

# Justpeace

## PAX CHRISTI

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### AGAINST THE STREAM

What pastoral help can a conscientious objector to the present conflict with Iraq expect to receive from the church? While church leaders have been queuing up to condemn a war with Iraq, one wonders just how far they would go in supporting those who for reasons of conscience refuse to fight in such a war.

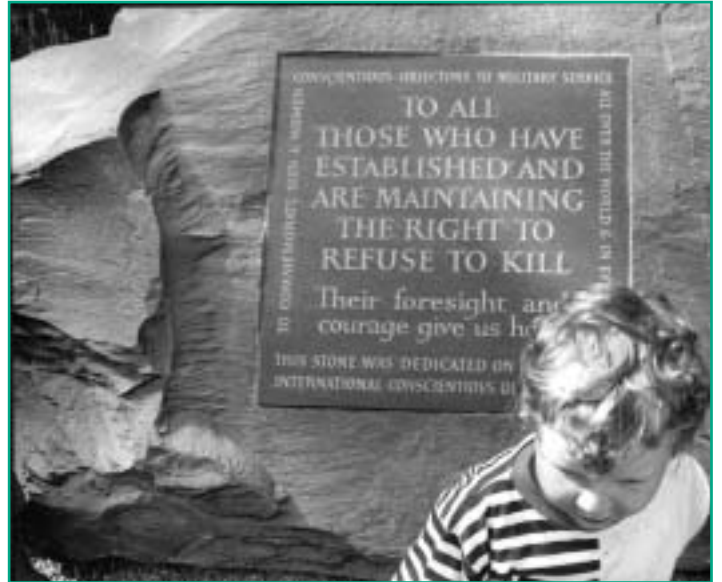
The concept of conscription - compulsory military service by all able-bodied males on behalf of the state - dates back to medieval times. However, formal recognition of conscientious objection - the refusal to serve in the armed forces on the grounds of moral or religious principles - only began to emerge at the beginning of the 20th century. The Catholic countries of Europe - apart from Ireland - where conscription has never been adopted - took half a century longer than their Protestant counterparts to recognise the right to object.

Although Britain can claim some credit for refusing to bring in conscription without simultaneous provision for conscientious objection, almost a third of objectors in the First World War - 6,000 out of 16,000 - ended up in prison because of the way the system was administered. Injustices in other countries have included putting 'alternative service' under the control of the military with objectors serving twice as long as military service. At the other extreme, conscientious objectors in Germany (including the annexed Austria) were executed during the Second World War, and in 1949 two objectors were executed in Greece. The Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly in Resolution 1518 of 23 May 2001, recommended that the right of conscientious objection be formally incorporated into the European Convention on Human Rights.

The churches - especially the so-called 'peace churches' like the Anabaptists, the Mennonites, and Quakers - played an important part in the development of conscientious objection. In recent times a celebrated example of church support for conscientious objection was the testimony of the Catholic Archbishop of Durban, Denis Hurley, in South Africa in 1988. Disillusioned by two years of military service, a young man refused the call-up to further military service and was not granted the status of conscientious objector. The penalty imposed was a six-year prison sentence. Archbishop Hurley stated in court that it was the teaching of the Catholic Church that provision should be made for conscientious objection on the part of those who do not wish to serve in war.

In the Balkans conflict, the plight of the forgotten resisters of Kosovo has recently been highlighted by Amnesty International. Several hundred conscientious objectors are currently imprisoned in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia - most of them serving a prison sentence of at least five years. The number of such cases currently before the Yugoslav military courts may be at least 23,000 according to Amnesty International. Their stories reveal a pattern of consistent neglect by the international community of a group of men clearly in need of guarantees of protection.

In another theatre of conflict many young Israelis are refusing to enlist in the military because of their government's policy



Memorial Stone to Conscientious Objectors, Tavistock Square London

towards the Palestinians. Israel does not recognise the right to conscientious objection, which is derived from Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, of which Israel is a signatory. War Resisters' International has recently released a report on conscientious objection to military service in Israel today. It covers the period October 2000 to January 2003 and lists more than 180 conscientious objectors who served prison terms in this period. The report will be submitted to the United Nations Committee on Human Rights during its session in March of this year.

These few examples (and there are many more) only serve to illustrate just how difficult life has been and continues to be for conscientious objectors. Conscientious objection may well prove to be an important issue for many people in the years ahead if the so-called 'war against terrorism' develops. Then 'prophetic' leadership as well as 'pastoral' guidance from the churches will be much in demand.

