

# Catholic Peace Action

7 Putney Bridge Road  
London SW18 1HX

December 2005

Dear Friend,

Please note the enclosed invitation to join us during Lent 2006. Let us know if you have any questions or if we can assist you in anyway in order to help you respond to this invitation from Pax Christi and us.

A few of us have re-started the direct communications with Ministry of Defence workers, handing out leaflets either at lunchtime or when they come into work. Let us know if you would like to join us. We have done three sessions since September and hope to continue, at least once a month. Liz Yates, one of the leafleters, has said, 'It is imperative that we attempt to be as visually present as possible during these times.'

On Holy Innocents day last year, Liz and four others (Chris Cole, Fr Martin Newell, Angela Broome, Scott Albrecht) went to the MOD to dig graves and write on the walls in protest of the war in Iraq. For some unknown reason Angela was not arrested. The others were convicted of Criminal Damage on 6 June. After a day of moving testimony and at times vigorous discussion with the prosecutor, the magistrate made it clear that 'it is not for this court to decide the legality or not of the Iraq war.' They received various levels of fines and orders to pay compensation to the MoD. The bailiffs have already sent letters to Liz, who has informed them that she has no intention of paying.

On 16 November, Voices in the Wilderness (UK) founder Milan Rai was sentenced to 28 days imprisonment for refusing to pay £2000 'compensation' to the British Government for spray-painting the Foreign Office with the words "Don't Attack Fallujah. Black Watch Out" on 3 November 2004, just days before last year's devastating US assault on the city (see [www.j-n-v.org](http://www.j-n-v.org) for background and pictures).

The Christmas season is fast approaching. We wish you strength in Spirit, health in body, and a joyous time with loved ones.

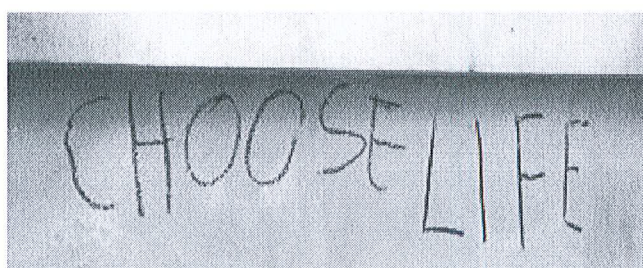
Thank you for your thoughts and prayers of support for peace,

Carmel and Dan Martin  
Pat Gaffney

Encl: Invitation for Lenten peace work 2006, Pax Christi leaflet



9 August 2005. Dan, after the police cut the chain attaching him to the front door of the MoD.





## **60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Atomic Bombing of Nagasaki**

On 9 August, Dan Martin and Angela Broome chained themselves to the front door of the Ministry of Defence in Whitehall; they encouraged the closure of the MoD for the day in order to commemorate the incineration of Nagasaki 60 years ago and prevent future crimes against humanity. After a warning from the police and a refusal to leave the area the police cut the chains and carried/dragged the two down the steps, off the property. They were then told they could demonstrate freely there. No arrests were made. The two joined supporters and continued to distribute the leaflet below.

### **Close the Ministry of Defence 9 August 2005 In Memoriam**

We call on all staff to return home and reflect on the anniversary of the incineration of Nagasaki, Japan, 60 years ago today; and to reflect on the nuclear war preparations carried out in the Ministry of Defence.

On Nov. 7, 1995, the mayor of Nagasaki recalled his memory of the attack in testimony to the International Court of Justice: 'Nagasaki became a city of death where not even the sound of insects could be heard. After a while, countless men, women and children began to gather for a drink of water at the banks of nearby Urakami River, their hair and clothing scorched and their burnt skin hanging off in sheets like rags. Begging for help they died one after another in the water or in heaps on the banks.'

Quoted in 'Apocalypse Soon' by Robert S. McNamara, former Secretary of Defense of the USA, who further states:

'Four months after the atomic bombing [of Nagasaki], 74,000 people were dead, and 75,000 had suffered injuries, that is, two-thirds of the city population had fallen victim to this calamity that came upon Nagasaki like a preview of the Apocalypse.

'This in a nutshell is what nuclear weapons do: They indiscriminately blast, burn, and irradiate with a speed and finality that are almost incomprehensible.'

'I would characterize current US nuclear weapons policy as immoral, illegal, militarily unnecessary, and dreadfully dangerous.'

