

Investing in Peace

This issue of *Justpeace* presents three models for action supported by Pax Christi. The *Don't Bank on the Bomb* project challenges investment in the production of nuclear weapons. The *Morally Responsible Investment* project sets out questions and guidance on investments in Palestine and Israel, and the Coventry campaign is urging the West Midlands Pension Fund to divest from arms production. Our aim is to engage our members, the Church and financial institutions in conversation about the ethics of benefitting from the funding of military projects and weapons.

Arms trade disinvestment in the West Midlands

A three-year campaign to pull the West Midlands Pension Fund (WMPF) out of all cluster bomb investments was successful at the end of 2017. This was welcome, of course, but we have to remember that all 'support, assistance and encouragement' to the trade in cluster bombs was outlawed in the UK as long ago as 2010. The fact that it was possible to flout the law on this point, to the full knowledge of the authorities, is a sorry reflection on the state of play when it comes to arms investments.

The campaigning strategy in Coventry (the only place, so far, in the West Midlands to tackle arms trade investments) relies heavily on three arguments:

The investments made by the WMPF are taken from Council Tax revenues across the region. Anyone who pays Council Tax in any of the seven Districts of the West Midlands is therefore both implicated in the investments and has the right to object to them. The Trustees of the Fund are all local Councillors and therefore within easy reach of the electorate.

Further, investments in the arms trade are contrary to the ethos of the city of Coventry in particular, which claims to be committed to peace and reconciliation, at home and abroad.

The only way the investment arrangements can change for the better is by local people and their representatives acting together to convince the Trustees.

With the end of cluster bomb investments, we were faced with a difficult question: how to proceed? WMPF still had tens of millions in investments to get rid of. There was no shortage of possible answers, but in fact it took us several months to identify the best way forward, bearing in mind all relevant factors. And how is 'relevance' to be defined? For us, the firm or firms had to be part of the WMPF portfolio, to



The Coventry action group at Leidos HQ

retain the issue of how our Council Taxes are being used.

Secondly, there should be as close a local connection as possible, to maintain the tension between the work for peace and reconciliation (which goes on in many ways in the city), and the fact that arms-dealers simultaneously work here, unknown to most people. Thirdly, we ought to take on a firm whose activities would readily illustrate to the public the scale and scope of the arms trade.

We decided to go for Lockheed Martin, the world Number One arms-dealer (Hellfire missiles, F-35s, Trident). And they turned out to have a subsidiary, Leidos, based in Coventry University's Technology Park. Leidos, ranked 17 in the world of arms-dealing, is a logistics specialist and handles the supply of weaponry to U.S. troops and their allies across the Middle East, eg: Saudi Arabia, Israel/Palestine, Iraq, the Gulf states.

Our first task is to get this basic information into the 'municipal bloodstream', so to speak. All of the city's major institutions are caught up in the problem. We have no illusions about the amount of work that lies ahead.

Paul McGowan, Coventry Justice and Peace Group

Follow us and share with us:

<https://twitter.com/paxchristiuk>

<https://twitter.com/PaxChristiYouth>

[PaxChristiYouth](https://twitter.com/PaxChristiYouth)

www.facebook.com/PaxChristiUK

www.paxchristi.org.uk



Investing for Peace: Morally Responsible Investment

'Every single olive resists our occupation,' my grandmother used to say to me, remembering our own olive groves in Birzeit. And the older I get the more I realise she was right. The olive is not just a means of food and livelihood but also a profound symbol of our *sumud*, our resilience and our deep-rooted link to the land. This is why I am always so moved when, at this time of year, so many churches and activists go to Palestine to help bring our olives in - to provide labour, protective presence and solidarity to a community facing so much injustice. But this year has been a hard one for us Palestinians, and those who have just returned from the olive harvest have been acutely aware of this: increased closures and arrests, worsening economy, settler violence, the constant threat of displacement, and unlawful killing of Palestinians. It's easy to see



why some peace activists are feeling hopeless and overwhelmed.

To those people who feel as if the Church is not doing enough to support Palestinians or who feel overwhelmed by the enormity of dismantling the occupation, I tell them about 'Investing for Peace: Morally Responsible Investment'

INVESTING FOR PEACE

A GUIDE FOR LOCAL CHURCH
ACTIVISTS

'Investing for Peace' is a national campaign encouraging the churches to adopt morally responsible investment policies which would prevent investment in companies which profit from the occupation of Palestinian lands and the dispossession of its people.

This campaign is supported by Pax Christi, Sabeel-Kairos, Amos Trust and War on Want as well as other major UK church development agencies. As part of this campaign we coordinate and work with denominational groups from within each Church to help them define and implement their strategy, as well as supporting individual churches and people to take this campaign forward. Morally responsible investment is a legitimate, peaceful form of resistance which we are called to do by the Christian community in Palestine.

Our hope is that churches which introduce an investment screen will be sending a strong message - moral, economic and political - as well as ensuring that church funds are not complicit in Palestinian suffering.