Gerry McFlynn

#### Inspiration

*"I refuse to serve in the occupied territories because I believe in liberty, equality and fraternity - words almost forgotten in Hebrew. I refuse to take part in an occupation that denies three million Palestinians their freedom and human rights. I refuse to take part in an occupation marked by crimes and immoral deeds, an occupation that kills civilians and steals their land, an occupation that employs detention, closures, starvation, torture, theft and killing."*

Yoni Kozlovsky. Sentenced to 28 days in Tel Aviv, January 2003

## Pax Christi International

### Our International President

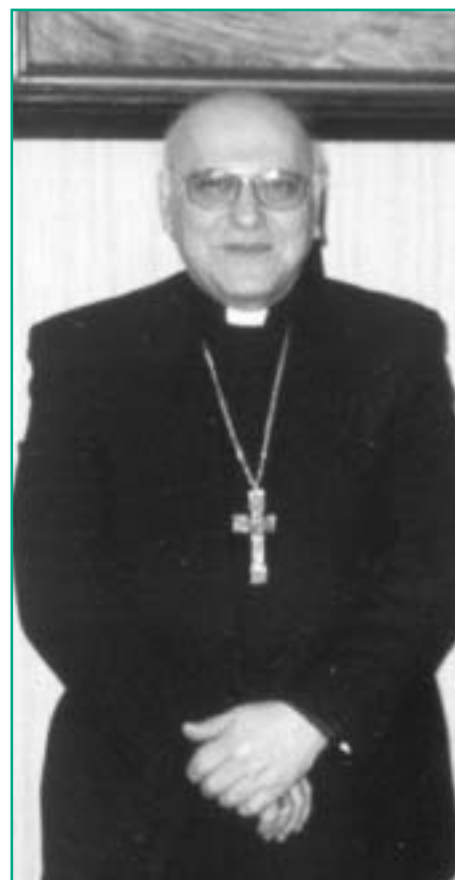
Msgr. Michel Sabbah is the current president of Pax Christi International, a post he accepted in July 1999. His Beatitude Michel Sabbah has been the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem since 1987. The title "Patriarch" is an honorary title given to the bishops of the Eastern (Orthodox tradition) and the Western (Catholic tradition) churches of certain historically important cities, including Jerusalem, Antioch, Rome, Alexandria and Constantinople. The Latin Patriarch is the bishop of those Middle Eastern Catholics who follow the Western Catholic liturgy.

As former President of the Middle East Council of Churches, he is very experienced with ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue. Coming from a region where violence and bloodshed engulfs the lives of so many people, Msgr Sabbah courageously calls the attention of the international community to worsening disparities between the rich and poor, the denial of human dignity, the lack of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, social injustice, intolerable refugee situations, internal and external displacement and physical or psychological

oppression. He never ceases to call for greater justice for the Palestinian people so that the Israelis and Palestinians can live together in peace and mutual trust. He condemns all violence against civilians from whatever side.

Born in Nazareth in 1933, he studied at the Latin Patriarchate Seminary in Beit Jala, was ordained in Nazareth in 1955 and assigned as curate in the parish of Madaba, Jordan. From 1957 he was professor of Arabic at Beit Jala. In 1964 he was named youth director for the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, and in 1966 director of education. In 1968 he taught Arabic and Islamology in East Africa. Two years later he became parish priest at Christ the King Church, Amman, Jordan, and in 1980 President of the University of Bethlehem. In 1987 he became the first native Palestinian to be chosen for the role of Latin patriarch, the highest-ranking Roman Catholic cleric in the Holy Land.

A man of small stature, only five feet tall, the patriarch possesses a great moral strength in his mission to free the people held hostage by conflict. His title bespeaks the honour accorded to the See of Jerusalem, one of only five patriarchates in the Latin-rite



*Msgr. Michel Sabbah*

Catholic Church. He reaches out to the Christian world through pastoral letters on the issues of faith, peace and suffering in the Holy Land.

