



# Pax Scotia

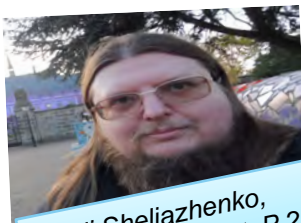
Issue 20

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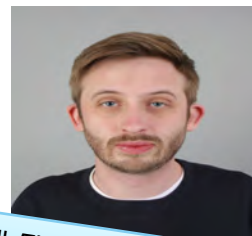
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## Voices for peace

In our newsletter this month, people who work for peace have written a range of articles for us.

We remember that while the conflict in Ukraine may be uppermost in all our minds, too many people, too many societies, around the world seek their own peace.

Investment in weapons – ‘conventional’ and of mass destruction – contributes to any conflict. The accepted and encouraged behaviour of authorities can devastate a society.

As Fr David Stewart says below, ‘God is calling on us to act...’

# We can't leave it all to God...

By **Fr David Stewart SJ**,  
Team member,  
Edinburgh Jesuit Centre

Countless people of faith have been praying for Ukraine these past few weeks; praying for peace, praying for the unimaginable numbers of non-combatants who have managed to escape to safety, praying – perhaps – for the perpetrators of the violence.

People of goodwill have been responding with moving generosity in the lands contiguous to Ukraine as they have here, too, but with the added layer of reluctance, to say the least, on the part of the British State to issue visas, a stance that has not compared well with the open attitude of most other nations.

Amid the horror and the generosity, it's worth pausing to ponder what exactly we mean when we say we're praying for these people and these things. Already a significant answer is there – if our prayer leads to action. Prayer and service really are inseparable.

Time spent pondering what we do as we pray is time well spent. There's a tendency to tell someone who is experiencing strife, “I'll pray for you”. Good enough, but what does this mean? “Prayer is raising up the heart and mind to God”, they told 7-year-old me to say, making very little sense then but a bit more now. For a start, I couldn't grasp why both head and heart were mentioned!

In the New Testament, St James says of Abraham that “his faith was made complete by what he did”. If that's right, it follows that our faith remains incomplete if we don't act! Long before he came to Rome nine years ago, Pope Francis was saying that always a Christian must be active at three levels – with our heads, our heart and our hands.

How can we pray about such horrible things? If it remains in our heads, it's incomplete; our meditation needs to engage our hearts, our emotions, our spontaneous feelings when we confront these things. For Ignatius of Loyola, careful attention to our interior movements reveals God's prompting and the patterns of our response. That will lead to the hands; to ministry. We can't leave it all to God; God is calling us to act. How? Pray, and we'll see.

# The War in Ukraine

*Pax Christi Scotland has taken part in a number of online seminars addressing the horror of the war in Ukraine. This led to a connection with **Yurii Sheliashenko**, a member of the board of directors of World Beyond War. He is based in Ukraine. Yurii is also executive secretary of the Ukrainian Pacifist Movement and a board member of the European Bureau for Conscientious Objection. We invited him to write for us, and we are honoured that from the midst of the war, he sent this moving - and controversial - article.*

## **A Sacred Duty**

*By Yurii Sheliashenko*

Three months ago, when the world celebrated Human Rights Day at the conference organized by National University Odessa Law Academy, I spoke about violations of human right to conscientious objection to military service in Ukraine.

I told about lack of access to alternative service, bureaucratic obstacles and extortion of bribes, discriminatory demands of membership in the list of religious organizations approved by the government, and non-compliance of Ukraine with recommendations of the UN Human Rights Committee. My presentation was received well; other participants shared their experience of countering arbitrary detention of conscripts.

And then professor Vasyl Kostytsky, former MP, made a remark that it is commonly said that service in the Armed Forces of Ukraine is a sacred duty of every man.

I knew that professor is a dedicated Christian, so I replied to him that I can't remember any such sacred duty among the Ten Commandments. On the contrary, I recall it is said, "you shall not kill."

This exchange came to my mind now, when my home in Kyiv is shaken by explosions of Russian shells nearby and air raid warning sirens several times day and night remind that death is flying around.

