



Do Justice!!

“Do Justice, Love Kindness and Walk Humbly With Your God” Micah 6:8

A Newsletter on Social Justice Issues

Welcome to the November 2016 edition of Do Justice. This newsletter, prepared by Auckland Diocesan Social Justice Group, looks at various Social Justice Issues. We apologise for not circulating an October Do Justice but a number of the Social Justice team that put together Do Justice have been overseas so this edition does reflect some of their experiences.

Brexit and TPP.

Following the vote to leave the European Union in June the re-organised British government under Theresa May has been struggling with how to implement the referendum result. The media is full of “Hard Brexit or Soft Brexit”; when will Article 50 be implemented; does leaving the EU also mean leaving the Single Market and so on. In recent days a new, and potentially very concerning development, has appeared. Government ministers are saying that they will make all the decisions about negotiation goals and tactics, do the negotiations in secret and only bring the result to the Parliament for “yes/no” approval.

For a visitor from New Zealand this sounds very familiar. This is what happened with TPP and continues with a number of other “Trade” negotiations. What is so special about so called “Trade” negotiations that requires all decisions to be made behind closed doors?

Traditionally, basically democratic countries such as the UK and New Zealand, a government would have a broad mandate to negotiate a foreign treaty based on an electoral manifesto or at least a broad policy discussion in Parliament. In the case of both TPP and Brexit no such “mandate” is apparent.

In the UK situation it appears that the Government has concluded that the “LEAVE” vote was a vote against immigration even though the wording of the referendum made no mention of immigration. One of the four cardinal requirements of the “Single Market” is free movement of citizens, in other words any citizen of any of the 28 European States can live and work in any of the other 27 States. The UK has attracted large numbers of citizens from some of the EU states. The interesting thing is that the regions who voted heavily in favour of leaving the EU are these least affected by immigration from Europe or the rest of the world. And London, which has been a magnet for young

Europeans willing to work particularly in the service industries, voted heavily in favour of remaining in the EU.

Recently the EU and Canada have agreed to a “Trade Agreement” that has many characteristics of TPP. For it to come into force it needs to be ratified by all the EU’s national parliaments and in those countries that have them regional parliaments. One regional parliament in Belgium has rejected the agreement so there is now stalemate.

Although in New Zealand our parliament is not asked to ratify the TPP, rather the Cabinet has to finally ratify the deal. It now looks increasingly likely that we will have an opportunity to have a say on TPP as it is unlikely to be ratified by the required number of nations before our General Election in late 2017. The British people do not appear to have the same opportunity as their next election is not until 2020 and Brexit is likely to be completed by 2019.. What is happening to democracy, particular as one of the key arguments of the “Brexiters” was that leaving would return sovereignty to the British Parliament in London.

The New British Prime Minister.

With the election of Theresa May as the new leader of the Conservative Party and her automatic appointment by the Queen as Prime Minister, comparisons are inevitable with the first woman British PM Margaret Thatcher. Some are obvious, they are both women, both members of the Conservative Party, both had “Grammar School” education rather than the Eton and Oxford education of many of their male counterparts.

Politically it is difficult, as yet, to make a comparison. From some of Theresa May’s early speeches it appears she has recognised at least some of the damage that has been done to British society by the neoliberal policies of Margaret Thatcher and the austerity policies of her predecessor David Cameron since the Global Financial Crisis of 2008. She is talking about closing the gap between the very rich and everyone else and has suggested that companies need to look carefully at the inflated salaries of some of their senior staff or else..... Some commentators suggest she is moving the conservatives to the left to fill the perceived gap left of centre that the re-election of Jermyn Corbin as Labour Leader has caused.

Theresa May is the daughter of an Anglican Vicar and is still reported to be a card carrying member of the Anglican Church. Before becoming Prime Minister she was the Home Secretary for the previous 6 years. The Home Secretary is responsible for law and order and immigration amongst other things. She had a target to substantially reduce immigration which she failed to achieve.

She is reported in the media to have been in favour of remaining in the EU.

Only time will tell if she is prepared to address the wrongs of the Thatcher era, certainly there are many in her party, and regrettably in the Labour Party, that continue to subscribe to the free market neoliberal dogma of the past 30 years. It will take a very strong leader to change that. Mrs May may be that leader, but will she be strong enough?

Auckland Council Elections.

The election of Phil Goff as the new Mayor of Auckland and an apparent small majority of Councillors who support the Living Wage for council staff and for regular staff of Council Sub contractors is encouraging. But the Living Wage campaign thought that had achieved that in 2013 only for one councillor who had endorsed the Living Wage during the campaign only to renege. Candidates for Mayor and Council were asked to endorse the following statements about the Living Wage:

- **Firstly**, and in a single unbroken commitment: a Living Wage for directly employed staff and workers employed on a regular and on-going basis by contractors at Auckland Council and its CCO's, including Auckland Transport, and will act in accordance with this commitment on election to office.
- **Secondly**, that as a first step, that the 2017 renewal of cleaning services is undertaken on the basis that the successful tender will employ staff on no less than the current Living Wage.
- **Thirdly**, that a sub-committee of the Governing Body of Auckland Council be established that includes representatives of the Living Wage Movement Aotearoa NZ to inform, monitor, and support Read The asks we are making of the candidates are on the screen and they are also on the inside of your programme.

Mayor Goff absolutely endorsed points one and three and agreed to look carefully at the ways to enforce two. The Living Wage Movement Aotearoa New Zealand will be monitoring carefully progress on this key issue. The 2016 Auckland Synod passed a motion encouraging all ministry units to support the Living Wage by membership of the Living Wage Movement. Details of membership are on the Living wage web site <http://www.livingwage.org.nz/>.

Children in poverty and more dollars for Prisons.

Judith Collins recently linked child poverty to poor parenting. A few days later she announces plans to increase the capacity of our prisons to handle 1800 more prisoners at an extra cost of \$1 billion.¹

The Katie Bruce of Just Speak sums up the situation well. She writes how the number of people in prison on any one day is set to top 10,000 by the beginning of next year. She talked about our crisis of mass imprisonment and targeted criminalisation. Over 300 Just Speak attended our Maori and the 'justus' forum and over 2000 people have watched the livestream. The decision by the Government not only accept mass imprisonment as inevitable but to invest another \$2.5 billion dollars in building another prison and double bunking existing ones is difficult to understand.

More information about Just Speak can be found on <http://justspeak.org.nz/>

JUST WAR ? LECTURE AND STUDY DAY, BISHOP SELWYN CHAPEL, HOLY TRINITY CATHEDRAL, AUCKLAND,

18th - 19th NOVEMBER, 2016.

Dorothy Brown Memorial Lecture 2016, 7.30 pm
Friday November 18 (Selwyn Library) Dr Jenny Te Paa.

Study Day, 9 am to 5 pm, Saturday November 19
speakers include

- Father Claude Mostowik,
- Professor Kevin Clements,
- Professor Richard Jackson,
- Dr Derek Woodard-Lehman,
- Keith Locke, Chris Barfoot
- Professor Margaret Bedggood.

Booking essential for both events for catering purposes. No charge for lecture, Study Day \$20 (pay on the day). Light refreshments provided including lunch on Saturday. Book with barfoots@xtra.co.nz or phone 575-6142. Arranged by N.Z Christian Network, Aotearoa New Zealand Peace and Conflict Studies Centre Trust, Pax Christi and Anglican Pacifist Fellowship.

<https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/government-approves-plans-increased-prison-capacity>¹