*Aimee Swartz*

## Peacemaking Resources

### Against the Stream: Franz Jägerstätter

This booklet, first produced by Pax Christi and the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship in 1996, tells the story of Franz, an Austrian Catholic who was beheaded in the Berlin Brandenburg prison because he refused to fight for Hitler. Franz spent six months in prison before his execution. During this time he was constantly urged to consider his family and take up military service. When it was put to him that millions of other Catholics found it possible to take up arms, Franz replied that they had not been given the grace to see things otherwise. Available from Pax Christi. Price £1.50 plus 20% p&p

### Stop the Use of Child Soldiers

This resource pack, produced by the UK Coalition to stop the use of child soldiers, as a campaigning tool, has been sent to every MP in advance of a debate in Parliament on child soldiers within British armed forces. It provides information on the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, on the involvement of children in armed conflict, and on recruitment and deployment of under 18s in the British armed forces. Useful for discussion among those working with young adults. Available from the Pax Christi office at 50p for postage

### RECOMMENDED WEBSITES

War Resisters International offers up-to-date information on the plight of conscientious objectors around the world, with a new section on terrorism and the war on terrorism. This includes guidance for members of the British and US armed forces who may have questions of conscience regarding their involvement in a war with Iraq, plus ideas to help people plan for International Conscientious Objectors Day (15<sup>th</sup> May) with a special focus on Israeli refuseniks.

<http://www.wri-irg.org>

Peace Pledge Union (PPU) provides educational materials for those working with children. It also has advice for any military personnel who wish to exercise their right to conscientious objection. White poppies can be bought on line at

<http://www.ppu.org.uk>

Child Soldier Coalition offers worldwide briefings on children as soldiers, with submissions made on their behalf to the United Nations, plus international laws which have been introduced to protect children. <http://www.child-soldiers.org>

## Celebrating Peacemaking

### Building peace in the Middle East

Participants in Pax Christi's annual carol service last December will remember writing messages of support for the Arab Educational Institute (AEI) in Bethlehem. Others may know AEI's "Letters from Bethlehem," revealing life under Israeli occupation.

The AEI, affiliated to Pax Christi since 2000, is a Palestinian organisation for community education. Located near the Church of the Nativity, it offers classes on many subjects, including computers, business administration and languages, and provides lessons for pupils while schools are closed. The AEI is the secretariat of the campaign, "Let Our Children Go To School," initiated in October 2002. Local and international youth projects foster improved skills of young Palestinians in cross-cultural relations. Non-violent strategies for addressing Israeli occupation are explored in workshops.

([www.aeicenter.tripod.com](http://www.aeicenter.tripod.com))

Another Pax Christi Palestinian contact is Wi'am, which in Arabic means "cordial

relationships". Wi'am helps to resolve disputes within the Palestinian community by complementing the traditional Arab form of mediation, called Sulha, with Western models of conflict resolution. Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza live under siege and curfew and movement outside their towns (and often their homes) remains heavily restricted. Unemployment and stress levels have soared. Wi'am projects include community building, youth in-service training, and tackling drug abuse. Teachers have expressed appreciation for workshops on child trauma. Helping families cope with domestic violence is another area and Wi'am staff describe this work as especially difficult "because the reason for the anger and frustration has not been eliminated".

([www.planet.edu/~alaslal/](http://www.planet.edu/~alaslal/))

Gush Shalom is an Israeli-based movement, and the name means "The Peace Bloc". Gush aims to influence Israeli public opinion towards reconciliation with the Palestinians. Run by volunteers, its advocacy work calls for an end to the Israeli occupation and

acceptance of the right of the Palestinian people to establish an independent and sovereign State of Palestine, including all the territories occupied by Israel in 1967. Political education campaigns include: "Stop the Bulldozers!" (against the building of new Jewish settlements); "National Boycott of Settlements' Products!" (urging Israeli households to avoid products produced in the industrial parks of settlements); and "Marking the Green Line" (to re-establish the pre-1967 border in public consciousness, where activists physically mark the boundary on the ground with green paint). Day-to-day emergencies are tackled too.

([www.gush-shalom.org/english/](http://www.gush-shalom.org/english/))

Rabbis for Human Rights (RHR) gives voice to the Jewish tradition of human rights and all its members are Israeli citizens. RHR has helped numerous individuals, publicised causes, engaged in civil disobedience, lobbied the Knesset and participated in a landmark high court case limiting the scope of the Israeli army to abuse human rights under the guise of security.