Robert S. McNamara | Apocalypse Soon; [www.truthout.org/docs\\_2005/050505B.shtml](http://www.truthout.org/docs_2005/050505B.shtml)

Where Mr McNamara speaks of 'US nuclear weapons policy', we believe the UK policy, though with fewer nuclear weapons, is qualitatively the same: 'immoral, illegal, militarily unnecessary, and dreadfully dangerous.'

The Ministry of Defence should be closed today:

- In memory of the atomic victims of yesterday and today (victims are still dying as a result of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki).
- As an act of repentance for that horrendous slaughter and for continued readiness to repeat it, on a much greater scale.
- As an act of penance, however slight, to right this wrong.
- As an act of reparations for the money stolen from the poor of this world because of nuclear war preparations.
- As acknowledgment of our hypocrisy in the eyes of the world. While we possess, and are willing to actually use these horrendous weapons, we preach and enforce restraint to some countries (Iran, Iraq, North Korea) and ignore others (Israel).
- To give us a chance to recover our humanity and let our hearts of stone become hearts of flesh.
- Because nuclear weapons are not safe in anyone's hands.

Catholic Peace Action

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## Peace-making on Ash Wednesday and in Lent 2005

In London over 50 attended a service followed every subsequent Wednesday by a few people to stand and pray, hold banners and sometimes mark the building with the ash/charcoal of repentance. Others held vigils and took action in Oxford (including the Oxford Catholic Worker), Cambridge and Newcastle. Let's build on the past 24 years of witness against nuclear war preparations and make Lent 2006 more responsive to the 'cry of the poor' and the call of the peace of Christ.

Dan Martin said these few words at the Ash Wednesday service in London:

From the Vatican II document: 'The arms race is a crime against God and humanity and injures the poor to an intolerable degree.'

Since this was written in 1965, we, as a church, have done little, or at least not enough, to show how intolerable this demon race is. We have tolerated numerous wars, an ever-quickenings arms race and first-strike nuclear weaponry. The moral shadow this casts on our lives has been with us for so long, for most people it is hardly noticeable. Shadow becomes day and war is only twilight,

Like nocturnal creatures we have got used to the moral darkness; we open our eyes wide and because of that we think we can see.

We tolerate the race to oblivion by the building of weapons, which are immoral in ethical terms and unusable in military terms. We tolerate the unthinkable by our actual willingness to use these weapons. We tolerate the theft from the poor both in this country and throughout the world, which the production of these weapons represents.



9 August 2005. Angela Broome removed from the MoD.

Can this demon be cast out? 'Lord I believe, help me in my unbelief.' Mk 9:24

### To the Black Watch – Largesse

'Home' he said, 'by Christmas  
'After your work is done.'  
'Free of the desert sun'  
'Home' he said 'by Christmas'  
'Choir boys lauding God'  
'Presents in the children's hands',  
'Mince pies on the hob.'

'Home' he said 'by Christmas'  
'After your work is done.'  
'Work with the knife and bayonet'  
'Peace from the mouth of the gun.'  
Bush babies burn in the wasteland,

Black hawks shatter the sky,  
Foxes die on the stubble,  
Politics stink of the lie.

'Home' he said 'by Christmas'  
'To warmth in the manger's hay'  
'Angels and saints enfold you'  
'Tho thousands may die on the way'  
The cry of the new-born Christ-child  
Keens the dead of this guiltless war.  
'Home' he said 'by Christmas'  
'You can't possibly ask for more'.

By George Clark

(The Black Watch regiment (an 850-strong force) provided support for US forces during the invasion of Falluja in November 2004. In the same month, the Prime Minister announced to the House of Commons the regiment would be home by Christmas. Most were; but five were killed during the month-long deployment to Camp Dogwood in central Iraq.)



**Demonstration at Dimona**  
**Incident at the Bethlehem Checkpoint**  
**By**  
**Carmel Martin**

(In April this year, Carmel accompanied the 2<sup>nd</sup> international delegation to Israel since the release of Mordechai Vanunu. The hopes were that Mordechai would be allowed to leave Israel after a year since his release from almost 18 years in prison; but the restrictions were renewed for another year. It was a very full week of witnessing to peace and supporting Mordechai. For more information about this year's delegation and the UK campaign, contact us and we will send the latest (and final) bulletin. Mordechai is currently under house arrest for violating his travel restrictions.)

