade sports balls .....	9
Resurrection Reflection .....	3	Meeting of General Secretaries.....	5	Newsbrief .....	10
The International Day of Prayer Vigil to mark U.N. Day of Support for Victims of Torture .....	3	Pope Francis and the Death Penalty....	6	A Word that is born of our tears.....	11
		You yourselves were once foreigners..	7	Diary.....	12
		Bairns not Bombs .....	8		

I have to report that my Lenten decision to go on a diet from political commentary and news was no penance at all. Abstaining from processed and convenience 'current affairs' has left me feeling clearer and less burdened. Not total abstinence you understand. I saw enough of the 'Leaders' Debates, however, to see the politics of personality played out like a TV quiz (The Weakest Link comes to mind). These 'leaders' that we haven't voted for say whatever they think will gain the approval of voters, with nothing as accountable as a manifesto to justify it. Then I read Dominic Lawson telling of being at a meeting and asked by the former adviser to Barack Obama now employed by the Conservatives to guess the amount of time the typical adult spends thinking about politics. The answer was four minutes. Four minutes a week.

The extra time that became available from the world of chit-chat allowed me to look over a recently published book by a group of contributors. It is entitled Blue Labour, after the name of the group, which aims to return to a more communitarian and traditional Labour vision, rejecting neoliberalism and the opportunism of New Labour. Most of the contributors are Christian (including some Roman Catholics), but the really interesting aspect of the book is the overt employment of Catholic Social Teaching and some of its leading ideas, notably the Common Good. Theologians like Rowan Williams and John Milbank, political theorists like Maurice Glasman and Adrian Pabst and reputable politicians like John Cruddas MP have brought together a more serious approach to politics. The context is essentially English and the unifying element in their thinking is the rooting of politics in a tradition of shared values rather than the passing fashion of ideologies. The tradition they incline towards is Catholic Social Teaching, in particular the concept of the Common Good.

Many Labour supporters are appalled at this importation of something as alien as religion and Roman Catholic religion at that, into the postmodern world of secular politics, which has outgrown such things. One can in turn ask them, however, what are the criteria for their political loyalty; and are they any less dependent on faith

of a sort? For Christians, the warranty for the unique dignity of each human person and the basis for mutual respect and love comes from the fact that we are all created in the image of God. There is a great deal of benefit to be derived from looking at Catholic Social Teaching in the context of political science in the way that Blue Labour suggests. None of it requires us to join the Labour party, any more than a theology of liberation requires us to become Marxist.

I consider myself to be a mugwump, which is to say a person who remains aloof or independent, especially from party politics. My inspiration for this position is Psalm 118:9, *'It is better to put your trust in God than in political leaders'*. Of course one runs the risk of being thought superior or elitist, particularly by people who are happy to go along with received opinion. But I find support for my view from what might seem to be an unlikely source, former prime minister John Major: 'Only in Britain could it be thought a defect to be "too clever by half". The probability is that too many people are too stupid by three-quarters'. Far from contradicting our creation in God's image, such a viewpoint merely recognises the reality of human stupidity rooted in sinfulness.

Our faith gives us a wider canvas for discernment. The first Easter was a time of disbelief and disillusionment for the early disciples. We have the benefit of hindsight, but the disciples had hoped for a Messiah who would usher in an age of justice and peace as foretold by the prophets; and it seemed that their hopes were shattered. Their growing awareness of Resurrection is perhaps the greatest shift in the history of human consciousness. It brings with it a sense of inevitability realised by Paul in his own life: *'And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is useless and your faith is in vain'* (1 Cor 15:14). In our own times it was the realisation that allowed Archbishop Romero to face his own destiny. As he said on March 24, 1980 shortly before his assassination. *'If they kill me, I shall arise in the Salvadoran people'*.

What are the consequences of this resurrection for us? For a start it has permanently reorganised the nature and realisation of our relationships with God and our neighbour. The dynamics

of wealth and power and violence are subordinated to the practice of love and compassion. The great love of laying down our life is no longer the terminal heroism of the battlefield; but rather the capacity for sacrifice in the necessities of everyday life. Instead of looking after number one, we are asked to look after one another. This may seem like an idealistic opting out of the struggles of life; of a religious quietism, subdued by the expectation of 'jam tomorrow' in a future life.

Of course, the notion that once every five years we get the chance to choose among a set of consumerised policies is hardly the summit of participatory democracy. One of the constant refrains that turns up if any attempt is made to criticise political policies from the perspective of faith, is that 'religion and politics don't mix'. In a sense this is true: since the wellspring and methods of religion should be different from the opportunism, ambition and selfishness that frequently characterise politics. All too often in history, however, religious groups have adopted similar abusive methods of greed and violence to consolidate their position.

*'For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realising that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked'* (Rev 3:17). Time and again, scripture points to the failure to perceive the difference between genuine participation and self interest. Time and again in the gospel the way of the world is turned upside down; and those who think themselves 'wise and clever' find themselves subverted by childlike wisdom (Matt 11:25). This too is part of the message of Resurrection. Out of imperial destruction 'even to death on a cross', comes renewed hope and strengthened faith, empowering us to act out of love not policy. The Jesuit poet Gerard Manley Hopkins saw the Resurrection, not only as enabling, but as the gift of recognising our share in the divine origin:

*In a flash... / I am all at once what Christ is, since he was what I am, and This Jack, joke, poor potsherd... / Is immortal diamond.*

Tim Duffy

## For the Election ...

The faults we ascribe to politicians are often only our own faults writ large.

Politics is far too important to be left to politicians. *Charles de Gaulle*



# Resurrection Reflection

*Jock Thorlby, who has worked in north eastern Brazil for forty years among the landless people, here reflects on resurrection in Araçoiaba, a sugarcane dormitory town, some 50 kms from Recife*

Araçoiaba, with its peripheral cemetery for peripheral people.  
In the cemetery, you can see rough rude  
crosses with roughly written names.  
... here, a limb of misery protrudes from the ground  
... and, over there, a skull of poverty erupts from the earth.  
'Why?' I ask the grave digger.  
'Because they can't afford a permanent grave.'  
So no real resting place here for bodies crucified by the sugar  
cane  
... but, at least, no more humiliation, no more suffering, no more  
pain. It's over.  
'Resurrection? No thanks – I didn't fare too well the first time  
round.'