([www.rhr.israel.net/](http://www.rhr.israel.net/))

*Ellen Teague*

## Diary

### 29 March (Saturday) Crewe

'Making all things new' - Shrewsbury Justice and Peace conference with Christine Allen (CIIR) and Christopher Rowland (Queen's College, Oxford) plus workshops and children's programme. 10 am - 4.30 pm at St Thomas More School, Danebank Avenue. Information: Joan Sharples 01270 620584 email: [sdjp@fish.co.uk](mailto:sdjp@fish.co.uk)

### 29 March (Saturday) Lancaster

'Challenges to the Church in the Modern World - 40 years on from Vatican II.' 10 - 4.30 pm at Lancaster University Chaplaincy Centre. Speaker: Prof. James O'Connell. Seminar leaders include Tom Cullinan OSB and George Gelber of Cafod. Workshops on liturgy, evangelisation, supporting families, collaborative ministry and peacemaking. Details: John Gildert 01772 732313 or email: [Info@catholiccaringservices.org.uk](mailto:Info@catholiccaringservices.org.uk)

### 4th April (Friday) Haverhill

'Time to Abolish War'. Speaker Bruce Kent. Meeting 7pm, Methodist Church Hall, Hamlet Way, Haverhill, Suffolk. All Welcome. Organised by St Felix Justice and Peace Group. Details: Janet Doyle 01440 783234 email: [janethdoyle@britishlibrary.net](mailto:janethdoyle@britishlibrary.net)

### 26 April (Saturday) Dorchester

'Justice and the Environment' - workshop with Edward Echlin and Rosemary Read at Holy Trinity Parish Centre, Culliford Road. Details/registration - Tel: 01332 293336 email: [rosemary@read2804.freemove.co.uk](mailto:rosemary@read2804.freemove.co.uk)

### 29 April (Tuesday) London

Campaign Against Arms Trade needs people to attend the AGM of BAE Systems at Queen Elizabeth Conference Centre, Westminster. If you can help please phone 020 7281 0297 or email: [martin@caat.demon.co.uk](mailto:martin@caat.demon.co.uk)

### 10 May (Saturday) Horsham

'Theology and Spirituality of Justice and Peace' - workshop led by Patrick Purnell SJ and Rosemary Read at St John the Evangelist, Horsham. Details/registration - Tel: 01332 293336 email: [rosemary@read2804.freemove.co.uk](mailto:rosemary@read2804.freemove.co.uk)

### 10 May (Saturday) Birmingham

Peace and Disarmament: support and networking day for local campaigners, offered by Pax Christi, CAAT, UNA and Quaker Peace and Social Witness. Details from Pax Christi. Tel: 0208 203 4884 email: [paxchristi@gn.apc.org](mailto:paxchristi@gn.apc.org)

### 15 May (Thursday) International

International Conscientious Objectors Day. London memorial service in Tavistock Square at 12 noon. Information from War Resisters' International Tel: 0207 278 4040

### 17 May (Saturday) Plymouth

Day workshop on refugees and asylum-seekers led by Louise Zanré (JRS) Naomi Cheesman (NCRF) and Rosemary Read at Plymouth Cathedral Parish Centre, Cecil St. Details/registration - Tel: 01332 293336 email: [rosemary@read2804.freemove.co.uk](mailto:rosemary@read2804.freemove.co.uk)

### 28 May - 1 June (Wednesday - Sunday) Berlin

Ecumenical German Kirchentag involving thousands of Christians, including many from outside Germany. Bible study and

worship, forums on interfaith dialogue, globalisation, migration, bio-ethics etc. plus cultural events. Details from Mrs Sheila Brain 0161 288 9880. email: [ktag@sheilabrain.com](mailto:ktag@sheilabrain.com)

### 30 May - 1 June (Friday-Sunday) Swanwick

'Conflict and the Struggle for Reconciliation' - World Mission Conference focussed on the Middle East; workshops on conflicts in Rwanda, N. Ireland, Sri Lanka and South Africa. Sponsors include Christian Aid, USPG, Christians Aware, Methodist Church. Information from Meg Bailey 0161 432 3854, email: [meg@baileymm.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:meg@baileymm.fsnet.co.uk)

### 1 June (Sunday)

Day of Prayer to open Stop the Arms Trade week. Materials for exhibitions, discussions and liturgy from Pax Christi or Campaign Against Arms Trade

### 11-13 July (Friday-Sunday) Swanwick

'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice: a theology of protest in a globalised world' - 25th national Justice and Peace conference at Hayes Conference Centre. Speakers include Julian Filochowski and Tom Cullinan OSB. Details: 0161 449 8907

### 26 July - 1 August (Sat-Fri) Durham

Living Theology summer school at Ushaw College. Courses on Scripture, Ethics, Islam for Christians, Ministry, Ignatian spirituality. Details from Jo Caramello 0781 450 4527. email: [jo\\_caramello@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jo_caramello@yahoo.co.uk)

Copy date for the May/June  
Justpeace is 28th April

## Reflection from America - Finding Hope in These days

In these days of threat and heightened alerts and fears of terrorism and warnings of biological and chemical attacks, there is little space in which to stand back and reflect. America is still reeling from the shock and aftermath of September 11th, 2001. Sadly, the current Bush administration has done nothing to help citizens talk about, and work through the painful emotions and the need for post-trauma recovery. Instead we have the shoot-from-the-hip response of fighting back and punishing imaginary enemies.

