

# Justpeace

## PAX CHRISTI

International Catholic Movement for Peace

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### Commemorations that call for change

For the peoples of Palestine and Israel this is a year of commemorations. This Justpeace addresses two: the 'Balfour Declaration' of 1917 and the 1967 Israeli occupation of Palestine which continues today. The moral responsibility for the 'unfinished business' of the Balfour Declaration is set out by Nicholas Frayling with a renewed call for justice. The piece from Pax Christi International reflects the concern of our partners in Bethlehem, and their various calls to action for change are addressed to each of us, to explore where we can engage and use our voice for others.

*"We are commemorating a sad milestone this month with 50 years of devastating occupation. It is urgent that it is resolved as, for both Palestinians and Israelis, their future and hope depend on it. This is the moment for an increased commitment to reach a just and sustainable solution in accordance with international law."*

**Marie Dennis, Co-president, Pax Christi International.**

### Going deeper with 'Britain in Palestine, 1917-1948'



A Companion Guide to the Balfour Project Film

### Unfinished business? Seeking peace through the door of justice in the Holy Land

Between 1917 and 1948 Britain controlled the area of the Middle East then known as Palestine. These three decades were to have a profound effect on Arabs and Jews, and have left an incomplete legacy: Israelis have their state, but Palestinians still wait desperately for their due. For justice to be done, they too should enjoy the freedom of unfettered statehood.

The November 1917 'Balfour Declaration', in the form of a letter from Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour to Lord Rothschild, was a statement of Government policy. Balfour promised 'the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people'. This promise was fulfilled; but the Declaration continued: '...it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine'. Those communities formed the majority of the population.

This second clause has never been honoured, in terms of equal rights and equal statehood for the indigenous Palestinian inhabitants of the land. Many commentators have drawn attention to this contradiction. Few have been willing to address the moral responsibility of the United Kingdom for what has occurred, and our duty to work for an equitable solution to the impasse that Balfour bequeathed.

The Balfour Project was founded by a small group of interested people, to try to enlarge understanding in Britain of the Balfour Declaration and its consequences, as we approach its centenary on 2 November. We are concerned that the anniversary be marked with great sensitivity: it will, understandably, be a cause for celebration in Israel and the Jewish community, and for anguished reflection on the part of Palestinians and across the Arab world. Here in Britain, we must resist the temptation to believe that helping to provide a home for a persecuted people reduces our responsibility for the tragic consequences for those who were displaced.

This process has led the Balfour Project to think carefully about the relationships between pardon and peace, acknowledgment of rights, and dignity in coexistence. Bishop John Austin Baker observed that 'Politics and peace processes, even when carried out with integrity and the best of intentions, can take us so far and no further. True and lasting reconciliation depends on something far more demanding. It requires that we tread the costly road of sorrow and repentance'.

This is, of course, a deeply complex matter. Acknowledgment of suffering and injustice, past and present, is necessary, but not sufficient. The Balfour centenary is an occasion for profound reflection on both the past and the future, embracing 'a firm purpose of amendment' - putting matters right. The Balfour Project believes that the Declaration was born in controversy; it contains a contradiction, and its consequence has been conflict, which we have a duty to address.

What can be done? First, we in Britain need to challenge ourselves, hard as it may be, without endorsing or criticising either of the competing narratives in the Holy Land, the Israeli and the Palestinian. What matters is equity, the equal treatment of both peoples, by us and by each other, now and in the future.

We believe, with the contemporary Palestinian theologian, Naim Ateek, that 'the only way to peace is through the door of justice'. If this is so, both peoples need to live alongside one another, and respect the rights of the other. We advocate nonviolence from either people, and mutual recognition. Justice surely requires that Israel give back the Palestinian land she occupied by conquest in 1967, ending the 50-year Occupation in return for mutual security and the assurance of peaceful co-existence, guaranteed by the international community in accordance with the rule of law.

Continued on back page >>>

## It is time to say 'Enough'

This call, from Pax Christi International and supported by the British Section, urges governments, civil society and all people of good will to exercise their influence to seek an end to the occupation.

