GLASGOW



WORKER



Another Commonwealth Is Possible

In just a few months, the Commonwealth Games are to be staged here in Glasgow. As well as being a lucrative business opportunity for some, the Games are intended to celebrate the values of the Commonwealth, namely democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

Yet my experiences often suggest that contrary values prevailed under the British Empire, which was reduced to the Commonwealth following decolonization. There is the opulent grandeur of the Merchant City, gorged on private wealth generated in the colonies and plantations. There are war memorials, carved stone belying carved-up territories and bloody military campaigns waged across Africa, the Middle East and the Indo-Pak subcontinent. When I lived in a Commonwealth nation, Guyana, several years ago, I saw first-hand the tense (continued on page 2)

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Bellgrove Hotel



Bellgrove Hotel, Glasgow's East End

Often at our soup kitchen on a Friday night we meet people who have stayed or are staying at the Bellgrove Hotel. A good and sensitive man told me one night that "the only way out of the Bellgrove Hotel is in a coffin". This particular soul had decided to sleep rough in winter rather than face the Bellgrove.

When I looked it up on the internet there seemed to be some humorous banter where the hotel had made it into Tripadvisor's top 100 UK hotels. A five star rating.

I was told by people who are concerned for homeless and addicted people that at least they get somewhere to live.

'The stinking pools of vomit and urine on the floor of the Bellgrove Hotel's windowless TV room didn't seem to bother anyone.'

Is this the bottom line for some, the leper colony Jesus invaded?

We pray that the owners Ron Barr and Kenneth Gray may have a change of heart and help change the lives of those in their care.

St John MacLean?

Dorothy Day the co-founder of the Catholic Worker was a member of the Communist Party of America in her youth, before her conversion to Catholicism. Later she was to write: "Our problems stem from our acceptance of this filthy, rotten system." Undoubtedly, while rejecting the militant atheism of her Communist past, she still accepted the cogency of the Marxist critique of unbridled Capitalism. A system that exalts the human capacity for greed as Supremum Bonum (the supreme good) is irrational, inhuman, and ultimately, self-destructive. This was true then, and it remains even truer today in



John Maclean

the age of globalisation and cyberpower. As the late Jimmy Reid - another ex-communist - said: "the ratrace is for rats".

Like Dorothy, John MacLean who was born in Pollokshaws Glasgow in 1879 ...

(continued on page 6)

Another Commonwealth Is Possible

By Thomas Younger

(Continued from page 1)

historical legacy of the mass uprooting of whole populations subsequently forced into slavery (Africans) or indentured labour (Indians) on what were said to be the most brutal of all the Empire's sugar plantations.

I reflect on all of this because it throws into relief the radically different vision of the Commonwealth that we, as followers of Jesus and Catholic Workers, are called to participate in. At the heart of who Jesus was, and what he called his followers to, was this dream of the *Basileia tou Theou;* in contemporary language, the Commonwealth of God.

Jesus' entire mission can be seen as a sign and realization of this new Commonwealth. The rich and powerful, who enjoy the prestige and recognition of society, find themselves last; the first to be embraced by this new Commonwealth are the poor, the marginalized, the religious outsiders and the oppressed, whom Jesus calls blessed. The Commonwealth of God explodes the logic of meritocracy and exclusivism, announcing a banquet to which all are invited. Jesus' Commonwealth is the promise of liberation from all that enslaves us, including the drive to dominate and separate ourselves from others; it is the salve which restores our sight, so that we can see ourselves for who we truly are: sisters and brothers, fully alive to one another in dignity and communion; fully open to the reality of God-with-us, the *Abba*-Mystery in

whom we live, move and have our being.

Jesus' parables suggest that the Commonwealth of God, unlike other commonwealths, is not forced upon us from above through coercion.



Instead, it grows from the ground up like a seed, or from within like yeast, often in darkness and obscurity. The Commonwealth grows as we learn that power is authentic not when it is held over others or used to stay in control but when it is yoked by love and turned to service.

