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The magazine of the fellowship
of united reformed youth

Hello all!

In this edition of **f2** we concentrate on the current situation in Israel and Palestine and look at some of the issues facing ordinary people out there. We also have a competition and reports from events around the country.

I hope you all enjoy reading this edition. God bless,

Josh Thomas, **f2** editor

Wake up to Trade Justice

15-16TH APRIL 2005

On the evening of Friday 15th April, 25,000 people gathered in London in an attempt to make Tony Blair, Michael Howard and Charles Kennedy wake up to trade justice. And they stayed there all night.

The proceedings began with a service held at Westminster Abbey. I was lucky enough to get a seat near the front; however, many people were left standing or outside (where my sources tell me there was a giant hokey-cokey going on around the Abbey!). It included music from the Kingdom Gospel Choir, Rwandan Umubano drummers, musician Jools Holland and singers Beverly Knight and Ronan Keating, and a selection of diverse readings from actors Pete Postlethwaite and Damian Lewis and actress Vanessa Redgrave. We were also addressed by Barbara Crowther, a Board Member of the Trade Justice Movement, and Farhad Mazhar, a Southern trade justice partner.

Following that, most people started to form a giant white MakePovertyHistory band around Parliament Square, before starting a vigil on Whitehall, which was to continue throughout the night. However, a group of FURYites, including FURY Chair Gareth Jones, FURY Chair-Elects Steve Pryor and Isobel Simmons, former FURY Chair Rosemary Simmons, FURY Webmaster Geraint Goodfellow and I, went to start our shift in the Fairtrade Chill Out Café, one of the Café's open through the night. We served tea, coffee and Tradecraft snacks (most of which included Chocolate) to

hundreds of people, both those in the café and to those in the street waiting to get in. During this time, about 15 other members of FURY visited us, and several groups of people I spoke to recognised what organisation I was from because of my specially designed FURY T-shirt. Although it was exhausting (a day later and my arms are still aching!), it was also fun and it felt great to be doing something so practical.

At 4am, the time when the largest amount of people in the world are awake, we joined thousands of people at Whitehall in a candlelight vigil. Following some breakfast and chill time, we joined an estimated 25,000 people on a march past Downing Street in the hope of waking Tony Blair up.

The whole night was an incredible experience; it's difficult to comprehend the amount of people that were there, and who obviously feel passionately about trade justice. It

was well worth the 6-hour journey there and back from Newcastle, and hopefully it will have made some politicians realise how big an issue this is to people.

More information on this event can be found by following the hyperlinks below:

<http://www.tjm.org.uk/>

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4450737.stm>

<http://www.fury.org.uk/forum/>



Photo: Simon Rawles/TJM

SARA PATON

(NORTHERN SYNOD REP TO FURY COUNCIL FOR WEBSITE,
FURY COUNCIL SECRETARY FOR F2)

Botswana, April 2005

Our adventure to Botswana started when Gemma Timpson, Judith North and I flew from Heathrow to Johannesburg International on the 12th April and we started our adventure to attend the youth conference of the UCCSA (United Congregational Church of Southern Africa).

We stopped in the airport for a few hours, whilst we waited for our flight to Gaborone, the capital city, of Botswana. Having left for Heathrow around lunchtime on Tuesday morning, we eventually arrived in Gaborone at around 8am local time, Thursday morning. We were met at the Gaborone airport by Calistas and Toboko, two of our guides for the visit. Both had attended our FURY assembly earlier this year. Calistas is the treasurer, and Toboko the secretary for the youth work for Botswana as part of the UCCSA the church with which the URC is linked. From the airport, which was not more than a runway, and a big hut at the end, we all went to the guesthouse which had been provided for us. We stayed there with a family, all of whom were very kind to us throughout our visit.

We left our bags in our rooms, and Gemma and I went to look around Gaborone with a group from the local church. We had a tour around the town centre, which looked a lot different from our major cities. No high rise flats, smartly suited people or traffic jams. Instead there were street sellers selling everything from ice cream to phone top-up cards. After walking around for about an hour in a temperature of about 25-30°C, we went to see the synod office to meet everyone there.

On the Friday we left the guesthouse to start the 12-hour journey up to Maun, where the assembly was to be held. The scenery was good at first, though after seeing a few hours of scrubland and sand, it all looked much the same. So I slept the rest of the way. We did stop every five hours or so, to eat and stretch our legs and we saw loads of cattle crossing the roads like they owned them. When we eventually got to the conference, which was being held in a school where the kitchen had just been burnt down and the air conditioning units had packed up, we went out for a meal, before going to another guest house to sleep the night.