In another place, not far away – another cemetery  
– monuments to land barons  
– mausoleums to their offspring  
– mansionhouse graves  
to their rich and powerful  
What a wonderful resurrection they are expecting ... such great  
hopes for the future life ...  
'more of the same? Oh! yes ... more of the same again, amen!'

Whose humiliation raised the monuments?  
Whose suffering erected the mausoleums?  
Whose pain built the mansionhouse graves?

Some 5 kms from Araçoiaba, there is a place called Prado. It  
is peopled by rough men and rude women who decided to  
anticipate resurrectional promises of 'new heaven, new earth'  
(Apoc. 21:1), 'heaving table, overflowing plate' (John 10:10b).

They decided to occupy the land that lay unproductive for years.  
What was the resurrectional spirit that gave them the courage  
to face up to the cruelest and most violent sugar baron that  
the inherently cruel, inherently violent latifundary system can  
produce? ... face up to – and win through!

The Institution translates 'resurrection as 'coming back from the  
dead', 'rising up'.  
Straightforward status quo stuff.  
Another translation talks of 'rocking the boat', 'creating problems'.  
I believe the man from Nazareth – and the men and women of  
Prado – would opt for the latter translation.

Rock the boat...  
Create problems...  
Practise resurrection (Lk 14:14)...  
Be Easter (Mt 25:31)...

## The International Day of Prayer Vigil to mark U.N. Day of Support for Victims of Torture – June 26th

The annual day of prayer organised by ACAT France will  
take place during the Night and Day of Saturday 26th June  
2015. As in previous years, there is a theme for prayer and  
meditation and this year the chosen theme is from Psalm 8:

*What is mankind that you are mindful of them?  
Human beings that you care for them?*

The web site containing further details and resources is open  
from 5th May 2015 at the following address:  
[www.acatfrance.fr/prier](http://www.acatfrance.fr/prier)

## REFUGEE FESTIVAL SCOTLAND 3 – 21 June

**T**his year the annual Refugee Week is being absorbed  
into a longer period of the Refugee Festival  
celebrating the contribution of refugees and the 30th  
anniversary of the Scottish Refugee Council

Refugee Festival Scotland is an annual celebration  
of the contribution refugees make to the richness and  
vibrancy of life in Scotland and the welcome offered by local  
people. Now in its fifteenth year, Refugee Festival Scotland is  
one of most exciting and vibrant events in Scotland's cultural  
calendar. Packed with music, art, film, live performance,  
community led family events and more.

To mark Scottish Refugee Council's 30th anniversary  
and in response to an increasing number of events over the  
past few years, they are embracing Refugee Week Scotland  
within an extended Refugee Festival Scotland programme,  
which will run from Wednesday - 3 Sunday 21 June 2015.  
The full festival programme will be announced in May!

The highlight of the festival is World Refugee Day on  
20 June, a global celebration of the resilience of millions of  
people around the world forced to flee their homes because  
of war, persecution or human rights abuses. Coordinated  
by Scottish Refugee Council, Refugee Festival Scotland is  
central to their work in helping refugees rebuild their lives  
and raising awareness of refugee experiences and issues.

The theme for Refugee Festival Scotland 2015 is  
Celebrate. We're celebrating not only the contribution  
refugees make to the vibrancy of our communities  
and cultural life, but also Scotland as a place that offers  
protection to people fleeing conflict and persecution where  
can rebuild their lives in safety: something we can all be  
proud of.

Further information Scottish Refugee Council  
[www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk)

*The work of community, love, reconciliation, restoration is the work we cannot leave up to politicians.  
This is the work we are all called to do. Shane Claiborne*

*All politicians should have 3 hats - one to throw into the ring, one to talk through, and one to pull  
rabbits out of if elected. Carl Sandburg*

# 'MY KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD'

*At the recent meeting of General Secretaries of European J&P Commissions, Tim Duffy gave the following talk*

Justice and Peace Scotland was formed in 1979, shortly after the accession of Pope John Paul II; and the accession of Margaret Thatcher as UK Prime Minister. From the moment she arrived on the steps of Downing Street, quoting the 'prayer of St Francis', she served as a role model - in reverse. Every policy, whether of work or unemployment, defence and nuclear weapons, increasing inequality and poverty, foreign relations with unsavoury regimes like South Africa, as well as a disregard for the effects of these policies on people, gave Justice and Peace an agenda of opposition. Mrs Thatcher was someone who thought that the Good Samaritan could only be compassionate because he could afford the cost of a place at the inn.

Over the years the issues changed but the root problems remained the same. These can usefully be understood under the terms hegemony or domination. I mean the attempt, not only to assert dominance for a particular economic, political or cultural ideology; but the attempts to get those who are subject to the domination to collaborate by accepting it. The resulting worldview is seen as natural, normative and beneficial for everyone, rather than as artificial social constructs that benefit only the ruling class.

Undeniably, Scotland and each of the countries here can point to their own culture (or more probably cultures) which form the basis of our personal and social interactions. Yet even those designations of 'country' or 'nation' are social constructs which are themselves the current balance and historical residue of dominant hegemonies.

These days, 'nationalism' tends to be a bad word, with no shortage of historical examples (remember the origins of the word 'nazi'). Yet we need to be careful to discriminate a valid and fruitful cultural nationalism from the dominating nationalism of hegemonic superiority. Here is the psychoanalyst of culture, Erich Fromm, in his book *The Sane Society*:

*Nationalism is our form of incest, is our idolatry, is our insanity. 'Patriotism' is its cult. It should hardly be necessary to say, that by 'patriotism' I mean that attitude which puts the own nation above humanity, above the principles of truth and justice; not the loving interest in one's own nation, which is the concern with the nation's spiritual as much as with its material welfare - never with its power over other nations. Just as love for one individual which excludes the love for others is not love, love for one's country which is not part of one's love for humanity is not love, but idolatrous worship.*

This parallels a similar sentiment in the

*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church:*

*Despite the widespread aspiration to build an authentic international community, the unity of the human family is not yet becoming a reality. This is due to obstacles originating in materialistic and nationalistic ideologies that contradict the values of the person integrally considered in all his various dimensions, material and spiritual, individual and community. In particular, any theory or form whatsoever of racism and racial discrimination is morally unacceptable. The coexistence among nations is based on the same values that should guide relations among human beings: truth, justice, active solidarity and freedom (C, 433)*

Political nationalism, however, is only one form of an ideology of domination. These days, the economic transnationalism of finance and banking is far more powerful and influential than many countries. It brings with it a cultural transnationalism of the Coca Cola and Macdonalds variety as does the influence of all forms of media. These elements work together to coordinate the pursuit of status, wealth and power regardless of human cost. The response of Justice and Peace Scotland has been to emphasise and encourage initiatives for Fair Trade as part of a spiritual examination of our own lifestyle.

