Catholic priest from Hayes, Middlesex, is the first priest in Britain to be brought to court for protesting against nuclear weapons.

The other defendants were Sarah Hipperson, 55, a former magistrate and mother of five, Linda Frewin, 19, and Pat Gaffney, 25.

All four were sent to the cells for contempt after they persisted in trying to make statements criticising the nuclear arms race, which the magistrates regarded as political, and not relevant to their part in the demonstration at the MoD.

After the case, Fr Bartlett said "We considered our statement to be our defence. I'd like them to have been accepted as that. We came here to declare that nuclear weapons are immoral."

He said there had been a political decision to stifle the protest. The charge of criminal damage had been reduced to an offence under the Metropolitan Police Act of marking buildings, so they could not have their case heard by a jury. The magistrate had refused to hear their case, and they had been let off "scot free".

Barbara Eggleston of Christian CND said the law seemed determined not to make any Christian martyrs for the CND cause.

Catholic Peace Action explained that blood and ashes were used to demonstrate the Christian origins of their resistance. Blood symbolised, for instance the blood of Christ and of the martyrs and ashes were a symbol of repentance.

Magistrate raps peace priest

HAYES disarmament supporters Father Tony Bartlett and Mrs Patricia Gaffney were removed from Bow Street Magistrates Court for allegedly making "political" speeches.

Father Bartlett, a priest at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Botwell Lane, and Mrs Gaffney, an aid organisation worker, of Guiness Close, Hayes, were among the four anti-nuclear protestors arrested during a prayer meeting outside the Ministry of Defence building in Whitehall on April 14.

The four, all members of the Catholic Peace Action Group, were charged with "marking a building without the occupiers' consent" under Section 12 of the 1839 Police Act.

Police had arrested them after they had scattered ashes and blood on the steps and walls of the MoD.

Magistrate Mr Ronald Bartle gave all four a conditional discharge, but at one point during the hearing, he removed them from the court and told them they were in contempt of court.

The incident happened as the four defendants made their defence. As each of them began long speeches prepared before the hearing, Mr Bartle said: "You are not making a defence, you are making a speech. I shan't listen to speeches which are politically motivated."

The defendants were taken to police cells and were brought before the court again half an hour later, when they were conditionally discharged. Contempt charges were not proceeded with.

After the hearing, Father Bartlett said: "We are a group of Catholic Christians who believe that nuclear war and the preparations for nuclear war are morally wrong.

"The ashes represent repentance and we used human blood, our own blood to symbolise the sacrifice that goes back to Jesus Christ. It was an entirely non-violent and prayerful protest."

Father Bartlett added: "We are not going to appeal because the conditional discharge was the least possible sentence that the magistrates could give us, and apart from allowing us to go to a higher court, which they said they would not admit, there would be nothing gained."

ADVERTISER AND GAZETTE Page 5

Thursday, June 9, 1983

THEOLOGY student Linda Frewin, 19, of Runnelfield, Harrow Hill, was one of four people charged with committing criminal damage by daubing the walls of the Ministry of Defence with ashes and human blood. She was conditionally discharged at Bow Street Court.

May - June 1983

Magistrate sends protesting priest and friends to cells

By Paul Brown

A Roman Catholic priest and three other nuclear protesters were sent to the cells for contempt yesterday by a Bow Street magistrate when they persisted in trying to make speeches to justify pouring their own blood on the steps of the Ministry of Defence in London.

The magistrate, Mr Ronald Bartle, then set all four defendents free by conditionally discharging them for a year. He left the court in uproar, leaving his clerk to explain that they could not refuse the order.

Father Tony Bartlett, 36, from Hayes. Middlesex, is the first priest to be brought to court for protesting at nuclear weapons. With Sarah Hipperson, aged 55, Linda Trewin, 19 and Pat Gaffney, 25, he was arrested at the main entrance of the Ministry of Defence in Horse Guards' Avenue for pouring ashes and his blood over the entrance door, pillars and steps during a religious service.

After the case Father Bartlett said there had been a number of political decisions to stifle the protest. First the charge of criminal damage was reduced to an offence under the Metropolitan Police Act so they could not go before a jury to make their case.

And second the magistrate had refused to hear their defence and third he had let them go "scot free."

"If we were anything other than Christians acting on the dictates of our consciences then we would have been dealt with severely. We have been allowed to go free and treated as children because we wanted to make a serious point against nuclear weapons. Clearly, a political decision has been made to keep us as quiet as possible," he said.

All four denied marking buildings without permission but were found guilty and conditionally discharged for a year.

Mr William Bailey, head of the Ministry of Defence security force, said he saw the priest and women praying on the steps of the Ministry and red liquid and ashes spread around. He called the police. Contractors were called in to clean off the blood and the bill was £45.

Among those attending the case was Mgr Bruce Kent, general secretary of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and 60 members of Catholic Peace Action.

THE GUARDIAN Friday May 27 1983 6