



Pax Scotia

Issue 17



There are weapons of mass destruction, arms that are bought and sold to wreak devastation on civilians in countries around the world. And then there are seemingly inoffensive pieces of machinery that are also used to literally demolish the peace of civilians.

On January 1, World Day of Peace, may we resolve to speak out against the use of all instruments of violence – whatever the intention of their manufacture. In this issue, Rosalyn Mauchline, Pax Christi Executive Committee member, discusses divestment and the actions we can take (P2)

Inside:

Rosalyn Mauchline on demolition in Palestine - P2

Nationality & Borders Bill – P3

Plans for 2022 – P4

The recent Amnesty report on JCB's role in Palestine:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/11/uk-construction-giant-jcbs-products-used-for-palestinian-house-demolitions-and-illegal-israeli-settlements/>

Interreligious dialogue – not an optional extra for 21st century Catholics

By **Bishop Brian McGee**,
Bishop of Argyll & the Isles &
Bishop President of the Bishops'
Conference Interreligious
Dialogue Committee

Pope Francis is very popular. Across the world he is widely loved and admired both within and outside the Church. However, I often wonder how many of his admirers actually listen to what he says! Pope Francis is very challenging in his words and actions.

I consider our Pope to be a man of deep reflective prayer. His regular meditations on the Scriptures have formed him in the ways of God. He has opened his ear like a true disciple. This makes him an inspiring but challenging leader.

I think that it is fair to say that most Catholics would not see Interreligious Dialogue as a top priority. However, Pope Francis does. One of the areas in which he confronts Christians in their comfort zones is interreligious dialogue. Whether through the Document on Human Fraternity, asking every European Catholic Parish to welcome refugees, or by visiting Iraq, he has given visionary leadership.

I have no doubt that God works through all people of good will, including those of no or little faith. However, during the Inter Faith Vigil at COP26 it struck me that religious faith, when lived out properly, brings an extra dimension. If people are open to the divine then the Lord can work within hearts in a mysterious but transformative way that inspires people to deep service.

I pen these words on the Isle of Bute where the Catholic Parish of St Andrew's joined with other Christian denominations to reach out and welcome Muslim families from Syria who were escaping from war. This pattern of love has been woven in communities all across our country.

The cause of peace and justice will be strengthened when faiths dialogue and work together. Vatican II may have invigorated the Church regarding interreligious dialogue but its practice cannot be an optional extra, because dialogue and service are core to the Christian life.

+ Brian McGee
Bishop of Argyll & the Isles

Pax Christi Scotland Peace Issues: Palestine

Rosalyn Mauchline, a member of the Pax Christi Scotland executive committee, works tirelessly to halt the arms trade that is responsible for so much violence around the world. Here she finds that it isn't only arms companies that destroy the peace of innocent people.

We all recently rejoiced in the announcement by Bishop Nolan that the Scottish Bishops have decided to divest from fossil fuels - but as people who are committed to the gospel message of non-violence, perhaps we need to ask ourselves about other areas of diocesan investment.

Each diocese has an ethical investment policy, but just *how* ethical? Does it cover not investing in companies that are involved with the nuclear weapons industry, the arms trade in general, or companies involved in areas of conflict such as the illegal settlements in Palestine?

Pope Francis has made it clear to us that nuclear weapons are an abomination:

"Spending on nuclear weapons squanders the wealth of nations...when these resources are squandered, the poor and the weak living on the margins of society pay the price." Pope Francis, December 2014

"I appeal strongly for peace, an appeal which arises from the deep within me. How much suffering, how much devastation, how much pain has the use of arms carried in its wake in that martyred country [Syria], especially among civilians and the unarmed! War begets war, violence begets violence." Pope Francis, Angelus Message 1 September 2013

More recently he has linked the arms trade with the refugee crisis – noting that the very countries that sell and profit from the arms trade, such as the UK, then refuse refuge to the refugees fleeing the wars being fought with these same weapons.

So, what can we do? We can ask for details from our own diocese on what investments are excluded. In my diocese, our Caritas Justice and Peace Commission has found that the policy as it has existed is not specific enough on these subjects and while the policy is now under review, we have asked our concerns be taken into account. Perhaps Pax Christi members would consider doing something similar in their own diocese.

We can also highlight the very companies that are involved in the arms industry. CAAT (the Campaign Against the Arms Trade, with whom Pax Christi Scotland has liaised) is a good source of information. But I want to highlight one particular issue. Recently Hugh Foy, a member of our executive committee, contacted his MP Gavin Newlands regarding these issues, and I cite two quotes from Mr Newlands' response:

"JCB, the British tractor firm, has been found by a UK government watchdog to have failed to carry out due diligence human rights checks over the potential use of its equipment to demolish homes in the Occupied Palestinian Territories."

&

"The UK's arms export police has demonstrated the UK's complicity in other conflicts like the War in Yemen, which the UK government has seen fit to fuel with billions of pounds of arms exports despite the overwhelming evidence of these weapons being used against civilians, and international calls from all sides to suspend arms exports with Saudi Arabia."

We may feel powerless against the might of the UK government, but JCB have a head office in Glasgow and distributors all over Scotland. My hope for the New Year is that the campaign that has been active in England for some years against JCB's involvement in Palestine will be brought to Scotland and that we can achieve positive results.

Rosalyn Mauchline

The Nationality & Borders Bill

By **Dr Sophie Cartwright**, Senior Policy Officer, Jesuit Refugee Service UK

The Nationality and Borders Bill (the Bill) currently going through the Westminster parliament is a key part of the government's much-vaunted new plan for immigration*. At its heart this plan, and the Bill, aim to make it as difficult as possible for refugees to get safe haven in the UK. It radically reduces the protection we offer to refugees. It has justly been dubbed the Anti-Refugee Bill** by many who campaign for a more humane asylum process.