The mid nineteenth century philosopher Thomas Carlyle, when asked the population of England replied: 'Thirty million people, mostly fools'. Not perhaps the most charitable response, but I am reminded that for the classical Athenians, an 'idiot' was someone who only cared about his own interests (idios) and had no interest in the common good. The political involvement of Justice and Peace is not based on party loyalties or policies. Yet the gospel stricture on serving two masters (Luke 16:13) seems to be about establishing priorities. The balance was pointed out by Archbishop Romero:

*In whichever political system or situation the church should not identify itself with any specific political option. Rather, it supports whatever there is that is just in it, while it is, at the same time, always ready to denounce what is unjust in it. It will not cease being the voice of the voiceless as long as there are people who are oppressed, who are marginalised from participation in the creation and the benefits of the development of the country.*

Recently, following the initiative of the European network, Justice and Peace

Scotland has engaged in dialogue with government and others on the issue of youth unemployment, in the overall context of the campaign for a Living Wage, as well as involvement in local Economic Forums.

In the approach to the political referendum last year, we examined the issues in the light of Catholic Social Teaching on self determination and proper subsidiarity. We are also involved in looking at the issue of non violence and the pursuit of peace in a country wedded to militarism and nuclear deterrence.

Socially and culturally we are concerned with the idolatry of cultural values which are made absolute, to the detriment of human dignity, excluding those who do not fit. This has long been a focus of our work, particularly with regard to the meaning of welfare in our society; our particular work with refugees and asylum seekers and their families; as well as recent work on human trafficking.

At the centre of our work is the tradition of Catholic Social Teaching and the effort to make it more available and accessible. It is no use having a tradition of teaching, however, if there are no students and practitioners. Rather than teaching it might be useful to see the tradition as formation in its full sense. Thomas Merton, the American Trappist monk whose centenary we celebrate this year, pointed out the difference, in a world of shifting fashions, between tradition and mere convention.

*Tradition, which is always old, is at the same time ever new because it is always reviving - born again in each new generation, to be lived and applied in a new and particular way. Convention is simply the ossification of social customs. The activities of conventional people are merely excuses for NOT acting in a more integrally human way. Tradition nourishes the life of the spirit; convention merely disguises its interior decay. (No Man Is an Island)*

We live at the mercy of a God of Surprises who says: 'My thoughts and my ways are not like yours.' (Isaiah 55:8-9). Under this dispensation, 'the nation and kingdom that will not serve you shall perish; those nations shall be utterly laid waste' (Isaiah 60:12). As Christians, we know that our Kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36). And yet we must make our way in a world which needs to find the means of coexistence.

*'It is time to devise a means for building consensus and agreement while seeking the goal of a just, responsive and inclusive society. The principal author, the historic subject of this process, is the people as a*



*whole and their culture, and not a single class, minority, group or elite. We do not need plans drawn up by a few for the few, or an enlightened or outspoken minority which claims to speak for everyone. It is about agreeing to live together, a social and cultural pact' (Evangelii Gaudium, n 239).*

Ultimately, we believe that we are held up by the unconditional love of God. In this sense, as the Beatitudes tell us, we are blessed not in the world's terms of status, wealth and power; but rather in their absence, when we are persecuted for the sake of justice and righteousness. For then the Kingdom of heaven is ours.

And since you are our guests in Scotland, I hope you do not mind that I end with a few lines from one of our great (and paradoxically atheist) poets - Hugh MacDiarmid

*'He canna Scotland see wha yet  
Canna see the Infinite,  
And Scotland in true scale to it.'*

## Meeting of General Secretaries of European Conference of J & P Commissions in Glasgow 27 February – 1 March 2015

**Grace Buckley, who was instrumental in organising this meeting in Scotland, gives her report of the event**

**T**he Scottish National Justice and Peace Commission hosted the meeting this year in Glasgow. The Archdiocese of Glasgow generously offered the use of the Eyre Hall for the meetings. A total of 16 Commissions in addition to our own were represented: Austria, Belgium (Flemish speaking), Czech Republic, England & Wales, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland and Slovenia. Unfortunately the Bishop President, Archbishop Hollerich of Luxembourg and the Vice-President Ingeborg Gabriel were unable to attend as both were taken unwell.

The Executive Committee (Exco) of J&P Europe arrived on the Thursday evening and were given Scottish hospitality at St. Leo the Great parish, courtesy of parish priest Mgr Gerry Fitzpatrick. The following evening, the meeting began with representatives being greeted at the Diocesan offices by a piper as they arrived, and then welcomed by Mgr Paul Conroy on behalf of the Archdiocese and Ellen Charlton on behalf of the Scottish commission.

### **President's and General Secretaries Reports:**

In the absence of the President and Vice-President, Cecilia Taylor-Camarra chaired the sessions. The meeting opened with a report from the President, presented by Stefan Lunte, the Secretary General. Issues covered included: a concern to reconnect with some of the member Commissions who have not been active in recent years (only 20-23 Commissions out of 30 are regularly active in the Conference); major concerns about issues of justice such as taxation, access to education, and major threats to peace in Europe such as conflicts between cultures.

As many will have already read, part of the reform proposals under consideration for the Roman Curia include a proposal to form two congregations, one of which would bring together the two existing agencies for Charity and Justice & Peace. It is unclear at this point what format this new congregation will take and what impact it will have on the national Justice & Peace organisations. More information is awaited.

### **Round Table Discussion on Nationalism and Increasing Populism:**

On Saturday afternoon there was a relaxed round table discussion on the theme of the Concerted Action for this year. Tim Duffy, our Research Officer, led off with a very thoughtful and well-received presentation on the acceptable and unacceptable faces of nationalism and political/cultural hegemony, set in the context of J&P Scotland's work.

Linda Fabiani MSP then followed this with a lively view of Scottish nationalism, beginning with some of Scotland's history, and making the point that, for her, nationalism was about self-determination for a country, and devolution in Scotland has been a process not an event.