We cannot say 'Yes' to the Commonwealth of God and remain the same. The veracity of Jesus' vision was met by the cross and death. But as Leonardo Boff writes, "The last word will not be that of death but of transfiguration of life in its fullness. This is a hope that has never disappeared, nor will it disappear from the earth." Since Iesus first proclaimed the Good News of the coming-near of God's Commonwealth, empires predicated on privilege, power and oppression have arisen and fallen. All the while, Jesus' upside-down dream for the world has continued to burn, at times building to a blaze. The beauty of Jesus' hope

for the world flamed out in the lives of Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin and many years later, we in Glasgow seek to live out and live ever in hope of this great Commonwealth of God.

"The time of waiting is over. The Commonwealth of God is approaching. Change your life. Believe in this good news." (Mk 1:15).



Support Us:

Non-perishable food donations welcome. We are particularly looking for tea, coffee, hot chocolate, sugar, fruit juice, tinned meat, black bags and anything else you have to spare. You can also set up a standing order to make a donation to us. Standing order form on page 8. Thanks

Join Us or Volunteer:

We meet regularly for reflection, discussion and to organise talks and demonstrations.

We normally meet at least every fortnight on a Tuesday at 6.15pm. Email us for more info.

Soup Kitchen Fridays 9-10pm Cadogan Street, Glasgow City Centre

Place of Welcome for Refugees: Saturdays 9am-1pm

Garnethill Multicultural Centre, 21 Rose Street Glasgow

Website:

www.catholicworker.org.uk

Email: glw@catholicworker.org.uk



Twitter: @CatholicWorkerG

Faceook: www.facebook.com/glasgowcatholicworker

Ay So There Yi Go

I'm invisible I walk your streets My lifes in ma bags awake or asleep. Nae hope,

nae dope,

nae soap

and nae wer tae go

and before you

know it yiv got a weeks growth

and a paper cup.

A never saw that com-

a always thought I'd

be something,

still there yi go, you

just never know wats

in store for you.

Its not easy for some

to adjust to the humdrum

the grudge runs

deep for that drugery

that seeps into the

minds on the street.

Don't let this broken

down machine keep

yi down, kill your dreams. Cause,

everybody is good

at something.

So if your down

so low with nowhere

to go and nobody

to take with you

Yi know you've got

issues your no makin up excuses.

Just startin wi the

truth and

tryin to get movin

Just tryin tae "get movin"

4 minute warning

This is just a nightmare
Soon I'm going to wake up
Someone's going to bring me
around
Running from the bombers
Hiding in the forest
Running through the field
Laying flat on the ground
Just like everybody
Stepping over heads
Running from the underground

This is your warning Four minute warning

I don't want to hear it
I don't want to know
I just want to run and hide
This is just a nightmare
Soon I'm going to wake up
Someone's going to bring me
around

This is a warning Four minute warning

Laurence D'Olier

adiohead

4 Minute -?



The four-minute warning was a public alert system conceived by the British Government during the Cold War and operated between 1953 and 1992. The name derived from the approximate length of time from the point at which a Soviet nuclear missile attack against the United Kingdom could be confirmed and

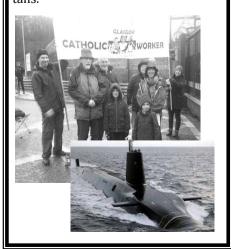
the impact of those missiles on their targets. The population was to be notified by means of air raid sirens, television and radio, and urged to seek cover immediately. In practice, the warning would have been more likely three minutes or less.



Solidarity In solidarity with Faslane Peace Camp who hold a vigil every Wednesday from 4pm to 5pm, in solidarity with SCANA who hold weekly vigils every Friday from 12:30 to 1:30pm outside the Savoy Centre in Glasgow and in solidarity with all people who seek an end to violence and nuclear weapons.

4 Minute Witness

Join us on the 1st Saturday of every month for our witness against nuclear weapons at Faslane Nuclear submarine base. Contact us for details.



3

This House Would Not Fight for Queen and Country

I met Ben Griffin at the Euro Catholic Worker Gathering last year where he gave a talk on his experience as a former SAS soldier. Later that year he took part in a debate at the Oxford Union, the motion being that 'This House Would Not Fight for Queen and Country.'
This is a transcript of what he said.

Fight for Queen and Country, what *does* that mean?

It is a jingoistic phrase dreamt up by some propaganda merchant intent on stoking the fire of that false religion patriotism.

