‘We learned in South Africa that the only way to end apartheid peacefully was to force the powerful to the table through economic pressure,’ said Archbishop Desmond Tutu. In this Justpeace we focus on current campaigns to use the power of investments to bring about change - in the Holy Land, over nuclear weapons, and in the policy of our churches at national and diocesan level.

**Investing for Peace**

Twelve months ago I had the opportunity to visit Palestine for the first time, whilst working at Pax Christi. Being part of the Pax Christi team had already opened my eyes to so many justice issues, not least the situation in Israel and Palestine. One year on and working for Sabeel-Kairos, I am immersed in trying to discover new and dynamic ways to effect change in Palestine from the UK.

Speaking to a church group recently in London about the Israeli occupation of Palestine, I was struck that almost all of the questions pertained to the same single issue: ‘...but what can we do?’ I could understand their feeling of being overwhelmed by the slightly depressing tone of my talk and the sense that change in Palestine can seem far beyond our reach. Yet there is also so much useful action we can take.

Morally responsible investment is a direct answer to helping Palestinians build a just and lasting peace. Where better to begin than within our churches? Our campaign *Investing for Peace* asks churches to fully disclose their financial investments, identify companies which are profiting from the occupation, review their investment in these companies, and most importantly, put in place a screen to prevent future investment in companies that profit from violations of international law.

In 2018 the Quakers in Britain became 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. We would like to see similar screening procedures within the Catholic and other churches.

To help you campaign with us we have produced a postcard which you will find included with this Justpeace mailing. Please send this to your national church leaders and begin to press for answers and for change. We have also produced an activist’s handbook which can be downloaded or ordered from Sabeel-Kairos.

A major part of our strategy is to work with denominational groups. In our fantastic Catholic working group we are joined by Theresa Alessandro from Pax Christi, and others from throughout the UK. We meet regularly, and keep each other up to date on various actions we are taking forward. Pax Christi is preparing a letter with the Bishops’ Middle East Forum regarding investment, to be circulated to all the diocesan finance officers in 2020.

We each continue to engage at our own local diocesan level and the momentum is certainly building. New members have recently joined the Catholic working group and more are welcome. If you would like to join one of our denomination al groups, please contact us on: advocacy@sabeel-kairos.org.uk

Peter Hickey

’..We implore our governments to help build a new political solution rooted in human dignity for all... Insisting upon the application of international law... Rejecting political or economic support for settlements...’

*Communique of the Holy Land Coordination: Bishop Declan Lang, Bishop Marc Stenger and others. January 2020*
Pax Christi is part of a group bringing to the surface information about UK investment in nuclear weapons. We are launching a new report, *Banks, Pensions and Nuclear Weapons: Investing in Change*. In its foreword, Baroness Susan Miller says that ‘Nuclear weapons states are likely to spend at least $1 trillion on nuclear weapons over the next ten years’.

I have been working with a range of partners, such as Christian CND, Soka Gakkai International-UK, the Baptist and Methodist churches and Quakers in Britain. Our report details our engagement with a sample of UK bank and pension providers. We asked questions about policy and practice on investment in nuclear weapons, and evaluated transparency about these investments. We liaised with the Don’t Bank on the Bomb staff at Pax in the Netherlands and the team behind Don’t Bank on the Bomb Scotland.

The UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is expected to transform the way investment in nuclear weapons is viewed. Once the treaty passes into international law we expect such investment to be delegitimised - in a similar way to cluster bombs and landmines previously. Some financial institutions here have a strong international presence in countries ratifying the treaty. It will be interesting to see how they respond to this new pressure.

Many banks and pension providers achieved fairly low scores in our scoring system. This was due to limited performance in one or more of the areas we investigated. We did take into account whether claims to exclude investment in nuclear weapons appropriately included critical components and infrastructure, or not.

One well-worded ethical fund was so poorly publicised that it seems unlikely there can be many fundholders. Representatives of some institutions we spoke to had insufficient awareness of their own organisation’s record on nuclear weapons’ investment.

Banks and pension providers claim to listen to customers and respond to issues they raise. Please use the information in the report to challenge those banks and pension providers where you are a customer. There will be sample letters on the dedicated new website: moneyoutofnukes.co.uk

Let’s hold our financial institutions to account.


*Theresa Alessandro (pictured below in her ‘Nukes Not Needed’ t-shirt)*

*‘In a world where millions of children and families live in inhumane conditions, the money that is squandered and the fortunes made through the manufacture, upgrading, maintenance and sale of ever more destructive weapons, are an affront crying out to heaven.’*

*Pope Francis, Nagasaki, November 2019*

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Where the Church invests its treasure

‘For wherever your treasure is, there will your heart be too.’ Matthew 6:21.

As a member of the ethical investment working group of the Lancaster Diocese Faith & Justice Commission, I had a glimpse of where the Church invests its treasure. I’ll try to give you an insight in a few words.

Lancaster Diocese has an established ethical investment policy. This states the areas to avoid and the types of company the diocese would prefer to invest in. The policy also restricts investment to the top 350 companies listed on the London Stock Exchange and to UK government bonds.

This negative screening does remove much of what the diocese wants to avoid, such as suppliers of weapons. But the process used means that the diocese can only pick negative criteria provided on a tick-list from the investment managers, and it’s not possible to select the positive criteria contained in the investment policy.