Gary Christie of the Scottish Refugee Council gave another point of view on the issues. He acknowledged that Scotland is slightly more positive about migration, which might be explained by the facts that there is a lower percentage of the population from ethnic minorities than is the case in England, and Scotland's population has been reducing unlike the situation south of the border. He suggested it is easier for migrants to take on a Scottish identity. The Scottish government pushes for integration but Gary made the point that issues need to be tackled at local level as well, and migrants must not be treated simply as units of labour.

In the general discussion which followed, the position of UKIP in Scotland was raised as was the situation of right wing groups using particular issues for political gain. There was a slightly amusing moment when one of the visitors challenged the sense of pursuing self-determination in what everyone accepted was an increasingly globalised and interdependent world. Linda responded to this point by saying on that logic why have any countries!

The Saturday programme ended with dinner at the Piper's Tryst, hosted by the Scottish Commission, which seemed to go very well, particularly for those who discovered the range of whiskies on offer at the bar. Several Commission members

**Bishop Peter with European J&P delegates**



attended and were able to enjoy discussion and exchange with their European colleagues. The staff were also very helpful and took our guests for a quick view round the museum, even although this was not part of their remit.

**Concerted Action 2015 and 2016:** A major part of the work of the General Secretaries meeting is to discuss subjects for the following year's Concerted Action. The purpose of the Concerted Action is to remind us that, despite the differences in our countries and our work, there are areas of concern that we share as J & P Commissions.

After discussions in small groups, we came back together to report on what we felt would be appropriate topics. A total of 15 subjects were put forward and Nicola Brady from the Irish Commission did her usual brilliant job of pulling together similar topics under a reduced number of headings for voting on. Unlike last year, when votes were split between two topics and further work was required to try to produce a single action, the clear majority were in favour of a concerted action on social cohesion and growing social inequalities. A working group will take this topic and produce a draft document for the General Assembly in Copenhagen.

On Sunday morning, Bishop Peter celebrated a concluding mass and spoke to the gathered Commissions on the work of the Scottish Commission and the situation in Scotland. Among the issues the Commission is involved in, he highlighted poverty, nuclear weapons in the form of Trident, immigration and detention, particularly of asylum seekers; and of course, the recent referendum.

The guests went home after a weekend of serious discussion and not so serious hospitality, which judging by emails of thanks, was thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated.

*In the democratic system, political authority is accountable to the people. Representative bodies must be subjected to effective social control. This control can be carried out above all in free elections which allow the selection and change of representatives. [This] is a constitutive element of democratic representation. Compendium, n408*



# POPE FRANCIS AND THE DEATH PENALTY

**Here is a translation of the letter that Pope Francis handed to the President of the International Commission Against the Death Penalty, Federico Mayor, in the course of an audience with the commission at the Vatican on 20 March 2015**

Mr. President:

With these letters, I wish to have my greeting reach all the members of the International Commission against the Death Penalty, to the group of countries that support it, and to those who collaborate with the organism over which you preside. I wish, in addition, to express my personal gratitude, and also that of men of good will, for your commitment to a world free of the death penalty and for your contribution to the establishment of a universal moratorium of executions worldwide, with a view to abolition of capital punishment.

The Magisterium of the Church, beginning with sacred scripture and the centuries-old experience of the People of God, defends life from conception until natural death, and supports full human dignity in as much as we are created in the image of God (*Gen* 1:26). Human life is sacred because from its beginning, from the first instant of conception, it is fruit of the creative action of God (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 2258), and from that moment, man, the only creature God loves for itself, is the object of personal love on the part of God (*Gaudium et spes*, 24).

States can kill by action when they apply the death penalty, when they take their peoples to war or when they carry out extra-judicial or summary executions. They can also kill by omission, when they do not guarantee to their peoples access to the essential means for life. 'Just as the Commandment do not kill puts a clear limit to ensure the value of human life, today we have to say no to an economy of exclusion and inequality' (*Evangelii gaudium*, 53).

Life, especially human life, belongs to God alone. Not even the murderer loses his personal dignity and God himself makes himself its guarantor. As Saint Ambrose teaches, God did not want to punish Cain for the murder, as He wants the repentance of the sinner, not his death (*Evangelium vitae*, 9).

On some occasions it is necessary to repel proportionally an aggression underway to avoid an aggressor causing harm, and the necessity to neutralise him might entail his elimination: it is the case of legitimate defence (*Evangelium vitae*, 55). However, the assumptions of legitimate personal defence are not applicable to the social milieu, without risk of distortion. Because when the death penalty is applied, persons are killed not for present aggressions, but for harm caused in the past. Moreover, it is applied to persons whose capacity to harm is not present but has already been neutralised, and who find themselves deprived of their freedom.

Today the death penalty is inadmissible, no matter how serious the crime of the condemned. It is an offence against the inviolability of life and the dignity of the human person that contradicts God's plan for man and society and His merciful justice, and it impedes fulfilling the just end of the punishments. It does no do justice to the victims, but foments vengeance.

For a State of Law, the death penalty represents a failure, because it obliges it to kill in the name of justice. Dostoevsky wrote: 'To kill one who killed is an incomparably greater punishment than the crime itself. Killing in virtue of a sentence is far worse than the killing committed by a criminal.' Justice will never be reached by killing a human being.

The death penalty loses all legitimacy given the defective selectivity of the criminal system and in face of the possibility of judicial error. Human justice is imperfect, and not to recognize its fallibility can turn it into a source of injustices. With the application of capital punishment the condemned is denied the possibility of reparation or amendment of the harm caused; the possibility of

confession, by which man expresses his interior conversion; and contrition, gateway of repentance and of expiation, to come to the encounter of the merciful and healing love of God.

Moreover, capital punishment is a frequent recourse used by some totalitarian regimes and fanatical groups, for the extermination of political dissidents, of minorities, and of any individual labelled 'dangerous' or who can be perceived as a threat to one's power or to carry out one's ends. As in the first centuries, today also the Church suffers the application of this punishment to her new martyrs.

The death penalty is contrary to the meaning of *humanitas* and to divine mercy, which should be the model for men's justice. It implies cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment as is also the prior anguish to the moment of execution and the terrible waiting between the dictating of the sentence and the application of the punishment, it usually lasts many years, and, in the waiting-room of death, not rarely leads to sickness and madness.

In some places there are debates about the way to kill, as if there were a way to 'do it well'. In the course of history, different mechanisms of death have been defended to reduce the suffering and agony of the condemned. However, there is no humane way of killing another person.