The idea of fighting for Queen and Country is held tight by those who never have and never will actually fight. It is held by those who long to bask in the reflected glory of war. It is held by those who have no experience of the suffering that war inflicts. It is an idea held up by those who gain the most from war, Politicians, Generals, the Arms Industry and the Media. It is a phrase that is dredged up again and again to stifle dissent and build unquestioning support for the aggression that we choose to unleash.

We must look at what lies behind this decrepit phrase.

Who is it doing the fighting?

A well-trained and professional force thats highest collective desire is to go to war, any war.

This force does not fight for Queen and Country. It fights when it is told to fight. Even when the Generals believe that a certain war is illegal or un-winnable or even detrimental to the security of these isles, when it comes to the crunch they always want war.

What does the fighting involve?

Well if you believe the media or the citations written on medals awarded you might imagine that the fighting consists of bayonet charges, lone hand grenade assaults on enemy positions or modern-day spit-



Glasgow: A cross for every British soldier who has died in the war in Afghanistan on the 'Squinty' bridge.

fire pilots scrambling to some noble action.

In my experience the reality is a lot darker.

Long periods of waiting punctuated by unforeseen moments of extreme violence.

Having your legs blown off by an IED.

A supposed ally shooting holes in your chest.

We claim that our armed

forces fight for Freedom,

Democracy or Human

Rights. This is not the case.

We wage war according to

Policy.

Dying in a helicopter crash.

Burning to death in a transport plane.
Being beaten to death by an angry mob.

Being shot in the face as you break into someone's home.

The reality is setting up thousands of checkpoints in the country you have occupied, disrupting the lives of the people and then killing them when they approach too quickly or fail to stop in time.

The reality is raiding people's houses, using explosives to enter into their homes. Detaining previously unknown males some as young as 15 and handing them over to be tortured. Leaving their families to fend for themselves, traumatised by your action.

The reality is killing people from the safety of an attack helicopter or drone control room. As if you are playing a computer game, with no regard for the lives of people who have been dehumanised.

Haji, Raghead, Sand Nigger, Chogie, Argie, Paddy, Gook, Chink, Jap.

Kraut, Hun. All terms used by our armed forces. A product of a society



Edinburgh: 40 foot patchwork quilt.

Each square is a reminder of someone who died from a Drone strike

which still believes in its superiority over other peoples and cultures.

We pretend that we wage war for higher, noble causes. We claim that our armed forces fight for Freedom, Democracy or Human Rights. This is not the case. We wage war according to Policy. It is a choice determined by Government. This policy is influenced by those who gain the

most from war. Politicians, Generals, The Arms Industry and The Media.
These scoundrels always predict victory. Always insist that violence is the answer. They Ignore the inevitability of

unforeseen consequences. The existence of Blowback. The fact that it is our own policy that creates our enemies. They deny when we have been defeated to maintain support for current and future bloodletting. The reasons they give for starting wars rarely match the reasons they give for continuing wars and rarely match the actual outcomes. These scoundrels currently hold the noble position of backing a military junta in Mali against insurgents that we decided to arm in Libya. Before that they celebrated the Arab Spring whilst turning a blind

eye to Saudi Arabian aggression in Bahrain. Where weapons that we supplied were used by our Saudi allies to kill civilians engaged in non -violent protest. Their silence in this matter shines a light on their complicity.

In both Iraq and Afghanistan, once the reasons for going to war were



found to be false, or unattainable or just forgotten, those with a vested interest in continuing the wars resorted to one of the oldest tricks in the book.

They cultivated the myth of the soldier as hero. They told you that you might not understand why the war continued but that you should support the soldiers. They told you that to stop the pointless slaughter would be sacrilege to those heroes that had already died.

Truth is the first casualty of war and tonight you will see this phenomenon first hand. You will hear men speak in reasonable tones using educated language to mount a defence of Fighting for Queen and Country. They will argue that at the very least we must be ready to defend this country. But they are talking about a hypothetical situation. The Taliban are not going to invade. The Chinese are not amassing on the coast of France.

From positions of vested interest they will try to convince you that Fighting for Queen and Country is your highest duty. But what they are really calling for is a continuation of business as usual. Fighting and killing in accordance with their policy. Which is designed to fulfil their interests, their greed, their ambition.