One of the most troubling and significant changes it seeks to implement is to determine refugees' worthiness of protection on the basis of how they travel to the UK. This approach ignores the reality of forced migration, in that most refugees have no choice in how they travel, and vanishingly few safe and managed routes exist – the Bill, indeed, does nothing whatever to create any, and even reduces those there are, such as family reunion. Furthermore, the Refugee Convention permits refugees to travel informally, and non-penalisation of refugees who cross borders without documents is at its heart. By penalising refugees for how they are able to travel, the Bill abandons the very principle of international protection. The Bill is also set to make routine the use of detention-like asylum accommodation, comparable to Napier Barracks***, and lay the groundwork for an offshore asylum process. This is deeply cruel and a denial of what we as human persons owe to each other. It should deeply trouble Christians.

The Bill has had its third reading in the House of Commons, so it has now passed to the House of Lords for further scrutiny and possible amendments, and will then go back to MPs sitting in the House of Commons, who can accept or reject any changes to the Bill made by the House of Lords. ***The Bill's second reading in the Lords is scheduled for 5th January 2022, right after parliament returns from the Christmas break.*** This involves a debate and is one moment at which this truly disturbing piece of legislation faces serious examination, as it can again in the Lords' Committee. This matters a lot, given that the government introduced a huge number of changes to the Bill after it had undergone line-by-line scrutiny by a committee of MPs in the Commons.

After second reading in the Lords, there will be opportunities for amending the Bill, with the potential to significantly change what the Bill looks like before it returns to the House of Commons. Amid a fraught and imperfect political process, there is an opportunity coming up for meaningful changes to the Bill. If these are to play out in what actually happens, it's vital that MPs in the Commons accept these changes. It is therefore important for constituents to write to their MPs, expressing concerns about the Bill, and calling for a just and person-centred system.

* <https://www.thetablet.co.uk/blogs/1/1760/why-the-new-immigration-plan-is-cruel-and-inhumane>

** <https://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/the-anti-refugee-bill-what-comes-next/>

*** <https://www.thetablet.co.uk/blogs/1/1699/the-inhumanity-of-keeping-sanctuary-seekers-trapped-out-of-sight-in-military-barracks->

WHAT WE CAN DO

Sophie says: 'We can and must continue to stand up for justice and humanity in the face of the Nationality and Borders Bill.'

She adds, 'The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) UK and St Vincent de Paul Society have produced a set of campaign resources to help Catholic communities and individuals advocate for change around the Nationality and Borders Bill.'

Here's the link:

<https://www.svp.org.uk/nationality-and-borders-bill-campaign-toolkit>



Pax Christi Scotland

Engaging with the world, seeking peace

Pax Christi Scotland 2022

Pax Christi Scotland's main aims include working to achieve a peace-filled welcome for refugees & migrants, and addressing discrimination in all its forms.

We believe that the Nationality and Borders Bill (see Dr Sophie Cartwright's article on P3) is discriminatory – and of course, as it stands, it denies refugees and migrants any welcome whatsoever.

Sophie has given us a link to a campaign toolkit to seek changes to the Bill, and she urges us to contact our MPs (made easy through our website).

We have seen disturbing scenes at borders, in the Mediterranean & the English Channel. This Bill offers cruel, unfair and intolerant 'solutions'.

During January, Pax Christi Scotland will hold a Zoom event to bring the latest information and advice on the situation. Watch out for details.

The Pax Christi Scotland Executive Committee wishes you a peaceful and healthy 2022

Palestine: a peace issue we cannot ignore

In December 2021, Pax Christi International held an on-line consultation with member organisations about the situation in Israel and Palestine.

Members agreed that it is the work of the Pax Christi network to speak out on the issue, and Ann Farr of Pax Christi England and Wales stressed that our role is to take the side of justice against injustice and that we need to name the injustice for what it is.

Pax Christi Scotland executive committee member Hugh Foy said that by naming that injustice as 'apartheid', it would impact in our own countries and internationally on our Jewish brothers and sisters, but that we must speak truth to power.

Former French diplomat Bernard Phippe, who had worked with the UN on the Palestinian-Israeli situation, said the situation is becoming increasingly violent (see picture P1) and internationally, increasingly tense.

In early 2022, Pax Christi International's executive committee will consider the findings of the consultation and decide on the approach the organisation will take. We will pass on that decision.

Membership Reminder

Most membership fees were due in November at the time of the AGM (if you joined very recently, renew **next** November).

You can pay on line on the membership page of our website. There you can set up an annual payment so that we don't have to remind you.

You can also make regular donations on our 'donate' page.

Membership fees are £10 for waged, £5 for unwaged. Explore the website for all our activities: www.paxchristiscotland.org

Our website

Blogs, podcasts, past and future events – these are all on our Pax Christi Scotland website. All newsletters are archived there. You can pay your annual membership fee on the Membership page and make donations. Please explore and share:

<https://www.paxchristiscotland.org/>

Continued thanks to webmaster Chris Boles of Caledonian Computers -

<https://www.caledoniancomputers.com/>

Where to find Pax Christi Scotland:

www.paxchristiscotland.org

<https://www.facebook.com/PaxChristiScotland>

[@PaxScotland](https://twitter.com/PaxScotland) (Twitter)

Pax Christi Scotland, c/o Xaverian Missionaries, Calder Avenue, Coatbridge ML5 4JS

Pax Christi Scotland now has a Youtube Channel where you can find recordings of past events. Find us at:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCcmLpQv27Py_ul14szp95g

Click on the word 'Subscribed' and you will be informed whenever a new recording is posted.