At present, not only are there means to repress crime effectively, without depriving definitively the possibility of the one who has committed it from redeeming himself (*Evangelium vitae*, 27), but a greater moral sensibility has been developed in relation to the value of human life, causing increasing aversion to the death penalty and the support of public opinion to the different dispositions that tend to its abolition or the postponement of its application (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, n. 405).

On the other hand, the punishment of life imprisonment, as well as those that because of their duration entail the possibility for the one punished to plan a future in freedom, can be considered veiled death penalties, because with them the culprit is not deprived of freedom but there is an attempt to deprive him of hope. However, although the criminal system can take away time from the culprits, it can never take away their hope.

As I expressed in my allocution of last October 23, 'the death penalty implies the denial of love to enemies, preached in the Gospel. All Christians and all people of good will are obliged not only to fight for the abolition of the death penalty, legal or illegal, and in all its forms, but also for prison conditions to be better, in respect of the human dignity of the persons deprived of freedom.'

Dear friends, I encourage you to continue with the work you do, as the world needs witnesses of the mercy and tenderness of God. I take my leave entrusting you to the Lord Jesus, who in the days of his earthly life did not want his persecutors to be wounded in his defence – 'Put your sword back into its place' (*Matthew* 26:52); he was arrested and condemned to death unjustly, and He identified himself with all prisoners, culpable or not: 'I was in prison and you came to me' (*Matthew* 25:36). May He, who before the adulterous woman did not question her culpability, but invited her accusers to examine their own consciences before stoning her (*John* 8:1-11), grant you the gift of wisdom, so that the actions you undertake in favour of abolition of this cruel punishment, are right and fruitful.

I beg you to pray for me.

Cordially,

Vatican, March 20, 2015

FRANCIS



# You yourselves were once foreigners

**The ever increasing complexity of Immigration law is an obstacle to the humane treatment of refugees and asylum seekers... and ultimately of us all**

**F**or many years, Justice and Peace has campaigned with others for a more humane approach to issues of immigration, particularly the difficulties faced by refugees and asylum seekers. There is a series of problems of course. Those seeking refuge are a sad problem in their homeland but an imposition and a nuisance at the bottom of our priorities when they arrive on our doorstep. They almost inevitably end up competing with others at the poorer end in society. The irony is that they often find far more compassion and fellow feeling there than from those who do not know them; but who are happy to profit from their cheap labour and willingness to do dirty jobs.

Immigrants of all types are an easy target for political parties looking for scapegoats. One of the interesting aspects of recent government legislation is the way in which innumerable refinements have been aimed at tightening control by trying to subsume so many ordinary matters of immigration under the extraordinary headings of those seeking refuge or asylum. The simple fact is that the country would not function without immigrant labour. To portray all immigration as a threat is as stupid as to operate an open borders policy, because it exercises neither differentiation nor discretion. To use the law to stigmatise people for party gain is reprehensible. It has been well said that there is no crueller tyranny than that which is perpetuated under the shield of law and in the name of justice.

When publishing a landmark report on overhauling the civil justice system in the United Kingdom, Lord Woolf stated that 'in order to ensure access to justice' the system should, amongst other things, 'be understandable to those who use it'. There has been growing concern that the manner and speed in which Immigration law has been changed has put it beyond the comprehension of many of those who are governed by it; not just applicants who must comply with it but members of the judiciary who are adjudicating upon it.

In December 2012 Lord Lester of Herne Hill, himself a Barrister sitting in the House of Lords said: 'My wife is an immigration and asylum judge and... she and her colleagues... find themselves in a quite terrible situation in trying to understand the Kafkaesque material that flows out of the Home Office'. He described the law governing immigration as 'a network of regulations that it is quite impossible for ordinary men and women, including Members of this House, to understand'. Lord Taylor acknowledged in response that 'no area is more complex than the whole business of the Immigration Rules and the procedures surrounding them'.

Parliamentary criticism has been echoed by the judiciary; the judge stated that the 'provisions have now achieved a degree of complexity which even the Byzantine Emperors would have envied'. In another recent case the judge explained that there was a problem with the complexity of the rules, and they were not readily 'understandable by ordinary lawyers and other advisers'.

Unfortunately, this criticism appears to have fallen on deaf ears. The most recent Statement of Changes released on 26 February 2015 stretches to 243 pages. The President of the

Immigration Law Practitioners' Association, Alison Harvey, stated that an Amendment to the Immigration Act 2014, which was released on the same date 'could not have been more confusingly drafted'. Despite calls from all quarters to consolidate and simplify the legislation, the Secretary of State appears intent on making the regime of immigration control increasingly inaccessible to those using or reforming it.

Nevertheless, around a quarter of asylum decisions are reversed on appeal, with an even higher proportion being reversed for particular countries. The Scottish Refugee Council has noted that high success rates in asylum appeals point to poor decision making at an early stage. It is also likely that, the more complex the law, the more grounds for challenging it can be found. The end product, as with much taxation law, is to promote a culture of finding loopholes which government then scrabbles to fill, meanwhile leaving applicants stranded without any status or security, or tempted to simply 'disappear'.

There is such a thing as petty bureaucracy. It is an attempt to shore up the insecurity of those who are charged with administering by treating others through ideology as inferiors. It is in some ways worse than, say, straight racism because it is informed by a modicum of intelligence, or perhaps cunning. Human distress and suffering can be disregarded as the necessary means to an ideological end. Worse the distress of others can be celebrated by the self-righteous, whose solutions are usually based on a lack of any experience of the problems they are so ready to criticise.

It has been said that the true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members. Theologically we can see this as God's particular concern, expressed in the preferential option for the poor. It doesn't win votes in a world where financial bribes and scapegoating are the primary political strategies. Yet in some sense we are all refugees and asylum seekers on the face of the earth. It is therefore worth considering that most basic and universal of moral principles, the Golden Rule, which asks us to treat others as we ourselves would wish to be treated.



*If God had wanted us to vote He would have given us candidates. Jay Leno*

*The church praises and esteems those who devote themselves to the public good and who take upon themselves the burdens of public office in order to be of service. Gaudium et Spes, n75*

*This report on the demonstration in Glasgow comes from Elizabeth Rimmer*

The 'Bairns Not Bombs' march and rally in George Square on 3 April was organised by the Scrap Trident Alliance, and people attending came from disparate groups across the Scottish civic society – Scottish Greens, CND, the Justice and Peace Commission, Scottish Clergy, Quakers, Civil Servants and workers in the NHS. Marchers left George Square, headed by the samba drummers SheBoom, and walked through the city centre. By the time the Justice and Peace group left the Square, we couldn't hear the drums because we were so far behind, and behind us more and more people kept on coming - young and old, families, individuals and one teddy bear, bearing the banner 'Bears not Bombs'.