For 50 years the international community has been witness to the denial of human rights and the deterioration of conditions throughout the occupied Palestinian territories. We have watched the slow ebbing of hope as lives are damaged by the policies of this occupation which:

- deny freedom of movement;
- limit access to critical services, especially health care;
- monitor and curtail access to basic necessities, especially water and electricity;
- diminish opportunities for education and employment;
- obstruct normal family life and the exercise of religious worship;
- negatively affect the Palestinian economic infrastructure, especially in the agricultural sector;
- punish legitimate, nonviolent expressions of resistance and protest;
- and impose regulations that create segregation and inequality.

Rania Giacaman Murra, Director of the Arab Educational Institute in Bethlehem, explains, *"The occupation severely affects especially Palestinian youth and women. Palestinian children and youth*

### Ideas for action

- Join us in sending messages of encouragement and solidarity to partners in Bethlehem, the Arab Educational Institute, [aei@p-ol.com](mailto:aei@p-ol.com) and Wi'am, The Palestinian Conflict Transformation Center, [hope@alastah.org](mailto:hope@alastah.org)
- Use the Pax Christi Statement and the information from the Balfour Project to write to your own newly elected MP about the situation in Palestine and Israel.
- Join the Stop Arming Israel campaign week of action from July 1-7. There is a lot of good information on this website if you're interested in putting on an event or getting involved [www.stoparmingisrael.org/stop-arming-israel-week-of-action-1st-7th-july-2017/](http://www.stoparmingisrael.org/stop-arming-israel-week-of-action-1st-7th-july-2017/)
- Look ahead to World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel 17-23 September. Plan a service, meeting or discussion. The focus this year is listening to the voices of the young. More resources will be posted here <http://tinyurl.com/UK-WWPPI>



*don't know how it was before the occupation, what it means to live in a land without walls, how it feels to breathe the air of the sea, what it means to pray as Muslims and Christians without being checked and humiliated at checkpoints. Mothers often live in fear that their children will not come back home safe, that they are killed or injured or humiliated."*

The current situation is not sustainable. Reaching a political solution is the only path to peace. We call for the parties to return to the negotiating table to establish a peace agreement that recognises and protects the human dignity and rights of the Palestinian and Israeli people as equals. We believe that the revival of a peace process must be based on a steadfast commitment to abide by international law and U.N. resolutions. To promote and support such efforts for peace, Pax Christi strongly recommends a ban on the sale and delivery of arms to Israel and Palestine and an immediate cessation of any military cooperation which contributes to violent conflict. (Full text of the call on our website).

### Voices of young people from Bethlehem

We invited members of the Arab Educational Institute to share with us their vision for the future.

*What I need for my future and country is justice and support so as to move from the present state of despair and frustration into a stage of hope and optimism. In order these dreams to happen I want to start with myself by changing negative thinking and negative behavior into positive thinking and behavior. This needs the positive support from all my adult leaders in the society. – Rana, 23*

*I like my future to be in a calm and peaceful country. Also, I want to be free like any youth in the world and want to find a suitable job. I think urgent and serious work is needed from all governments in the world to end the occupation. The young generation in both Israel and Palestine should put pressure on both sides and raise their voices, saying "enough is enough." – Fatima, 19*

## Creative solidarity - what can we do?

'What can we do?' is always the response I get when people hear and see the way the Palestinian people suffer the injustices of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories. 50 years on, the daily violations of international law and denial of human rights mean that Palestinian women, men and children experience violence and humiliation, and are denied access to health care, education and worship. Parents send their children to school each morning, terrified as to what might happen to them during the day and wondering if they will come home. The economy is badly affected and unemployment is sky high.

Pax Christi has supported this in very practical ways, importing and selling olive wood goods. We have also used a small organisation for which I have much admiration.

Zaytoun is a wonderful example of how one or two people can make a huge change for the better. Cathi and Heather wanted to do something to support the people in a very practical way. Working with farmers in the West Bank, they explored the idea of exporting olive oil to the UK. It was not easy, but in 2004 the company was founded, and funded by hundreds of customers putting up payment in advance. Since its small beginning I have seen this small enterprise grow so that, as well as the oil, there is now a range of delicious goods, exported to a number of countries. Zaytoun also organises two, highly recommended, visits a year during which the group can meet the farmers and their families, enjoy wonderful food and help with the olive planting or picking.