After the Russian invasion to Ukraine, martial law was proclaimed and all men in age from 18 to 60 were called to take arms and prohibited from leaving Ukraine. You need permission from the military to stay in a hotel, and you risk to be conscripted when passing every checkpoint.

Ukrainian government neglects human right to refuse to kill, and so does the Russian government sending conscripts to death and lying it doesn't.

I admire those Russians who massively protested against warmongering lies and against the war, and I am ashamed that Ukrainian people failed to insist on nonviolent settlement during eight years of war between the government and separatists and even now are supporting war effort more than peace talks.

And still I believe that everyone, including the government, shall not kill. War is a crime against humanity; I am, therefore, determined not to support any kind of war, and to strive for the removal of all causes of war. If all people will refuse to kill, no war will ever happen.

*Yurii Sheliashenko*

## Police Scotland & Colombia

*Niall Finn, Parliamentary Officer for Justice for Colombia, raises the issue of Police Scotland yet again working with a repressive regime – a Pax Christi Scotland campaign issue.*



Last July, Police Scotland officially opened a new international academy at its headquarters in Tulliallan Castle, close to the banks of the River Forth.

The academy's [proclaimed](#) purpose is to support Scotland's role as a "Global Citizen". But Police Scotland's international unit, which runs the new facility, has built close links to countries with some of the worst human rights records in the world.

Over the last decade, Scottish police have been training their counterparts in Sri Lanka, where local officers have been repeatedly implicated in torture and extra judicial killings. It was only after Pax Christi Scotland and others raised their concerns that the relationship was brought under proper scrutiny. Police Scotland ultimately decided to not renew the training programme.

Few lessons, however, appear to have been learnt. In February, Colombian police become some of the first to receive online training from the new facilities in Tulliallan Castle. Less than five months earlier, their colleagues in the Colombian capital Bogotá, had shot and killed 11 people, including teenagers, protesting the death of Javier Ordóñez.

The 44-year-old lawyer was repeatedly tasered by officers and placed in a stranglehold as he pleaded with them to stop, an incident that sparked nationwide outrage and drew comparisons with the killing of George Floyd in the United States.

Further protests against regressive tax reforms in April and June last year unleashed an even more brutal police response. At least 44 people were killed according to local human rights groups as officers fired on crowds, beat isolated protesters, and were implicated in widespread sexual violence.

Police abuses are not new in Colombia. In 2017, police killed seven protesters in the town of El Tandil, an incident Human Rights Watch later [described](#) as "a massacre". But the scale and range of the violence has grown at an alarming rate.

In 2019, 18-year-old student Dilan Cruz died after being shot in the head with a police tear gas canister. Amnesty International have since [accused](#) Colombian police of deliberately firing the projectiles into people's faces as punishment, recording hundreds of examples in 2021. The victims, frequently young people, often suffer life changing eye traumas as a result.

Police Scotland must not make the same mistakes it did in Sri Lanka. Instead, a fully transparent review of its relationship with Colombia is needed to ensure that it is not, once again, giving cover to appalling human rights abuses.

**Niall Finn**

## New Arms Trade Report What does it mean in our troubled world?

*Niamh Ní Bhriain, war and pacification programme coordinator of the Transnational Institute (TNI), reflects on this important report (<https://www.tni.org/en/publication/fanning-the-flames>)*

In 2009, the Irish electorate voted in favour of the Lisbon Treaty, having rejected it only a year earlier, for various reasons including how it might impact our neutrality policy. The then Taoiseach (prime minister) Brian Cowen told us 'Today the Irish people have spoken... It's a good day for Ireland and a good day for Europe'. But more than a decade on, the reasons why so many of us rejected the Treaty, not once but twice, have become European policy.

*The Lisbon Treaty* provided the legal underpinning for the European Union to develop a common security and defence policy. The EU's multi-annual budgets are a good indicator of where European priorities lie and how the Union identifies as a political project. It is clear that it is firmly shifting from its origins as a promoter of peace to becoming a defacto defence alliance.