There were speeches from Patrick Harvie, Labour's Katy Clark MP, Cat Boyd from the Radical Independence Campaign and Nicola Sturgeon, who pledged to make Trident a 'red line issue' in the event of negotiations with Westminster parties after the election. Nuala Watt



of Human Beings on Benefits spoke forcefully about the human cost of spending money on weapons rather than welfare, and there were songs from Karine Polwart and Penny Stone.

As usual, mainstream media coverage was minimal and inadequate, but at a time when more than 50% of prospective parliamentary candidates describe themselves as being opposed to Trident, it was good to see such a well-supported and articulated protest. Numbers attending ranged between 2,500 (official police estimate) and 8,000 (Socialist Workers). *The National* gave the number as 4,000, an estimate confirmed on the Scrap Trident Alliance website.

## Dungavel

*Margaret Donnelly, the long time link of Justice and Peace with those detained in Dungavel gives a report of a recent vigil*

On Sunday 22 March, Justice and Peace members, along with people from other groups including Friends of Refugees Ayrshire gathered in the car park outside Dungavel Removal Centre to show how we feel about refugees being locked up in what is a prison in all but name.

We usually gather on Mothering Sunday. But this year the date was changed in the hope that if the Gathering got some publicity at the Stand up to Racism and Fascism demonstration in Glasgow the day before, more people would be given the opportunity to hear about it.

We were joined as usual by our faithful friends and supporters, Linda Fabiani MSP and Aileen Campbell MSP. After a short period of silence to remember those in detention centres, several people spoke of the shame they feel that in our country which in the past welcomed people from around the world now seems to be alone in Europe in keeping people in custody - sometimes for more than a year. One speaker suggested perhaps we need to explore ways of expressing our anger and disgust that this continues to be done in our name.

We hope and pray that this affront to human dignity and this blight on our country comes to an end soon.



Anti Racist Rally, Glasgow (March 14)



*A politician is the devil's quilted anvil; He fashions all sins on him, and the blows are never heard.*  
John Webster

*The mistake a lot of politicians make is in forgetting they've been appointed and thinking they've been anointed.* Claude Pepper



# New Fairtrade sports balls

## organisation champions workers in Pakistan

**Angus Coull, the Joint Managing Director of Bala Sport, describes a new Fairtrade venture**

**T**he UK market for Fairtrade certified products is worth an impressive £1.7bn a year. Fairtrade food products like chocolate, coffee, bananas and sugar are now very much in the mainstream lining our supermarket shelves. This is great for ethical consumers, and great for the producers – long may it continue. The benefits from the Fairtrade Premium (paid on top of the fair price to farmers and workers) are impressive. This extra cash sum is used for schemes like clean water, free education and healthcare, the promotion of woman's rights, low interest loans, assistance with repairs to homes etc. The decisions on what to invest the Premium in are made democratically by 'joint bodies' empowering farmers and workers to provide a better future for their families and communities as well as themselves.

One in three bananas and 40% of bagged sugar sold in the UK is Fairtrade yet less than a quarter of 1% of sports balls sold here carry the Fairtrade Mark. Bala Sport, a new Glasgow based co-operative style organisation was set up to increase that number significantly in order to allow a better life for more and more factory workers and hand-stitchers in Sialkot, Pakistan.

Around 70% of the world's hand-stitched sports balls are currently made in Sialkot and hand stitching is still very much favoured in championship footballs. All the big name brands are there; Adidas, Nike, Puma, Mitre, Umbro etc, and some of those are made in the Fairtrade certified factories. There are currently only six sports balls factories in the world with Fairtrade certification – all are in Sialkot, Bala balls are made in two of them.

In order to make a significant impact on the market Fairtrade balls have to be good. To that effect all three balls in the Bala football range are made to the same specifications as FIFA Approved (the highest standards in football production), FIFA Inspected or International Matchball Standard (IMS). The top of the range Bala Pro ball for instance is tested to the FIFA Approved standard involving the ball being fired at a steel plate at 50 km/h, 2,000 times to check durability.

The Bala Pro match ball has 32 panels and requires 690 stitches carefully sewn by hand, taking around 3 hours for one person to complete. It's painstaking work and up until the mid 1990s child labour was widely used in this part of the production process, causing serious health issues with eyesight and back problems. This exploitation has long since been stamped out and Fairtrade certification ensures no child labour has been used and that conditions in the factories and stitching centres are safe and workers are paid fairly for their efforts.

However as recently as 2012 the Sydney Morning Herald uncovered cases of child labour in factories in India making promotional balls for the Australian Football League by two major sports equipment brands. The brands were unaware of the child labour issue and quickly acted to address it. The Fairtrade system includes regular audits and inspections of factories to make sure this never happens.

Bala Sport joint Managing Directors, Annie Howie and Angus

Coull visited 4 of the six Fairtrade factories and one non-Fairtrade factory in Sialkot. They found plenty of fire escapes, ventilation, face masks being used etc, whilst in the non Fairtrade factory much of the work including the laminating process was being done in a basement with the only ventilation coming from a hole in the concrete floor in the area above and some standard floor standing cooling fans as ventilation.

Workers in the Fairtrade factories and stitching centres can benefit from benefits like free eye tests and treatment; they can buy essential foods and other household items at cost price in Fair price shops and take free transport too and from work, avoiding very long walks between their homes and the factory. One of the most impressive examples of how the extra 10% Fairtrade premium paid by Bala is spent however comes from the water purification plants built by some of the factories.

These are not only for the benefit of employees, but anyone in the area can turn up and fill up containers of clean, safe drinking water – so whole communities can benefit.

Currently less than 8% of the output from the factories is under Fairtrade terms, so they have the capacity to produce hundreds of thousands more Fairtrade balls a year – we just need to start buying them.

In order to help achieve this goal Bala Sport which was established with the aid of a near £20,000 grant from the Co-operative Glasgow Business Development Fund run by the City Council launched its Community Share Offer during Fairtrade Fortnight in February this year. The community benefit society needs to raise £150,000 to ensure constant orders with the factories and increasing demand from Fairtrade supporters and other ethically minded consumers.