Buying Palestinian goods is a very positive way to support families who, due to the restrictions of the occupation, have no other way of selling their produce. We can be involved by:

- listening to the stories of the farmers who come to the UK in Fairtrade Fortnight;
- buying the goods from Oxfam, Traidcraft and Zaytoun. There are volunteer distributors around the country;



- organising a Palestinian evening with music and food;
- running a stall with Palestinian goods at local festivals and special events, especially at Christmas;
- becoming a volunteer distributor and making the goods available at meetings, and after church services. A group of churches might run something collectively.

Over the last few years we have also been encouraging RC and Anglican Dioceses to use Palestinian olive oil for their Chrism Services. This means that throughout the year, all the sacramental anointing will be even more deeply symbolic and an act of solidarity with the people of Palestine. Every year we ask people to contact their Diocesan offices to see if they will be using Palestinian oil or would be interested in doing so. The number of dioceses involved varies each year and we hope that this will become a regular act of solidarity that every diocese supports.

It is shame though that not everyone tells the congregations that the oil used in their diocese is from Palestine! If you know that your diocese uses Palestinian oil or would like to take part in this activity, please let us know. For further information Zaytoun website [www.zaytoun.org/](http://www.zaytoun.org/)

**Ann Farr, member of the Pax Christi International board. Contact via Pax Christi office.**

## Office report

**DSEI, the Defence & Security Equipment International**, the world's largest arms fair, is to be hosted again in London in September. Pax Christi will be taking part in two events. On 5 September at 4.00pm we will hold a gathering on the Faith Day, in the run-up to the Exhibition opening. We really need help and ideas as to what we might do during our slot - as well as people to take part. Please do get in touch with Pat ([coordinator@paxchristi.org.uk](mailto:coordinator@paxchristi.org.uk)) with your ideas for symbolic actions, readings, prayers. Then on 11 September we will help to coordinate a one-hour long silent vigil outside the Excel Centre in Docklands on the eve of the opening. Check our website for meeting time. You could also hold a time of prayer in solidarity with these actions wherever you are and ensure that awareness of this arms fair is raised in your parish. More here [www.stopthearmsfair.org.uk](http://www.stopthearmsfair.org.uk)

**Pax Christi Annual General Meeting:** Around 70 members and friends joined us in London on 3 June.

Unable to be with us, Archbishop Malcolm sent a message: *"Last year I was on pilgrimage to the Holy Land and once again I was horrified by the injustice that prevails there. Pax Christi's determination to achieve a just settlement for the Palestinian communities witnesses to the love of Christ in the land where he walked.*

*In an age when countries are increasingly turning in on themselves and putting themselves first we must continue to be brave and look outwards to those who need Christ's peace to us all."*

Laura Atherton was elected to the Executive Committee and Davina Bolt stood down after 10 years of service. The breadth and depth of Pax Christi's international work was shared by our International Secretary, Greet Vanaershot who also challenged us to be less humble about our work and efforts! The 2017 Peace Awards went to Nan Saeki from York and Rev Nagase of the London Peace Pagoda. You can read more about this very full day on the website.

>>> *Continued from front page*

The centenary of the Balfour Declaration provides an opportunity for the British people and our Government to right a historic wrong by pressing before the interested parties, preferably with our European partners, the moral issues to which British policy has given rise. Justice requires changing the status quo in the Holy Land, which is far from static. It is heading swiftly in the wrong direction. Britain has a moral duty to give a lead in urging positive change.

As a starting point, we believe the time is ripe for Britain equitably to recognise, alongside the State of Israel, the State of Palestine, on the basis of the pre-1967 borders, as more than 130 United Nations member states have done. Moreover, our Government should uphold the international law which Britain co-wrote after World War Two.