The many Americans who oppose the drive to war are characterised as "anti-patriotic". As Peter Gomes has written recently: 'They love their country and they love their God; and what do you do when your country is headed where you think your faith and your God don't want you to go? Where, oh where is any nugget of hope in the events of our days?' Gomes quotes from J.B. Phillips' translation of Paul's Romans 12, "With eyes wide open to the mercies of God, I beg you, as an act of intelligent worship, to give Him your bodies as a living sacrifice, consecrated to Him and acceptable by Him. Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold, but let God remold your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good, meets all His demands, and moves towards the goal of true maturity."

Pointing out that call to non-conformity, to transformation, Gomes goes on to say "That tension simply will not go away, and we, like all faithful Christians and honest citizens throughout all time, will have to live with it and through it. If we are uncomfortable with this conflict of values, we are meant to be uncomfortable. The easy syllogism that we go to war to keep the peace ought not to comfort us, or our Christian President."

Recognising the isolation and despair that the peace-carer may more than-occasionally feel, Richard Deats, writing in the current issue of *Fellowship* (Journal of the Fellowship of Reconciliation), reminds us of the choices which we are able to make each day; choices which help us to remain centred, sane and hopeful. "We are building a resistance community", he writes, and "WE MUST BE THE CHANGE WE SEEK IN THE WORLD." Our inner strength depends on intentional choices we make for our inward as well as outward journeys. Deats reminds us that it is essential for committed peace-makers to adopt the disciplines of - holding an empowering vision; an active faith life; being part of a peace group; keeping informed; meditating/praying; taking care of oneself; and finally, and perhaps most importantly, keeping a sense of humour. "The gift of shared laughter releases tensions and wards off the negative tendencies towards cynicism and bitterness. That shared laughter was a gift to a gathering of peace protestors in Cincinnati, Ohio, recently. In trying to protect GW Bush from an encounter with the protestors, police shepherded them away into side roads, unaware that they were thereby blocking all the exits from the dignitaries' car parks.... The Press were there to share the joke!

As an American, I am grateful to have this opportunity to thank Pax Christi UK and the hundreds and hundreds of anti-war protestors everywhere. Your courage, faith and commitment to the lasting peace bring hope to our troubled world. Thank you

*The Rev. Nancy Horvath is a Minister of Word and Sacrament in The Presbyterian Church, USA. A member of Pax Christi USA, she holds an MA in Peace Studies from the University of Bradford*

## Reports from the office

### Talking of Pax Christi

We were delighted to see hundreds of Pax Christi members and supporters at the National Rally on 15th February. Look at the Pax Christi website [www.paxchristi.org.uk](http://www.paxchristi.org.uk) for a photo gallery of the 15th February and Iraq-related events. The event highlighted to us that amidst talk of war many want to talk about peace. This is an ideal opportunity to talk to others about the work of Pax Christi and to increase our membership. If someone talks to you about peace why not give them the enclosed Pax Christi leaflet?

### Local contacts

On occasion new members ask to be put in touch with members in their area. At present we have contacts in a number of areas, which proves to be an ideal way to

strengthen our networking capabilities. If you would be willing to be a local contact please e-mail or write to the office confirming your contact details.

### Pilgrimage to St Radegund.

To mark the 60th anniversary of the execution of Franz Jägerstätter (see resources) Pax Christi is organising a pilgrimage between 7th and 11 August to St Radegund in Austria. The 2003 commemoration promises to be very inspiring and impressive, offering an opportunity to meet with Franz's 90 year old widow, Fransiska and her family. Contact the office for full details on 020 8203 4884 or email [paxchristi@gn.apc.org](mailto:paxchristi@gn.apc.org).

## Keep peace alive. Remember Pax Christi when making or up-dating your will

Please send me information on

Membership  Publications  Legacy

I enclose a donation of £\_\_\_\_\_ to support your work

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

Return to Pax Christi, St Joseph's, Watford Way, Hendon, London, NW4 4TY  
Tel: 020 8203 4884 email: [paxchristi@gn.apc.org](mailto:paxchristi@gn.apc.org) [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.

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