We know that this is an ambitious campaign and we know we will need much support along our path, but we remain steadfast as we '*plant the seeds that one day will grow. We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise*'. (Prayer of Archbishop Oscar Romero, 1979). If you would like to join one of our denominational groups working with churches at the national level, please contact by email: Advocacy@Kairosbritain.org.uk. If you would like to start a campaign at local church level please see our booklet. Free copies from Pax Christi or download here: <https://tinyurl.com/yb47vybq>

Phoebe Rison, Sabeel-Kairos

Stop Press: New Quaker statement

On 20 November the Quakers in Britain issued a statement, becoming the first church in the UK to announce that it will not invest any of its centrally held funds in companies profiting from the occupation of Palestine.

You can read the full statement here:
<https://tinyurl.com/ya8houfj>

Pax Christi is approaching every Diocesan Finance office, sending them a copy of *Investing for Peace* and inviting them to screen investments in the region.

What Investing for Peace is asking churches to do

To fully disclose financial information and lists of their investments in companies and businesses, in a simple and coherent way.

To identify any companies in their investment portfolio which are currently profiting from situations in which international law is violated, including illegal exploitation of natural resources, illegal construction of the separation barrier and its related infrastructure, and illegal settlements.

To put in place a comprehensive investment screening process, to identify companies that they currently invest in which are profiting from illegal activity and to prevent future investments in such companies.

To ask Churches to review their current policy of corporate engagement with companies in their investment portfolio found to be profiting from violations of international law. To make it time-bound and structured. This may potentially result in a change of investment strategy.

Don't bank on bomb!

Don't Bank on the Bomb Scotland (DBOTB Scotland) is a network of individuals that has been campaigning for Scottish organisations to divest from nuclear weapons producers since 2015. The group believes that divestment can help achieve a world without nuclear weapons by cutting off access to the financing that companies need to produce them, and by increasing the stigma attached to nuclear weapons.

We recently published a new report, *Stop Funding the End of the World*, that revealed the extent of Scottish organisations' investments in nuclear weapons and made front-page news in Scotland. The report is the first to analyse the nuclear weapons investments of Scottish local authorities and shows that they hold shares worth approximately £300 million in nuclear weapons producers. The report also details the investments of Scottish universities, the Scottish Parliamentary Pension Scheme and Scottish financial institutions, which have made £4.7 billion available to the top 20 nuclear weapons producers since 2014.

The report was launched at a public meeting in Edinburgh on 20 September ahead of the major Nae Nukes 2018 rally at Faslane. Our special guest speaker was Maaïke Beenes of Dutch organisation PAX, which produces the annual global *Don't Bank on the Bomb Report*, who updated us about developments in the international campaign for divestment. We were also lucky to have present activists from the United States, Anthony Donovan, Vicki Elson and Timmon Wallis, who shared their experiences and ideas for taking the divestment campaign forward.

In the next phase of our campaign, DBOTB Scotland intends to focus on Scottish local authorities, as well as continuing to keep up the pressure on Scottish financial institutions and the Scottish Parliamentary Pension Scheme trustees. There is widespread public opposition to nuclear weapons in Scotland and this is reflected in the policies of the Scottish government.



First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has signed ICAN's Parliamentary pledge in support of the nuclear ban treaty and recently expressed support in Parliament for those attending the Nae Nukes 2018 rally saying, 'I look forward to the day when there are no nuclear weapons on Scottish soil at Faslane, and the sooner that day arrives, the better'.

DBOTB Scotland argues that the investment policies of Scottish public bodies should reflect Scotland's opposition to nuclear weapons, rather than enabling considerable investments in the companies that produce them. Divestment would also reflect the will of the international community, as enshrined in the nuclear ban treaty, and send a clear signal that nuclear weapons are dangerous, illegitimate and should be eliminated.

Anyone can get involved in the divestment campaign and DBOTB Scotland's online resource contains detailed information in section 8 about what individuals can do to promote divestment. This includes a four-step process for engaging with banks and pension funds, suggestions for contacting local councillors and template letters. The report was written for people in Scotland but most of the information in this section will be useful to individuals across the UK. We encourage you to take action and share your progress with us. email nukedivestmentscotland@gmail.com; or Twitter @NukeDivestScot.

Linda Pearson, *Don't bank on the Bomb Scotland*

Diary

Advent 2018

Remember the people of Palestine this Advent and Christmas. Resources and ideas for sending messages and Advent reflections can be found on our website: paxchristi.org.uk/remember-palestine-at-christmas/

8 December (Sat) Edinburgh

Jim Forest on 'Spiritual roots of protest: Merton's enduring legacy.' Walpole Hall, 27 Chester Street, EH3 7EN. 10.30am for 11am start

11 December (Tue) London

Our ever popular Advent Peace Service 7pm in St Aloysius Church, Euston followed by our alternative Christmas market with fair-trade goods, goods from Palestine, Philippines, and much more.

11 December (Tue) Glasgow

An evening with Jim Forest on Christian thinking about peace and nonviolence and those who influenced it. 7-9pm. St Georges Tron, Buchanan St, G1 2JX. Hosted by Xaverian Missionaries, J&P Scotland and Pax Christi.