I am a Human Being and my allegiance is not to Queen and Country but to the whole of Humanity. I no longer accept the lies which perpetuate war.

I no longer accept that violence can lead to Peace.

Never again will I be complicit in the killing and torture of my Brothers and Sisters.

Never again will accept the vile religion of Patriotism.

I refuse to pull on that rancid uniform.

I refuse to fight for Queen and Country.

The motion was defeated as it has been on every occasion that it has been held since 1937.

Constant Prayer

By Michael Sutherland

The Catholic Worker in Glasgow is about growing together as a community, practising the works of mercy as when we share our food with our brothers and sisters, it's about resistance when we see the dream of God for our world per-

verted . It's about voluntary poverty, people before profit, nonviolence and getting together in round table discussions to learn and share ideas.

It's also about prayer. When we meet together we pray. Sometimes we pray by reading the days gospel from the liturgy then reflecting or meditating on it. Some of us then share our thoughts and feelings. I find this

powerful when someone shares from the heart, giving something understood. On a Saturday morning we say morning prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours. Praying together like this I find immensely helpful as my words flow into those of those gathered. On the first Saturday of the month we pray together at Faslane for peace and nonviolence. Each of us takes turns to

make up the liturgy. Prayers for peace next to a place of such potential destruction has great symbolism.

I find that our prayer time is enriched by the works we do and the works we do is given meaning by our prayers. The two at times seem to merge, it is like we 'pray constantly' as St Paul tells us to do. Origen says 'He "prays without ceasing" who unites prayer to works and good works to prayer. Only in this way can we consider as realizable the principle of praying without ceasing'.

This community praying deepens my personal prayer. Of course prayer does not always flow like incense rising to heaven. It can be difficult, sometimes I don't feel particularly worthy and wonder why someone like me should bother with prayer. But prayer for Christians is not an optional extra. It is not just for the good and holy. I know that even in times of emptiness I have to sit quietly and let God find me, '... the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words.'

The one sure thing I know is that

the Catholic Worker is as much about prayer as it is about anything. It is prayer that gives us and tests our vision. It helps us see Christ in each and everyone we encounter. Dorothy Day the co-founder of the Catholic Worker prayed, as Jim Forest says of her 'I have never known anyone, not even in monaster-



Dorothy Day

ies, who was more of a praying person than Dorothy Day.' And as Dorothy said , 'We feed the hungry, yes, we try to shelter the homeless and give them clothes, but there is strong faith at work; we pray. If an outsider who comes to visit us doesn't pay attention to our prayings and what that means, then he'll miss the whole point.' Pray for us.

People of Good Faith

St John MacLean?

By Brian Quail

(Continued from p1)

saw the inherent evil of the system, and completely rejected it. George Lansbury, the Labour leader and socialist politician, wrote of him: "He saw evil, and his whole being was ablaze with wrath". There are two particular evils that made John burn with indignation. First, he had a fierce sense of injustice at the wretched poverty and vile living conditions he saw workers enduring in Glasgow. The other was a passionate hatred for war, for the cynical organisation of the working people of one country to be herded into armies to slaughter fellow workers in another. "A rifle is a killing machine with a worker at both ends", he famously said. War is statesponsored murder.

MacLean was imprisoned five times and tried on charges of sedition after fiery public speeches to rallies organised against the war. After his first spell of imprisonment in Peterhead, he was sacked by Govan School Board. Without a job, he threw himself even further into the anti-war camp. At his speech from the dock in 1918 MacLean famously asserted that he was not the accused but rather, "the accuser of capitalism dripping with blood from head to foot".

MacLean's admired Lenin as the symbol of revolutionary change, but it is debatable just how much he actually knew about the man. The two were very different in character. MacLean's atheism flowed logically from his Marxism, but I suspect his burning sense of right and wrong owed more to the Presbyterianism of his Free Church mother, than to studying Marx' theory of surplus value. The ignorance was mutual; Lenin wrote about the "English" (sic) Socialist leader John MacLean".

John MacLean never made any secret of his atheism, and the Catholic Church was bitterly hostile to him. Consequently, he lost the Gorbals election of 1923, where the majority of voters were Irish Catholic. However, he claimed "I am out for life and all that life can give" in an expression curiously reminiscent of John 10.10 "I have come in order that you might have life—life in all its fullness". Shortly before he died on 30th November 1923 he gave his coat to a Black comrade. He was devoid of personal ambition or greed.