The Community Share Offer campaign is supported by Community Shares Scotland and Supporters Direct Scotland. The launch took place at Scotland's national stadium, Hampden Park. Scottish professional freestyle footballer, David Mennie was on hand along with kids from the nearby Mount Florida Primary School to kick off the event. Potential investors watched a special video message in support of Fairtrade sports balls from the Scottish Government's Minister for International Development, Humza Yousaf.

Bala has had some keen interest and orders from schools throughout the UK as well as some interest from the community and trust wings of some football clubs. Later this year they will take delivery of the first order of Bala Fairtrade rugby and futsal (indoor soccer) balls. Expansion will continue next year with the introduction of volleyballs and netballs.

Anyone (over age 11) can become a member of the Bala Sport community benefit society with a minimum investment of just £50 (up to a maximum of £25,000). It's a one member, one vote system so offers a real chance to be involved in the running of an organization that can level the playing field and bring about major change in the lives of thousands of workers in Pakistan.

Check out [www.balasport.co.uk](http://www.balasport.co.uk) for details of the organisation and the community share offer and follow them on twitter and Facebook.



*So that all citizens will be able to play their part in political affairs, civil and political education is vitally necessary for the population as a whole and for young people in particular, and must be diligently attended to. Gaudium et Spes, n75*

*Bad politicians are sent to Westminster by good people who don't vote.*



# NEWSBRIEF

**Facebook and Twitter:** We have been on Facebook and Twitter for about 6 months, and at the time of writing we have 199 likes on Facebook so only need 1 more person to like our page to take us to the next landmark. We have 139 followers on Twitter. Be the first to get the breaking J&P news - join us on both via our website.

**Magazine Subscription:** Many thanks to all who paid their magazine subscription so promptly, and all those who pay by standing order. If you have still to pay your subscription, a gentle reminder to please do so as soon as possible and help us keep our costs down.

## **Stop Climate Chaos - Mass lobby of Westminster - 17th June 2015:**

Speak up for the climate: On 17th June, thousands of people will head to Westminster to ensure our new Government and all MPs hear loud and clear that we are speaking up on climate change. It looks set to be an amazing day: fun, inspiring and impactful. Including ecumenical services, art installations and mass rally and, of course, the all important lobby. It would be great to get a really good show of people from across Scotland (especially J&P folks) at the event to tell their new MP why climate change matters to them. If you are interested in attending, contact Frances at SCIAF, [frayner@sciaf.org.uk](mailto:frayner@sciaf.org.uk) 0141 354 5555.

**Poverty, truth and dreams:** Younger adults, under 30, in Scotland are the group hardest hit by the experience of poverty. Research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) found that one in four of those under the age of 30 is at risk of financial hardship. Their report said the poverty affecting young adults contrasts with an improving picture for other age groups. The Poverty Truth Commission has been working with JRF and the New Policy Institute as they have been writing the report. Georgina, one of the PTC's young commissioners, spoke at the launch of the report in Edinburgh on behalf of the PTC, telling her story, entitled Poverty, Truth and Dreams. Georgina - 'It's hard for young people. There's so much pressure.....You feel ashamed.... A lot of young people have been hurt and let down so much in their lives already. People need to open their eyes and stop seeing us as statistics, but as actual people - then they might understand what life is like. My dream for a long time has been to get to university...I never thought at one time my dream would come true

- but it is thanks to the people in my life who believed in me and supported me against all the stigma.' (Priority Areas)

**International Day of Sport for Development and Peace:** In 2013, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 6 April as the International Day of Sports and Physical Activity, to celebrate the contribution of sports and physical activity to education, human development, healthy lifestyles and a peaceful world. The 2nd International Day of Sport for Development and Peace was celebrated on 6 April 2015. The choice of the date of 6 April can be explained by the fact that, in 2002, at its 55th session, the Assembly of the World Health Organization urged Member States to celebrate a 'Move for Health Day' each year to promote physical activity as essential for health and well-being. The date 6 April has been used since the year 2003 by some civil society organisations for celebrating a World Day for Physical Activity.



## **World Day Against Child Labour - 12 June:**

The most recent global estimates suggest some 120 million children between the ages of 5 and 14 are involved in child labour, with boys and girls in this age group almost equally affected. This persistence of child labour is rooted in poverty and lack of decent work for adults, lack of social protection, and a failure to ensure that all children are attending school through to the legal minimum age for admission to employment. The World Day Against Child Labour this year will focus particularly on the importance of quality education as a key step in tackling child labour. It is very timely to do so, as in 2015 the international community will be reviewing reasons for the failure to reach development targets on education and will be setting new goals and strategies.

## **Bishop 'appalled' at UKIP plan to exclude immigrant children from schools:**

Bishop Pat Lynch, chair of the English and Welsh Bishops' Conference office for migration, has expressed his grave concern at UKIP's policy to exclude immigrant children from UK state schools for their first five years of living here. A statement on the UKIP website says that immigrants and their dependants would need private education for five years after entering the UK. Questioned on this, UKIP leader Nigel Farage said it was a difficult issue but his personal view was that immigrants should not even be allowed to bring their children here, for a period of time. Once they were here, they should not be allowed to attend state schools for five years, he said. Bishop Pat Lynch commented: 'The UK has a long, proud and humane tradition of responding to the needs of immigrants' children. It is proven that education is a key element in integrating diverse communities. I recognise that in some places there are strains on resource but as a society we need to respond to this need rather than scapegoating any one group. I am appalled by any suggestion of discriminating against immigrants.' (Independent Catholic News)

## **Foreign Secretary refuses to request death-row Briton's release:**

Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond is refusing to request the release of a British citizen who was kidnapped and rendered to Ethiopia over nine months ago, it has emerged. Andargachew 'Andy' Tsege, a father of three from London, has been held at a secret location in Ethiopia since he was abducted in June 2014 while in transit at Sanaa airport, Yemen. A prominent critic of human rights abuses in Ethiopia, Mr Tsege faces a death sentence imposed in absentia in 2009. [www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/20745](http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/20745)

## **New target for Scottish Living Wage Accreditation:**

The Poverty Alliance, which operates the Scottish Living Wage Accreditation Initiative, has set a new target of 500 accredited Living Wage employers by the end of the next financial year. The new target was announced by the First Minister of Scotland, Nicola Sturgeon, on 28 March. The initiative, which is funded by the Scottish Government, recently celebrated the 150th accredited employer in Scotland. This was the original target set for the initiative and it was reached much earlier than anticipated due to a great enthusiasm from employers across Scotland. For more information contact, [carla.mccormack@povertyalliance.org](mailto:carla.mccormack@povertyalliance.org)