A new report by the European Network Against the Arms Trade and the Transnational Institute reveals how the EU's defence budgets were created and are being spent. There is a serious conflict of interest – the Group of Personalities on Defence that advised the European Commission on its security agenda was composed of 16 representatives, nine of whom were affiliated with the arms industry. Parts of the Group's final report were copied verbatim and became official policy, which established the EU's first ever budget to fund the research and development of military equipment. The same arms companies that directly influenced the creation of the defence fund have thus far received €86 million from it, though the finally amount will likely be much higher. Furthermore, four of the top eight beneficiaries of EU defence spending are involved in the development, maintenance and production of nuclear weapons meaning that European public money is indirectly fuelling nuclear armament. In addition, much of the weaponry being developed is 'smart' but ethical and legal checks are not rigorous raising concerns that once deployed, such weaponry will likely change the conduct of warfare leading to indiscriminate attacks and more breaches of International Humanitarian Law.

In recent weeks it has been frequently stated that there are no winners in war. This is untrue. Arms companies have captured public decision making spaces for their own benefit and make massive profits from war. Our then Taoisheach should more accurately have said upon the approval of the Lisbon Treaty that it was a good day for the arms industry – they are the main drivers and beneficiaries of Europe's defence policies.

## Pax Christi Scotland

# Engaging with the world, seeking peace

### Pax Christi Scotland's Stations of the Cross

Our faith defines our work, and so on our Lenten journey we pause for reflection before the Stations of the Cross.

That reflection has been prepared by **Dr Arianna Andreangeli-Clark**, Senior Lecturer in European Law at Edinburgh University Law School and a member of the Pax Christi Scotland executive committee, in collaboration with Fr John Convery sx, chaplain of Pax Christi Scotland.

The images that Arianna has chosen come from parishes in Scotland and from churches around the world, each helping us to focus on Pax Christi Scotland's Lenten journey, which is fundamental to Pax Christi Scotland's aspirations to pursue peace, human dignity, and nonviolence.

Please join us as we each walk with the Lord towards Calvary. Our thanks go to Arianna and Fr John for preparing this special online event.

**Pax Christi Scotland's Stations of the Cross online: April 5 at 18.30 UK time.** Please share the registration link in your parishes.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZludeqhqzMuGdSO78dmDn0E1WPWFJHKWAK>

### Membership Reminder

Most membership fees were due in November at the time of the AGM.

**You can pay on the membership page of our website.** If you pay by online banking, please give your name to identify your payment.

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](http://www.paxchristiscotland.org)

### Where to find Pax Christi Scotland:

[www.paxchristiscotland.org](http://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

### The Peace of Christ

**You will remember** the event Pax Christi Scotland hosted last year at which Abdelfattah Abusour of Alrowwad Palestine spoke so movingly.

**Ahead** of the Holy Month of Ramadan, Abdelfattah sent a message of hope. This is a short extract:

*'The Pandemic, and this long-term oppression and occupation, the economic challenges and lack of resources reinforced us to do more and respond better, and to care about the safety and needs of our people with more dignity and love.'*

**We refused** to give up to despair and agony... We didn't shout and wait for others to do the work for us... We didn't weep on our misery and surrender to our wounds and suffering, and wait for miracles to happen.... We worked with you to provoke miracles to happen.

**Victims** are all over the world... suffering suffocates every horizon... pain is in every neighbourhood and in every country... yet we are strengthened not to shelter ourselves in the "dark safety" and ignore everyone else... we are here for everyone who knocks at our door.'

**Pax Christi Scotland** is asking Pax Christi International to identify Israeli action as Apartheid, rather than suggesting each member organisation make a unilateral decision. Our stance is that the Israeli Government's policy **is** Apartheid. Many of our Jewish brothers and sisters, with whom we also stand in solidarity, agree with our position, as does Pax Christ New Zealand.

To support Alrowwad Palestine:  
<https://www.alrowwad.org/en/support-us>

Recommended reading: Brian J Brown's book *Apartheid South Africa! Apartheid Israel!*

### 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/>

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](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCcmLpQv27Py_ul14szp95g)

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