John MacLean (1879 - 1923)

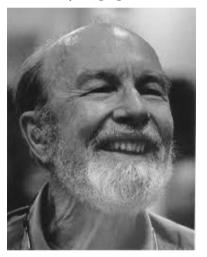
Dorothy Day is in line for canonization - John MacLean never will be. But I know she shared his disgust at "Bomb-blessing Bishops" and "vengeance-vindicating vicars" (to use the alliterative expressions beloved by an old Anarchist comrade), those who sanction war in the name of God.

If a person claims to be an atheist, we should first ask ourselves "What image of God are they rebelling against?" Invariably, it is one that a true Christian would also denounce. Like Pete Seegar, MacLean was a communist. Had he lived longer, who knows what path he might have gone? He may have evolved politically, like Jimmy Reid, Malcolm Muggeriudge, Evelyn Waugh, Keir Hardie or even Douglas Hyde.

"Where Have All the Flowers Gone." - Pete Seeger

By Tamara Horsburgh

On January 27th the world of music and the world of activism lost a great man – Pete Seeger. Pete was born in New York City in 1919. Growing up in a family of intellectuals as well as musicians, he was steeped in music from an early age and his first instrument was the ukulele. As a teenager he learned the banjo, and as a young college student began playing for audiences. At a young age Pete was in-



Pete Seeger

volved with groups such as the Almanacs and later the Weavers, and formed a friendship with Woody Guthrie that has become legendary. For 9 decades Pete Seeger has written songs that have helped motivate the world towards peace, activism. and environmentalism. Whether composing his own lyrics, or taking old negro spirituals and repopularizing them - whether introducing new generations to the genius of Woody Guthrie, or taking poetry from the Bible and setting the Psalms to music - whether backing song writers like the young Bob Dylan or influencing musicians like Bruce Springsteen - Seeger's influence stands alone.

The influence of Pete Seeger, however, goes far beyond the world of music. At a young age Pete formed an interest in politics which would last his whole life. He joined the Young Communist League, advocating the principles of communism, and was a pacifist during World War 2. During the 1950s at the



heights of the McCarthy era, when Pete Seeger was called before Congress and asked to testify against his friends and fellow political activists, he refused to do so, citing his first amendment rights, and saying that no American citizen should ever be asked by Congress to disclose their political associations. Pete's musical career was on the wane during this period, but he never backed off of his convictions.

Later in life Pete would apologize for his backing of communist Russia, and Stalin, stating he didn't know the violence that Soviet Russia perpetrated, while still maintaining he believed in the better principles of communism – equality and justice for all.

During the late 1950s and 1960s Pete Seeger's musical career had a resurgence. Involving himself in the civil rights movement Pete Seeger's re-working of the old spiritual "We Shall overcome" became the hallmark song of the era, and his song "Turn Turn Turn" put the beautiful words of Ecclesiastes to music. During the 1970s Pete regularly sang with Arlo Guthrie, introducing a whole new generation of Americans to Woody Guthrie's song "This Land is Your Land" as well as his own "If I Had a Hammer". Arlo Guthrie has eulogized Pete Seeger as a "father figure, a musical influence and above all a friend."

Often left unnoticed and unrecognized by the media is Pete Seeger's partner and wife Toshi – his wife of

over 60 years. According to Pete Seeger all he ever accomplished was made possible by the backing and strength of Toshi. With her gentle spirit and her sense of humor she raised their 3 children and passed on the values she and Pete held closely. As she jokingly said when asked about his busy schedule "if



only Pete would have affairs like other men, I'd have reason to leave him – however he doesn't have other women – he has causes." And she was the gentle voice behind every cause.

When asked about his religious beliefs Pete Seeger said the following:

"I feel most spiritual when I'm in the woods. I feel part of nature. Or looking up at the stars. I used to say I was an atheist. Now I say, it's all according to your definition of God. According to my definition of God, I'm not an atheist. Because I think God is everything. Whenever I open my eyes I'm looking at God. Whenever I'm listening to something I'm listening to God. I've had preachers of the gospel saying "Pete, you are a very spiritual person." And maybe I am. I feel strongly that I'm trying to raise people's spirits to get together."