*An authentic democracy is not merely the result of a formal observation of a set of rules but is the fruit of a convinced acceptance of the values that inspire democratic procedures: the dignity of every human person, the respect of human rights, commitment to the common good as the purpose and guiding criterion for political life. If there is no general consensus on these values, the deepest meaning of democracy is lost and its stability is compromised. Compendium, n.407*





# A Word that is born of our tears

***Glyzelle Palomar was a street child on the streets of Manila. The 12 year old girl was on a stage during the papal visit to the Philippines in front of tens of thousands of people, asking Pope Francis why God lets children suffer. Pope Francis laid aside his prepared text and answered directly through his interpreter.***

**D**uring my visit to the Philippines, I wanted in a particular way to meet with young people, to listen to you and to talk with you. I want to express the love and the hopes of the Church for you. And I want to encourage you, as Christian citizens of this country, to offer yourselves passionately and honestly to the great work of renewing your society and helping to build a better world.

There's only a very small representation of girls among you. Too little. Women have much to tell us in today's society. Sometimes we are too 'macho' and we don't allow enough space for women. But women can see things from a different angle to us, with a different eye. Women are able to pose questions we men are unable to understand. We have just seen this: Glyzelle is the only one who has put a question for which there is no answer. She couldn't put it into words but expressed it with tears. So when the next pope comes to Manila, please let there be more girls.

I thank you Glyzelle for talking about your experience so bravely. As I said, the heart of your question has no reply. Only when we too can cry about the things you said can we come close to answering that question... Why do children suffer? When the heart is able to ask itself and weep, then we can understand something.

There is a worldly compassion which is useless. You expressed something like this. It's a compassion that makes us put our hands in our pockets and give something to the poor. But if Christ had had that kind of compassion he would have greeted a couple of people, given them something, and walked on. But it was only when he was able to cry that he understood something of our lives. Dear young boys and girls, today's world doesn't know how to cry. The marginalised people, those left to one side, are crying. Those who are discarded are crying. But we don't understand much about these people in need. Certain realities of life we only see through eyes cleansed by our tears. I invite each one here to ask yourself: have I learned how to weep? Have I learned how to weep for the marginalised or for a street child who has a drug problem or for an abused child? ...

This is the first thing I want to say: let us learn how to weep as Glyzelle has shown us today and let us not forget this lesson. The great question of why so many children suffer, she did this in tears. The response that we can make today is: let us really learn how to weep.

In the Gospel, Jesus cried for his dead friend, he cried in his heart for the family who lost its child, for the poor widow who had to bury her son. He was moved to tears and compassion when he saw the crowds without a pastor. If you don't learn how to cry, you cannot be a good Christian. This is a challenge. When this question is put to us - why children suffer, why this or that tragedy occurs in life - our response must be either silence or a word that is born of our tears. Be courageous: don't be afraid to cry.



*Why do you see the speck that is in someone else's eye, but fail to notice the log that is in your own eye?*  
*Matthew 7:3*

*Don't forget to vote! Information on the election can be found on the J&P website.*



## APRIL

- 26 Bishop Gerardi murdered in Guatemala (1988)
- 26 Nuclear Plant accident Chernobyl, Ukraine (1986)
- 29 Day of Remembrance for all Victims of Chemical Warfare

## MAY

- 1 International Workers Day - St Joseph the Worker
- 3 World Press Freedom Day
- 16 World Debt Day
- 29 International Day of UN Peacekeepers

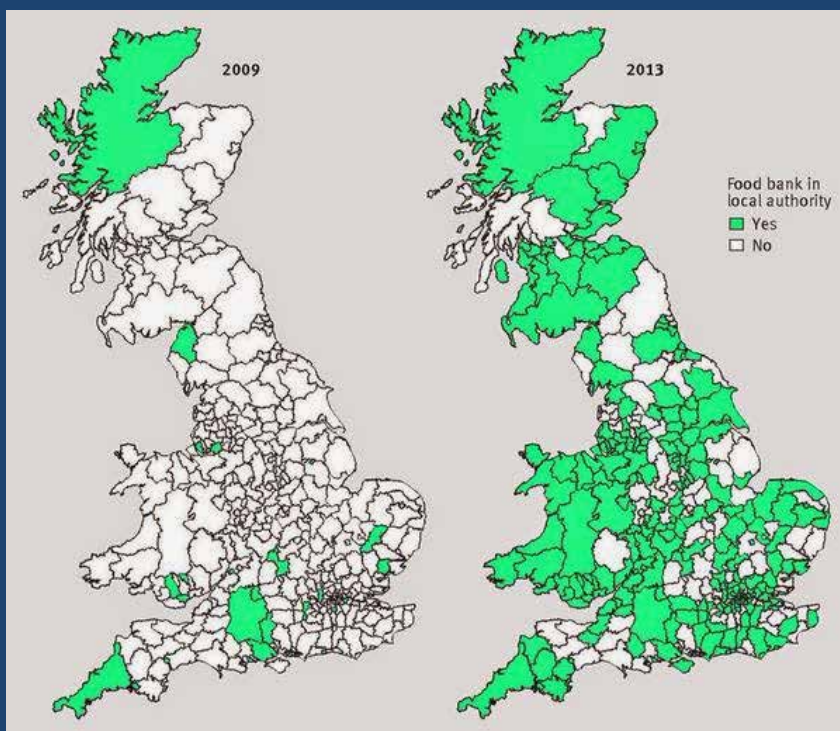
## JUNE

- 2 Nuclear Abolition Day
- 3-21 Refugee Festival Scotland
- 4 International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression
- 5 World Environment Day
- 12 World Day Against Child Labour
- 17 Climate Lobby - Westminster
- 20 UN World Refugee Day
- 26 International Day in support of Victims of Torture

## JULY

- 12 Apostleship of the Sea
- 16 First atomic bomb detonated in New Mexico
- 18 Nelson Mandela Day
- 30 World Day Against Trafficking in Persons

Full details and links on the events page of our website [www.justiceandpeacescotland.org.uk/EventsDiary.aspx](http://www.justiceandpeacescotland.org.uk/EventsDiary.aspx)



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