**Dimona**

(Mordechai was a technician at Dimona, Israel's nuclear installation, from 1976 to 1985. He discovered that the plant was secretly producing nuclear weapons. His conscience made him speak out and in 1986 he provided the London *Sunday Times* with the facts and photos they used to tell the world about Israel's nuclear weapons programme. His evidence showed that Israel had stockpiled up to 200 nuclear warheads, with no debate or authorisation from its own citizens.)

As we made the long coach journey to Dimona there was no doubt that we were in occupied territory. Several military planes flew over while we travelled and the presence of the army was evident by the roadside.

We saw eight or ten army trucks parked just off the road and a large group of soldiers standing around a man in a white t-shirt who was sitting in the road, his fate unknown.

We arrived and gathered our posters and banners from the bus and began setting up for our vigil and witness under the scorching heat of the sun and in the shadow of the Dimona nuclear weapons factory.

Assembled were a group of international representatives from across the world including, Japan, Ireland, England, Norway, Israel and the United States of America.

Dimona was perhaps the most significant of all the places we had been during our few days in Israel.

*It represented the witness of Mordechai Vanunu and his resistance to Israel's government's secret Nuclear Weapons Policy and production - the reason for his willingness to sacrifice his life to publicise its lethal potential.*

Standing in close proximity to the site of such destructive and evil capability sent a chill down the spine.

The speakers were eloquent, dignified and moving in their delivery and in the content and power of their contributions.

The first speaker reminded us graphically of what was prevented by Mordechai's act of resistance nineteen years ago. She was Ryoko Normq from Hiroshima. Her presence needed no words but she spoke movingly of the need for the world to disarm and prevent another Hiroshima from happening. She spoke about the continued suffering of the people that would be inevitable if these horrendous weapons were ever used.

I spoke and also invited everyone to scatter ashes in the desert as a symbol of what we would become should these weapons be used. I linked the witness at Dimona with the repentance and resistance that many others and I have been part of at the Ministry of defence in Whitehall, London for the past twenty-one years. 'Countless others around the world are inspired by the high price of eighteen years spent in prison by Mordechai Vanunu.'

'Only by exposing these places to the scrutiny of the public is it possible to begin the process of building a movement towards peace, a wound that is not exposed to the air will fester and infect the body, sometimes to

**'Dimona is a real holocaust.  
The Israelis are producing  
Genocide weapons here.  
End the production of these  
genocide weapons. Shut  
Dimona.'**

**Mordechai Vanunu**



the point of death. The hidden work of evil and corruption requires persistent struggle and a deep faith that peace is actually possible.’

I then read a defiant message from Mordechai.

‘Dimona is a real holocaust. The Israelis are producing Genocide weapons here. End the production of these genocide weapons. Shut Dimona.’

The next speaker was Nobel Peace Laureate Mairead McGuire who made an impassioned plea for Israel to denounce Nuclear Weapons and sign the non- proliferation treaty. Other speakers included Rayna Moss from Israel, Kathy Kelly from Chicago, Knesset member Issam Makoul, Israeli poet Mati Shmueln and Akiva Orr also from Israel.

Mordechai Vanunu’s poem ‘I am your spy’ was read in Irish by one of the Irish delegates, Justin Morahann.

Entertainment and music was provided by Ben Inman from London who played his trumpet as he had done so passionately on the occasion of Mordechai’s release from prison twelve months earlier.

A group of Israeli grannies, dressed in aprons and hats covered in flowers, sang political protest songs with gusto and astute perception of the suffering of Mordechai and the Palestinian people in particular.

### **Incident at the Bethlehem Checkpoint**

We went a few times to a particular Café, one of Mordechai’s favourite places to eat, a rooftop overlooking Jerusalem, and got to know one of the waiters there. On our last visit we were disappointed that he was not there.

We assumed it must be his day off. He arrived just before we left and he shared with us the reasons for his delay. He made the journey to work every day from Bethlehem to Jerusalem across a checkpoint. There are six members of his family and he is the only one who works. The others are dependent on his wage to keep the family going.

That morning his neighbour needed to travel to the hospital for dialysis. She did not have papers but he did and he agreed to accompany her through the checkpoint. He pleaded with the soldiers at the checkpoint to allow her entry and they eventually agreed to let her through but told him he would have to stay there for ten hours. He told them they could keep him for twelve hours, he did not mind as long as she was allowed through.