The Project has produced a 20-minute film, *Britain in Palestine 1917-1948*, which has been shown to Members of Parliament at Westminster, and at several Balfour study days around the country. This film, and its Companion Guide, seek to explain, objectively, the causes and consequences of the Declaration. Details of the Project and access to the film and guide are at [www.balfourproject.org](http://www.balfourproject.org)

Progress towards reconciliation in such diverse areas of conflict as South Africa, Northern Ireland and Australia has been made possible when people have moved into dialogue with those they had grown up to think of as unspeakable, to discuss the unthinkable. As Maya Angelou wrote:

*History despite its wrenching pain  
Cannot be un-lived, but if faced  
With courage need not be lived again.*

Mrs May has said that the centenary will be marked with pride. No doubt the Jewish community will wish to do so; but the Balfour Declaration has left a legacy of inequality, and we in this country have a particular responsibility to urge our political leaders to do all in their power to make it right. This matters if we are to discover a way to right a historic wrong, for our own benefit and for the good of both peoples - indeed, all the people - who inhabit the land in which the God of many names has chosen to be revealed.

*The Very Revd Nicholas Frayling is Dean Emeritus of Chichester and a trustee of the Balfour Project. His book Pardon and Peace was published by SPCK in 1996.*

## Diary

### 14-16 July (Fri-Sun), Kinnoull, Perth

'Reclaiming Gospel Nonviolence': conference co-sponsored by Pax Christi, with speakers John Dear and Lucas Johnson of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation. It will include a meeting of Pax Christi and FoR members in Scotland. Email: [dmumford@phonecoop.coop](mailto:dmumford@phonecoop.coop) Phone: 01368 840361. Price varies from £150 for whole weekend, to £10 for Sat only with no meals.

### 15 July (Sat), London

Launch event for the 'Faith and Resistance Network' with Andrea Needham, Sam Walton and Martin Newell cp. Support and encouragement for Christians undertaking nonviolent direct action for justice, peace and integrity of creation. 10.30am-4.00pm at Friends House, Euston Rd, NW1. <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/faith-resistance-network-launch-tickets-34467181267>

### 21-23 July (Fri-Sun), Swanwick, Derbyshire

National Justice & Peace Network annual conference at The Hayes on 'A Sabbath for the Earth and the Poor: the challenge of Pope Francis'. Speakers: Dr Ruth Valerio (Tearfund) Fr Peter Hughes (Columban Latin America specialist) Kathy Galloway (Iona Community and Christian Aid Scotland). Details of programme and bookings: <http://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/conference/>

### 6 August (Sun) Hiroshima Day, London

Pax Christi will have a stall from 10-5pm outside Westminster cathedral. Prayers at 11.30am and 3.30pm. Please contact the office if you can help at some time during the day.

### 9 August (Wed) Nagasaki Day, London

Pax Christi stall and prayer times as above. At 6.30pm in the Crypt Chapel of Westminster Cathedral there will be the annual service marking the

anniversary of the execution of Bl Franz Jägerstätter, followed by the annual interfaith peace walk to Battersea Park Peace Pagoda.

### 3-4 November (Fri-Sat), Minsteracres, Northumberland

'Resurrection of Hope: Digging Deep for a Just Peace in Palestine and Israel'. Focus on the Balfour Declaration, 50 years of Occupied Territories, and this Kairos moment. Keynote speaker: Prof Mary Grey. Residential and part-time bookings. Details: Fri/Sat rate £80.00, Sat only £35.00 and other rates here <http://urc-northersynod.org/event/resurrection-of-hope-in-palestine-and-israel/>



### Follow Pax Christi on Twitter:

<https://twitter.com/paxchristiuk> and <http://www.twitter.com/PaxChristiYouth>

*If you are organising a local event don't forget to let Pax Christi know in time to advertise it, and send a report/photo for the Members' News section of the website.*

## Keep peace alive. Remember Pax Christi when making or updating your will

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Tel: 020 8203 4884 email: [info@paxchristi.org.uk](mailto:info@paxchristi.org.uk) [www.paxchristi.org.uk](http://www.paxchristi.org.uk)

## 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.

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