Once the conference started, we were introduced to everyone there. There were about 300 young people, ranging

from 14-30. They conducted their assemblies in both English and Setswana, which is the unofficial language of Botswana, though it was mostly in Setswana so we had to have an interpreter, and as this was just the person we happened to sit next to, the understanding of the topic varied greatly.

The assembly itself was conducted in the form of lectures, it took a lot of effort to keep ours, and the other people's concentration focused, especially in the heat and humidity, with no air con. We were 'asked' to take part in various activities, mostly involving getting up on stage, and talking to people, or attempting to teach them songs, each to very little understanding from the young people there, but to great embarrassment to me and Gemma.

While there we managed to see some of the tourist spots of Botswana. We spent a day at a safari park, in the north-west of Maun, near the Okaevang Delta, watching giraffe, buffalo, bush bucks, ostriches and elephants amongst other things, though no lions. We also went to a crocodile farm, the crocodiles are sold to South Africa for meat. We weren't allowed to sample any though. The conference food was edible in most parts, sometimes good, but other times we opted to eat out at a restaurant.

Before we left we had a campfire with everyone, and there were songs and prayers and goodbyes. We left well before the end, as apparently it ended in the early hours of the next morning, unlike any of our last nights of course. The next day we travelled back around the other side of the country, past where Judith has some relatives, in a town called Serowe. We arrived late on Wednesday evening, back at the guesthouse we first stayed at, and slept well into the next morning. We then stayed around the house for the day, before leaving the next day, to return home to a much colder UK. In the end, we had mixed feelings about the trip, as the conference was not what we were used to, and the long lectures, and high temperatures made it uncomfortable at times. But in the whole, I at least, think it was a worthwhile experience and hope that the link we tried to make will be carried out through all the different parts of FURY, and through the URC as a whole.

IAIN BHAGWANDIN

IS THE YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE ON THE RACIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Competition Time!

Hello all,

This time in **f2** we give you the chance to win a £20 Amazon voucher which you can spend on anything from books to games or CDs. All you have to do is answer this ridiculously easy question by texting A, B or C along with your name to.... 07891 032 233, so here is the question!

What is the Jewish word meaning Peace?

A= Shallot

B= Shalom

C= Sallom

Closing date will be September 10th. And remember one entry per person only otherwise it will not be counted. Members of FCG will not be able to take part in this competition.

Israel/ Palestine –

the time for action is now

Despite all the talk of Road Maps and peace process, the facts on the ground show that true peace is far away and every day the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories results in more Palestinian land and livelihoods being lost, more Palestinians imprisoned¹ and anger turning to despair.

Background:

Israel occupied the Palestinian Territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in October 1967, and has maintained its military occupation of the territories for over 37 years. This is despite UN Security Council Resolution 242 calling for the withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from the territories, a call which has been reiterated by the UN on a regular basis.

Since September 2000, Israel has intensified its action against Palestinians living under the occupation, leading to a human rights crisis. According to the Israeli human rights centre B'Tselem, a total of 3,189 Palestinians were killed from September 2000 to the end of 2004, including 617 children; this is against 940 Israelis killed in the same period, including 167 children.

The Israeli government continues to build the Separation Wall which extends deep into Palestinian territory and has destroyed the livelihoods of thousands of farmers.

On 9th July 2004 the International Court of Justice (ICJ) – the UN's highest judicial body – ruled that the wall is illegal. The ICJ demands that the construction of the wall be halted . . . and also demands that the international community take action to halt the wall's construction. All states which are party to the Fourth Geneva Convention are obliged to ensure Israel's compliance with the Convention. There is now a growing international movement calling for economic sanctions against Israel in order to force it to comply with its legal obligations.

Caterpillar

The spotlight is on Caterpillar Corporation, which sells the bulldozers to Israel to be used to construct the wall, and for its occupation of the Palestinian lands.

- Caterpillar D9 bulldozers have been supplied to Israel since the beginning of the current intifada.
- Caterpillar D9 bulldozers have crushed and killed Palestinians in their homes.
- A Caterpillar D9 bulldozer drove straight over American Peace activist Rachel Corrie ending her young life.
- Caterpillar D9 bulldozers have helped destroy over one thousand homes in Gaza and the West Bank since 2001. The number of house demolitions has increased in recent months (source ICAHD)
- Caterpillar bulldozers are constructing the apartheid wall inside the Green line, aiding the theft of a further 60% of the West Bank's fertile land and its underwater aquifers.
- Caterpillar bulldozers are used to dig up Palestinian olive trees, as seen in places like Jayyous in December 2004.