Then the soldiers began to take off their helmets, a sign that they are no longer considered to be on duty and also that they were about to beat him. The leader and most aggressive soldier was a woman. This was the festival of Passover and he told us that it was usual for them to put the most aggressive soldiers on duty during the holiday times. Again he told the soldiers that it was ok if they beat him up, he was not a troublemaker, he was non- violent. He stood with his head bowed and his hands behind his back and prepared himself for a beating.

After a couple of hours of waiting like this with the soldiers trying to provoke him, finally the police arrived and eventually they let him go. He would spend the following night sleeping at the restaurant to avoid this conflict at the checkpoint and to be sure he would not miss work the next day. He had enabled his neighbour to ‘Passover’ and receive the medical help she so desperately needed.

**‘It is not enough to be a hero, you have to know how to survive.’**

**Mordechai Vanunu**

It is difficult to imagine the effect such continual harassment and brutality would have on people when they are required to live in this way at every moment of their lives. This young man is certainly one of the many silent heroes of the country. However, as Mordechai himself said, ‘It is not enough to be a hero, you have to know how to survive.’

The beautiful, forgiving and generous spirit of this young man was witness to the belief that goodness can overcome evil and its power is unquenchable.

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# Greenham - Non-violent Women-v-The Crown Prerogative

by Sarah Hipperson

A Review by Ray Towey

This is a book that is essential reading for anyone who looks back to the 80s and 90s and reflects on a time when the Cold War was at its height, Mrs. Thatcher's government dominated the political arena, Mr. Heseltine Secretary of State for Defence was telling Parliament that protesters ran the risk of being shot and to be a peace activist often meant regular visits to court and sometimes jail. The women's witness at Greenham Common against the installation of 96 cruise missiles each one with the explosive power of 16 Hiroshima bombs was an escalation of nuclear madness that became intolerable for thousands of people and resulted in scores of affinity groups developing and searching out non-violent ways of responding. Sarah Hipperson a founder member of Catholic Peace Action and a Greenham Common women peace activist was at the forefront of these activities and this is in many ways her story of Greenham. For me her journey is a fascinating story partly because my own faith journey brought me into membership of Catholic Peace Action and I was one of the support people who assisted in Sarah's first non-violent action, which was at the Ministry of Defence London in 1983.

As Sarah puts it: **'I had crossed over an invisible line, which marked out a commitment to no longer being a bystander.'**

The line she crossed then, she was to cross so many times over the next 19 years at Greenham with severe consequences of many terms in jail. To live at Greenham was a hard choice with much harassment and brutal treatment by the authorities.

For us in London with so many informed eyes watching and our secure and warm homes to go back to was a much gentler option. The peace camp at the early stages became a women only peace camp which she describes in her book as being strategically the right decision. The hardest process in taking actions of non-violent civil disobedience is not the police and courts but building the support community and I was always very respectful of the choice the women had made. There were so many military establishments available it was hardly going to limit others who wished to confront the nuclear madness with a different support community.



Ash Wednesday 1984 - **Sarah Hipperson(far left), Carmel Martin, and Patrick Harty at the Ministry of Defence London at a Catholic Peace Action act of civil disobedience.**

The book is short, 183 pages, has many black and white photographs and is essentially in two parts. The first includes some of Sarah's personal background, a reflection on non-violence and a timeline of actions of significance to her during her stay at the camp for 19 years. It is of course necessarily brief in a book of this size but I would have liked to have read more on these topics, indeed you could have one book alone devoted to these topics coming from a Christian women with such a life experience. The second part is a description of the legal struggle against the State that accompanied her journey. This is by its nature complex and requires some detailed study but the result is an insight into the legal culture that permits the genocidal nuclear weapons to be given the full legal protection of the State. In short the legal structures are a culture of death and the so called "Crown Prerogative" puts the nuclear war plans above the law. However there were significant legal successes such as establishing the voting rights of the peace camp residents and the over turning of the byelaws which had been introduced to illegally arrest up to one thousand women.

The final chapter relates to the setting up of the Greenham Commemorative and Historic Site which now occupies the very place at which the Yellow Gate peace camp was situated and all monies generated from this book go towards the maintenance of this Commemorative and Historic Site. The real value of this book is that it is told from someone who lived the non-violent struggle herself with passion, commitment and persistence and took the often harsh and painful consequences.

Published, 2005, by Greenham Publications, 15 Sydney Road, London E11 2JW; Cheques payable to 'Greenham Publications', £11.04 (this includes p&p).

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