Certainly, through his music, his politics, his lyrics, and his spirit Pete Seeger has brought people together. We, as Catholic Workers, believe he is still working to bring people together as part of the Communion of Saints. We pray for his soul to rest with God and pray that the world continue to use his music and lyrics to promote a peaceful and just world.

Dorothy Day, on Pete Seeger, from her Diary, dated February 25th, 1968, after watching Pete sing an anti-Vietnam song on the Smother Brothers: "I drove up at noon, Mass at Tarrytown. In the evening Smothers Brothers had Pete Seeger on, singing his controversial song "the big fool said to push on". He (Seeger) is a fine person, loving people, a ballad singer, close to the present and to the past. He traveled over Russia singing, he loves the Hudson, the Catskills, the region in which he lives."

Gift Horse?

Why we're not a registered charity

By Martyn Sabell

Anyone led to gift a donation to support our work may notice we supply no Charity Number to identify our cause. This is no accident on our part but rather a conscious decision drawing on a longstanding Catholic Worker ethos.

We are rooted in the personalist tradition of the Church, one which recognises that each person has a God given dignity and purpose. Be-



The Christ of the Homeless (1982) Fritz Eichenberg

ing the body of Christ, we are bound together such that an injury to one is an injury to all. As Dorothy Day said, "No-one asked us to do the work..... because we are our brother's and sister's keeper, because of a sense of personal

Continued page 8

Gift Horse?

Why were not a charity

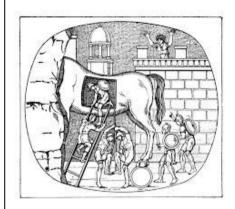
Continued from page 7

responsibility, we begin to try to see Christ in each one that comes to us."

We pursue the works of mercy, inadequate though our efforts are, independently of government welfare programs, on the margins of society. Many charities today perform in the so called 'Third Sector' of social work, supplementing both direct state provision and the private sector. Problems arise here when charities become too financially dependent on the government as purchaser of welfare services. The charity ends up supplying only that service for which the state is willing to pay. This can distort the whole thrust of the charity's original aim. Government priorities are not necessarily wrong in themselves, but as Christians we have always to remember that our primary loyalty lies not to the nation but rather to Christ and his Church. Too often in history has the Church been subject to state regulation. In the present day, OSCR, the Office of the Scottish Charities Regulator, has proved to be no friend of Catholic teaching; witness the protracted legal battle against St Margaret's Children and Family Care Society.

We can question the whole basis for tax relief to charities. Donors choose to give to causes which appeal to them, not to those in greatest need. Children's charities find fundraising easier than do those combating addiction. Tax incentives do not distinguish between subsidised aid for famine relief and the compulsory public spending on Britain's private education system.

Catholic Worker Glasgow accepts no government money. We avoid registering for official charitable status, denying the seductive tax breaks and rates subsidies which would buy our silence over issues countercultural to those of the state. While our work fulfils a number of charitable purposes, our listed aims include direct action to address structural injustices and also rejection of neoliberal capitalism. We want too to persuade others of our critique of the kingdoms of this world. In the process, our witness to Christ's subversive way of nonviolence and unconditional love should render us ineligible for nonpolitical charitable status.



Ultimately, in rejecting gift aid on donations, we are ready to look this particular gift horse in the mouth. In doing so we may identify it more accurately as a Trojan horse, one we should be wary of.



Standing Order Mandate Form

Please fill in this form in **BLOCK CAPITALS** and send it to us at the address below. This will enable us to set up a standing order with your bank. This can be stopped at any time by informing your bank. **You can also set this standing order up via online banking.**

	wish to pay: Glasgow Catholic Worker £10 / £20 / £40 / other amount £
Until further notice / or until/	
Y	our Bank Name
Y	our Bank Address POST CODE
Your Account Name	
Your Account Number	
	Please pay the above credit to: Glasgow Catholic Worker Bank Name: Triodos Bank Account Number: 20467753 Sort Code: 16-58-10 SIGNED: Please hand into your bank in person or return to: Glasgow Catholic Worker 15 Carrick Crescent Glasgow G46 6PP

DATE: