

Waiting for the army to leave

The Pacifist Youth Club in Vilnius has been existing for two years, although it has not been registered by Vilnius City Council. We don't have many members, lack money, lack wider relations with similar organisations, and — *Peace News* apart — lack recent information on pacifist movements and materials on the theoretical basis and history of pacifism.

Early in December, together with the Liberal Youth Society, the Humanist Youth Union, and the Social Democratic Youth Society, we arranged a round-table conference to discuss the future of the military in Lithuania. We criticised our laws of military service and offered alternative national security models.

We believe there can be a gradual way to full demilitarisation. At first, we want to replace conscription with a volunteer army and full social control of the military's budget, cadres and role. It is necessary for the government to replace provisionally the Soviet Army which is maybe going to leave Lithuania. The second step is to refuse any army at all and, if possible, to transfer defence functions to international security structures. However, we have not prepared in detail ways of reaching these aims.

There are lots of obstacles to peace in Lithuania. On the one hand, the government "supports" the ideas of demilitarisation and nonviolent resistance, for instance when the Dalai Lama visits; on the other hand, old-fashioned minds in the national defence ministry aim to create huge military structures avoiding public discussion on national security.

Later in December, we shall have a second round of our conference and prepare a memorandum with our attitudes in it. Perhaps our measures will be successful since we believe there are a number of sober-minded people in Lithuania who don't want to have any military at home and in the world at all. **Paulius Illapatauskas, Vilnius Pacifist Youth Club, Basanaviciaus 18-8, 2009 Vilnius, Lithuania.**

Property at the root?

When I received my mail here in prison, I was surprised to find *Peace News* with the Honour Roll of prisoners for peace — a very nice surprise! After many nonviolent demos against nuclear weapons, after many arrests, after some days in jail, after many discussions about nonviolence, I think I found the root of militarism, behind the suppression of demos: property.

Let me explain (I would be glad if people found it worthwhile to let me know whether they agree with my reasoning). Though I am not religious, I follow the reasoning of Francis of Assisi who said: "I do not want property because I would have to defend it with weapons". I think our property is secured by national (inner-state) deterrence (door-locks, police, penal code, courts, jails) which is the basis for international (inter-state) deterrents (military, nuclear weapons) against which we demonstrate.

Now my question: nonviolent demos against militarism, etc, are necessary but should not the next step be to get rid of property in order to dismantle the logic of deterrence? I know it sounds unreal, but — as a fellow peace prisoner in the US — as a fellow peace response to my question — "the obvious answer is still too difficult for me: voluntary poverty". **Hannes Fischer, Stadelheimerstr 12, 8 München 90, Germany.**

Too little too late?

Let us hope that Mr Baker's call to the nations of the world to help the Soviet republics is not too little too late. Even at this late hour, however, we could avert a disaster that may embroil the world by drastically reducing our defence expenditure and using the money saved to finance a radical long-term concept that could ensure the success of the fragile [ex-] Soviet commonwealth.

Disarmament has already begun, but if we are to meet the challenge we need to reach a comprehensive multilateral disarmament agreement to reduce future defence expenditure by at least half. We could then earmark a percentage (say 25 to 50) of the money saved to help the Commonwealth of Independent States from imminent collapse over a four or five year period.

Any aid, however, should be made within an agreement that includes: human rights; an understanding about what is meant by development; and a requirement that a well-qualified secretariat (similar to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development; OECD) formulate and administer a Regional Economic Plan. If the spirit of the agreement was not observed, yearly payments could be suspended.

Under this proposal everyone would benefit, not least ourselves, as we would receive a 50-75 per cent peace dividend. The Commonwealth of Independent States would also have every incentive to reduce defence spending even further, thus making total nuclear disarmament a real possibility. The threat from the ex-Soviet republics would then be ended and the basis of a new world order, based on cooperation, laid.

With these advantages and safeguards, aid should be made available to "kick-start" a regional Soviet reconstruction plan into being, on a scale similar to the Marshall Plan. Such an imaginative response would give the world, and especially the people of the Soviet republics, a new sense of meaning, purpose, and hope; only when these virtues are installed in people's hearts will success become possible.

The danger to our security today comes not from war, but from terrorism (especially nuclear terrorism), environmental damage, refugees, and chaos. These real and dangerous problems can only be overcome by removing their economic and social causes through regional and international cooperation, including the CSCE process, the Council of Europe, and the United Nations.

Britain alone cannot make this vision possible, but we could capture the imagination of the world by proposing the idea in the UN Security Council as a matter of extreme urgency. The fate of the Soviet republics, and indirectly the Third World, and our own economy, depends on our willingness to respond.

Ted Dunn, Essex, England.

Control or be controlled

I was interested to read Ken Simons' article on CND in your January issue, and I would say that CND conference did the right thing in committing itself to re-affirming its nuclear focus, including global security and so forth. As long ago as 1978, the 10th Special Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations stated that "ending international peace and security cannot be built on the accumulation of weaponry by military alliances nor be sustained by a precarious balance of deterrence or doctrines of strategic superiority." This is even more true today

and nuclear weapons are a very serious threat to international security. Moreover, it is hard to reconcile their use as an integral element of the security of any state with the ideas behind the UN Charter.

Britain depends on nuclear deterrence for her defence and to support it is willing to undermine the Non-Proliferation Treaty. With the breakup of the USSR and the uncertainty about their nuclear weapons, now is the time to campaign as forcefully as possible for the elimination of all nuclear arms in the world, and the eventual establishment of security that does not rely on the use of force or the threat of force.

It is well to remember that the military-industrial complex benefits from the arms race. State leaders should be encouraged to control these forces rather than be controlled by them.

Mary Barker, Somerset, England

A costly conscience

A final report on my refusal to pay the Inland Revenue £11,000 in capital gains tax accumulated over five years.

After making me "bankrupt" on 28 August, and threatening me with jail for contempt of court for nearly three months, on 19 November the Official Receiver in Gloucester "released" what was in my local bank, acquiring about £2800 in addition to the tax due. I was then notified that the full penalty, largely because of the redundant "bankruptcy" order from the High Court, would be over £8300.

Because of family obligations, I decided not to hold out on the approximately £5500 required to end the "bankruptcy". In any case, if that was eventually released in the same way, there would be a further penalty, ad infinitum.

Money talks, so the high penalty attracted interest from the local press. But it does seem that refusing Caesar his currency is costly, however urgently one's conscience cries out. The penalty money could be so much better used.

I shall continue my support for **Conscience: the Peace Tax Campaign** (1a Hollybush Rd, London E2 9QX) which, over many years, has tried for a change in the law to match in the money realm the right to refuse to support war that now exists regarding physical support. We can refuse to fight, but we cannot refuse to pay for others to fight, or for the killing machinery of the automated battlefield.

Roger Franklin, Stroud, England

Vanunu not a "hostage"

I resent the misdescription of Mordechai Vanunu as a "nuclear hostage" (*PN*, January 1992). A hostage is any in-

dividual unlucky enough to be seized and held by some person or group and used as a bargaining counter. But Mordechai Vanunu was kidnapped and is now incarcerated in shocking conditions because of something he actually did — not because he happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. He is a nonviolent political prisoner (deplorably not adopted by Amnesty International as a prisoner of conscience), and it diminishes his significant contribution to world peace to call him a hostage — which he palpably is not.

Pat Arrowsmith, London

Surprised and saddened

We received your latest issue and were surprised and saddened that you did not give space to our Remembrance Sunday event, though you knew about it beforehand by a press release and were telephoned by afterwords and what had happened. (For the record, the event was organised by Catholic Peace Action and consisted of a prayer service attended by 25 people plus three people who each dug a symbolic grave outside the Ministry of Defence in Whitehall; the three were charged with criminal damage.)

We were surprised and saddened because we expected that *Peace News*, above all other publications, would give priority to nonviolent civil disobedient actions against war and war preparations. If the people against war do not read about such actions in your journal, where else can it be found?

Surprised also because before now *PN* always found space for such actions. Why the silence now? We are implying that you need agree with every aspect of our event but we would have hoped that broad sympathy and general support was there. Are we wrong?

We realise of course that any publication has limited space but wonder what the priority is if there is no space given for news of nonviolent civil disobedience.

You might like to know that at our trial on 23 December we were found guilty of criminal damage and given 28 days to pay court costs and £105 in compensation to the Ministry of Defence (one person had charges dismissed). We were also ordered to sign an agreement to "keep the Queen's Peace" for two years, which we refused to do, hence our present address. We were then sentenced to 21 days. We will be out a week before we have to return to court to explain why we will refuse to pay any money to the MoD in the courts. **Dan Martin and Chris Cole, HM Prison Pentonville, London N7.**

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US and British nuclear threats

MILAN RAI

Why did Iraq fail to use chemical weapons during the Gulf War? The UN Special Commission has uncovered 45,000 chemical weapons in Iraq, of which at least 30 were long-range Scud missiles armed with Sarin nerve gas.

The Iran-Iraq war made Iraq the most experienced military force in the world at employing chemical weapons on the battlefield. By contrast, Western forces in the Gulf had no experience of chemical warfare in desert conditions. The use of chemical weapons might have at least mitigated the extent of the Iraqi defeat.

The answer appears to be that Iraq was intimidated by nuclear threats. A senior officer with 7 Armoured Brigade was reported as saying that if attacked by chemical weapons, British forces "will retaliate with battlefield nuclear forces". Hugo Young reported hearing a minister say that the war might have to be ended with "tactical nukes". Similar statements were made in the USA. During the war, British foreign secretary Douglas Hurd was paraphrased in the *Guardian* as saying that "if Iraq responded to an allied land assault by using chemical weapons, President Saddam would be certain to provoke a massive response — language the US and Britain employ to leave open the option of using chemical or nuclear weapons."

Under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, it is forbidden to launch a nuclear attack on non-nuclear signatories of the Treaty, such as Iraq. Questioned by the Commons Foreign Affairs Committee on 16 January, Hurd replied:

"If any non-nuclear weapons state covered by our negative security assurance were to manufacture or acquire nuclear weapons in breach of its Treaty obligations, we would have to consider carefully how our undertaking in respect of that state was affected. I think you can read the meaning of that."

Iraq was quite capable of reading the meaning of these various pronouncements.

The first Kuwait invasion

One helpful experience for the Iraqi leadership in interpreting Western nuclear threats was the British invasion of Kuwait in 1961. After Kuwaiti "independence" from Britain was arranged in June, a threat from Iraq was manufactured and 6500 British troops poured into the Emirate in July. It was subsequently conceded by Air Chief Marshal Sir David Lee that "HMG did not contemplate aggression by Iraq very seriously". Nevertheless, according to historian Anthony Verrier, "the nuclear weapons system played a central, concealed role [in the invasion] directed against Nasser and, by extension, Russian ambitions in Arabia."

British and US nuclear threats against non-nuclear Third World states are long-standing feature of international affairs. While the literature on US nuclear threats is hardly vast, it does at least exist, the seminal work being a 1978 Brookings Institute study, *Force without War*, by Barry Blechman et al. They list 19 incidents involving US strategic nuclear forces between 1946 and 1973, including the inauguration of a president in Uruguay in February 1947, and the US-sponsored overthrow of the democratic government of Guatemala in May 1954.

Daniel Ellsberg, the former Pentagon analyst, has compiled a complementary list of nuclear crises including a number of incidents involving Vietnam. He comments:

"every president from Truman to Reagan, with the possible exception of Ford, has felt compelled to consider or direct serious preparations for possible imminent US initiation of tactical or strategic nuclear warfare, in the midst of an ongoing, intense non-nuclear conflict or crisis."

We may now add George Bush to this roll of honour.

The quiet Briton

In contrast, there has been no systematic study of British nuclear threats. Orwell's comment on nationalism seems appropriate: "The nationalist not only does not disapprove of atrocities committed by his [or her] own side, but



CAROLINE AUSTIN

"One year on" — a die-in organised by ARROW, Active Resistance Against the Roots Of War, in London's Whitehall on 17 January. Four people were arrested but later released.

he [or she] has a remarkable capacity for not even hearing about them."

One useful source on Britain's nuclear diplomacy is *V-Force: the history of Britain's airborne deterrent* by Andrew Brooke. This 1982 study confirms that during the 1961 British invasion of Kuwait, the government "also placed V-bombers at readiness in Malta". Until 1969, the V-bomber force of Vulcans, Victors, and Valiants were Britain's strategic nuclear arsenal.

Some of the nuclear threats mentioned by Brooke involved the Malayan Emergency, the Malaysian Confrontation, and Uganda. The Malayan Emergency, immediately after the Second World War, was a British campaign to eliminate the former anti-Japanese resistance, conducted with customary colonial niceties. In addition, between 1951 and 1953, Britain also sprayed areas of Malaya with vast quantities of dioxin-based herbicides similar to Agent Orange. According to Brooke, V-bombers were also despatched to Malaya between 1957 and 1960 "not so much to go into action as to be seen in a position to do so".

The received version of the Malaysian Confrontation is that between 1963 and 1966 Britain aided Malaysia in deterring expansionist Indonesia. At its height, Britain had 59,000 troops in Malaysia, and the cost of the war has been estimated at £256 million. A historian of British intervention, James Wyllie, comments "if the Confrontation had escalated, then the strain on British military and economic resources could have proved unbearable ..."

In order to prevent escalation, Brooke reports, eight Victors were sent out in December 1963, "positioned to be seen as ready to eliminate Indonesian Air Force capabilities if they launched air attacks" against Singapore. Air Chief Marshal Sir David Lee comments "their potential was well known to Indonesia

and their presence did not go unnoticed."

According to Brooke, Bomber Command sent V-bombers on 400 overseas flights in 1963 alone, including a visit to Uganda's independence ceremony. The purpose, in Brooke's words, was to prove "that the V-force had the ability to back up tactical air force overseas, and to deter limited aggression anywhere in the world and at any time."

One incident involving tactical air forces concerns Belize, the British colony in Central America granted independence in 1981. According to the Latin America Bureau, during a sovereignty dispute with Guatemala in 1972, Britain responded to Guatemalan troop movements by despatching two nuclear-capable Buccaneer aircraft from the *Ark Royal* to fly over Belize.

"Gun at the head"

These are some incidents, on three continents, involving British nuclear weapons. There are others. Furthermore, Blechman et al comment "like Army ground troops deployed overseas, strategic nuclear forces serve vital political objectives on a continuous basis, perhaps thus obviating the need for discrete and explicit utilization."

The record demonstrates that "nuclear weapons have been used ... in the precise way that a gun is used when you point it at someone's head in a direct confrontation, whether or not the trigger is pulled" [Ellsberg]. Returning to the Gulf War, it may be argued that Western nuclear threats would never have been carried out. This may be so. Nonetheless, the threat of terror is still terrorism. We may recall that during the Cuban Missile Crisis, US policy-makers were willing to accept 50 per cent odds of nuclear war to establish the principle that only the USA should be able to station nuclear weapons on the borders of its enemies. It may therefore be unwise to discount all such threats.

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