13 December (Thu) London

An evening with Jim Forest: Reflection on Thomas Merton, Dorothy Day and Daniel Berrigan. 7-9pm St Pancras Church Hall, Lancing Street, NW1

19 January (Sat) Musselburgh

Bruce Kent will speak at 11.00am hosted by Our Lady of Loreto parish, 17 Newbigging, EH21 7AJ and the Archdiocesan Caritas-Justice and Peace Commission.

19 January (Sat) Harpenden

Pat Gaffney speaking on the theme *Pope Francis calls us all to be peacemakers - Pax Christi responds* Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Harpenden. 11.00 start with lunch at 1.00pm. Contact Graham Ryan graham-ryan@sky.com

19 January (Sat) York

Chris Cole, Director of Drone Wars UK and Pax Christi Exec member speaking at Middlesbrough Diocesan J&P Commission event, 10.30-1.00 (shared lunch). Our Lady's Parish, Gale Lane, YO24 3AE

20 January (Sun) Scotland

Bruce Kent will speak at Masses in the parishes of St Gabriel's, Prestonpans at 10.00am and St Martin's in Tranent 11.30am.

What the Church has to say

In May of this year, the Dicastery for Integral Human Development and the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith issued a document on economic and financial issues, *Oeconomicae et pecuniariae quaestiones*. It alerts us to the influence of financial markets on the material wellbeing of most of humankind. It urges the regulation of the dynamics of markets and of the need for clear ethical foundations that assures the quality of human relationships. It lays this challenge particularly at those working in the fields of economy and finance.

Quotes from Pope Francis and the Vatican

“The economic system orbits around money and not men, women. ... So war is waged in order to defend money. This is why some people don't want peace: they make more money from war, although wars make money but lose lives, health, education.” *Speaking in Rome, 2015*

“What is morally unacceptable is not simply to profit, but rather to avail oneself of an inequality for one's own advantage, in order to create enormous profits that are damaging to others; or to exploit one's dominant position in order to profit by unjustly disadvantaging others, or to make oneself rich through harming and disrupting the collective common good.”

Oeconomicae et pecuniariae quaestiones, 2018

“The word we hear a lot is insecurity, but the real word is war. We must not be afraid to say the truth, the world is at war because it has lost peace. When I speak of war, I speak of wars over interests, money, resources, not religion.”
Poland 2016, following death of Fr Jaques Hamel

“Here we have to ask ourselves: Why are deadly weapons being sold to those who plan to inflict untold suffering on individuals and society? Sadly, the answer, as we all know, is simply for money: money that is drenched in blood, often innocent blood. In the face of this shameful and culpable silence, it is our duty to confront the problem and to stop the arms trade.”

Speaking to the US Congress, 2015

Office News

Peace Sunday is 20 January 2019

The theme for the 2019 World Peace Day message is timely and pertinent: *Good politics serves peace*. The press announcement from the Vatican states: “Political responsibility belongs to every citizen, and in particular to those who have received the mandate to protect and govern. This mission consists in safeguarding the law and encouraging dialogue between the actors of society, between generations and between cultures. There is no peace without mutual trust. Political commitment - which is one of the highest expressions of charity - brings concern for the future of life and the planet, of the youngest and the smallest, in their thirst for fulfilment.”

Our liturgy resource booklet, prayer card and new leaflet are enclosed with this mailing, to inspire and encourage you to mark the day in your parish. In addition we will post the full message (and extracts), a short script for a three-minute talk and other resources on the Peace



Sunday page of our website. The most fruitful outcome from Peace Sunday comes when our members organise and take initiatives in their own parish! Over to you.

New Director

You will be pleased to know that the Executive Committee have appointed a new Director, Theresa Alessandro. Theresa will join the team in March 2019 and will have a month-long hand-over period with Pat Gaffney. We look forward to introducing Theresa more fully in 2019.

Pax Christi Peace Awards 2019

Introduced in 2001, this award gives Pax Christi members an opportunity to nominate individuals working for peace at grass-roots level, whose work is often hidden and unrewarded. The Awards are given every two years, during our Annual General Meeting which, in 2019, will be on Saturday 18 May.

Do you know of people in your community, parish who could be nominated? If so, provide us with their nomination, accompanied by two references. Nominations should be sent to the office by 15 March, marked for the attention of Arn Dekker, Award Team.

Please send me information on

Membership Resources Legacy

I enclose a donation of £ to support your work

Name:

Address:

Pax Christi, St Joseph's, Watford Way, London NW4 4TY

Pax Christi—Our Values

Pax Christi members live by the biblically inspired values of **Peace, Reconciliation, Nonviolence**.

These values are supported by the witness of peacemakers down the ages and the experience of the Pax Christi community.

Pax Christi is rooted in Catholic Christianity but is open to all who are in sympathy with its values and work.

Pax Christi, St Joseph's, Watford Way, London NW4 4TY

Tel: 020 8203 4884 info@paxchristi.org.uk www.paxchristi.org.uk