What you can do:

- 1 Caterpillar doesn't just produce construction equipment; it also sells both footwear and clothing in the UK, yellow boots, bags, caps, watches and mugs. ***Don't buy these products – and tell your friends and family to follow suit.***
- 2 Find out more about the Stop Caterpillar campaign www.catdestroyshomes.org
www.caterkiller.org
www.waronwant.org – ask for copy of their new report on Caterpillar
www.stopthewall.org
- 3 **Write to Caterpillar to stop them supplying its bulldozers to the Israeli military.** We as FURY youth have taken direct action and have sent a letter to the chief executive of Caterpillar asking him to reconsider the continuation of supplying Israel with Bulldozers and other destructive tools.

With thanks to Anne Martin.

Footnote 1: 5794 Palestinians – including 373 children – were being held in Israeli custody at the end of 2004, of whom 863 were being held without charge or trial, or with no release date.



Photo: Alice Klein

MakePovertyHistory youth day

On the 12th March 2005 a MakePovertyHistory youth day ran alongside the Wessex synod meeting. It was full of interesting things such as watching clips of what is happening in other parts of the world and playing random games like guess the amount spent on useless things everyday, this particularly made us feel bad for the amount we spend on unimportant things when people are starving. We had a mixture of craft; printing our own handprints, drama and music. We also made up our own play to show to the people at the synod meeting this, and to introduce them to the MakePovertyHistory campaign: this was good and rather funny to organize. A great day was had by all and it made the campaign stand out in people's minds and inspired us to do more to help the people suffering around the world.

MEGAN THOMAS,
PORTSMOUTH DISTRICT



The **f²** Interview

This time in **F2** we speak to **Heather, Viv, Syliva** and **Joyce** from the Youth & Children's work office and also the Pilots desk to find out more about their work.

f²: As we know you work at the Youth & Children's Work Office & Pilots Desk but what does that actually involve?

H,V,S,J: Day-to-day office stuff (opening mail, answering phone calls & emails, arranging meetings, etc), answering CRB enquiries, helping people with questions about their ministry with children's work, Pilots & youth in local churches, offering resources.

f²: What is the most rewarding part of your job?

H,V,S,J: People contact

f²: How long have you all been doing your job as a combined number?!

H: 6 ½ years
V: 13 years
S: 8 years
J: 6 years

f²: Which of you has the most comfortable chair?

H&S: Viv & Joyce!

f²: What's your favourite coffee break biscuit?

H: Custard Creams
V: M&S Chocolate covered ones
S: Double Chocolate Traidcraft cookies
J: Milk Chocolate Digestives

f²: How many FURY pens are in the office (and we want an exact figure)?

H: OK, one box has 330 in, the other box has 750 and there are 7 on our desks so I guess that makes 1087 in total!

f²: What time do you all start work of a morning?

All: Early 'til late as we work flexi-time.

f²: Where did you go on your last holidays?

H: To sunny South Africa
V: Brugge
S: Carlisle
J: Isle of Wight

f²: How many letters do you receive roughly each week?

All: Depends on the time of year

f²: Who has the messiest desk?

All: If messy equals busy, then all of us!

f²: What's on your computer desktop?

H: A view of the Drakensberg Mountains which I visited on my last holiday
V: Sting
S: My youngest son and daughter-in-law on their wedding day
J: Plain old Windows desktop

f²: Who has the Crazy frog ringtone?

All: No-one – they are extremely irritating.

f²: Who has the most time off work?

All: No-one

f²: What are your most irritating habits in the office?

V: Sylvia doesn't answer from 2-2.15pm when earphones are applied for *The Archers*; on reasonable request for less heat in the office via the fire, a banter of rude comments is received.

S: When not paying proper attention, Viv goes 'hmmmm?' in response to a question.

f²: Who does the most work?

All: All of us!

f²: Do you have any games on your pc? Own up!

All: Only the ones that the computer comes with already – but we do not play them!!!!

f²: What does working for the pilots desk involve?

S: Dealing with mail, enquiries, affiliations, the Bridge, any big events (Cadbury, Lego), awards, meetings & conferences.

f²: How many emails/letters do you receive in an average day?

All: About 30 emails/letters between us.

Dates for your diary...

JULY

- 29-1 What Do You Think?, University of Warwick
- 2 Make Poverty History Rally, Edinburgh
- 2-6 General Assembly, University of Warwick

SEPTEMBER

- 11 Racial Justice Sunday
- 16-18 FURY Council, Edinburgh
- 16-18 Youth & Children's Work Committee, Derby

OCTOBER

- 4-6 Mission Council, Durham
- 14-16 God is Youth, Multicultural Youth Event, Pioneer Centre, Kidderminster