So, the investment consists of around 50 companies such as high street banks and shop chains, as well as national housebuilders and utility companies. In other words, it’s mainstream commercial investment. It’s a compromise, but is this where our heart is?


The investment portfolio is disappointing when you consider the potential. According to FaithInvest:

‘Together, the faiths represent the fourth largest investment bloc in the financial world’. So, it may come as a surprise to see that the Church invests only in mainstream commercial investment.

Is this paying to Caesar what belongs to Caesar?

Lancaster Diocese recently announced that it will divest from fossil fuels, and it’s one of the first dioceses to do so. The diocese, to its credit, had divested some time ago. But it cannot end there. The Churches, as the fourth largest group of investors, need to make positive investment choices, for example to invest in local alternatives to fossil fuels.

So, there is work still to be done to influence the decision makers.

Patrick Hynes

Diary

20 February (Thurs) Liverpool
Theresa Alessandro is speaking at the Cenacle, over supper from 6pm. All welcome. Details from the office.

22 February (Sat) Oxford
‘The White Rose: Voices from the German Resistance’. Concert with vocal ensemble Sansara. 7.30pm University Church of St Mary the Virgin. Part of a project commemorating the students executed in 1943 for distributing anti-Nazi leaflets at Munich University.

23 February (Sun) Birmingham

26 February - Ash Wednesday
Acts of Repentance for the possession and intended use of nuclear weapons will take place in:
Coventry
Gather with Pax Christi 11.45 at the foot of the Old Cathedral steps CV1 5FB
Liverpool
Starts 12 noon at St Luke’s church. Pax Christi liturgy with a special focus on the nuclear ban treaty.
London
Meet 3pm Whitehall Gardens (closest to Embankment station) and process around the Ministry of Defence. Organised by Pax Christi, Christian CND and London Catholic Worker.

4 March (Wed) London
Kate Hennessy, grand-daughter of Dorothy Day will be speaking about her family and signing copies of her book The World will be Saved by Beauty. 7pm Bloomsbury Baptist Church,235 Shaftesbury Avenue,WC2H 8EP Hosted by Pax Christi and London Catholic Worker

7/8 March (Sat/Sun) Nottingham
International Women’s Day reflection 2-5pm with Theresa Alessandro. Contact office for more details.

14 March-4 April Romero Season

31 March (Tue) London
Christian CND Embassies walk. Meet 11am St Martin-in-the-Fields, Dick Sheppard Chapel, then 12 noon in the café for lunch and briefing.

25 April (Sat) London
Prophets & Reconcilers. A conference organised by the Network of Christian Peace Organisations.10-4 at Maria Fidelis School, Drummond Crescent, Euston NW1

15 May (Fri) International Conscientious Objectors’ Day
Why not plan a local ceremony with music, poetry, speakers, stories, at some significant site near you - plant a tree, hold a street stall?

6 June (Sat) London
Celebrate Pax Christi’s 75th anniversary at the annual general meeting.
Office News

We need financial help!

Only this time I am not talking about money. We are setting up a new finance group and need some help from outside the Executive Committee.

We need someone with recent experience of submitting applications to grant-giving bodies, to help us write and submit applications for funding for specific projects that we wish to undertake. We also need someone with recent financial accounting experience to help guide us to account for this project (and other) work in the most transparent and useful way.

Could you be one of these two people? Or do you know someone who has the relevant skills and experience and is at least sympathetic to the work of Pax Christi? If so, then please get in touch (or put them in touch) with Theresa Alessandro at the office.

The commitment we are looking for is attendance at quarterly meetings with some work in between. It will be possible to participate via Skype or similar for some of these meetings.

Joe Burns (Treasurer)

Nonviolent

In this mailing you will find a flyer introducing a new way to approach Lent. Inspired by Pope Francis and the Catholic Nonviolence Initiative, we invite you to join us in making a fresh commitment this Lent to set aside ‘violence in thought, word and deed’. As Lent progresses, we can reflect on our efforts to transform the violence within ourselves and also deepen our understanding of nonviolence values. We will be encouraged by words and images on our new Nonviolent blog paxchristi.org.uk/lent-blog. You might like to share your thoughts via our dedicated Facebook group.

Peace Sunday 2020

How did Peace Sunday go in your area? Please let us know if the materials we produced were used in your parish. It’s a great help to the Pax Christi office to receive your stories and photographs illustrating the events and exhibitions with which you marked Peace Sunday 2020.

75th Anniversary

2020 is the 75th anniversary of the foundation of Pax Christi International. This will be celebrated at a World Assembly in Hiroshima in May with the theme ‘Remember, Rise: the Promise of Peace’. Note our own AGM date of Saturday 6 June. The AGM will be in London this year where we have the largest volunteer network to support the slightly bigger event for the anniversary year. There will be an exhibition of our work past, present and future which will be available for display in other locations afterwards. Get in touch if you want to host the exhibition where you are. You could use the exhibition, for instance, as a focus for having a collection for Pax Christi in your area as well as sharing the fruits and challenges of our work. Please consider making a special financial contribution to Pax Christi. Among other anniversary expenses, we hope your gift will enable us to fund attendance at the World Assembly for a member from the global south.

Consider making a donation during our 75th anniversary year

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

Skype Call

Theresa will soon be organising the first skype call with members around the country. It’s not too late to get in touch and express an interest in taking part. We hope this will be another way to support you in your work for peace where you are.

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 peace-makers 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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