



YORKSHIRE CND AT RAF LAKENHEATH

By Matthew Maslen, with thanks to David and Mollie Somerville

On the 21st May, hundreds gathered at RAF Lakenheath in Suffolk to protest against US nuclear weapons being stationed on British soil.

A group from the West Yorkshire area got in a coach in Bradford and Sheffield and arrived among the earliest at RAF Lakenheath. Among them were Mollie and David Somerville. Other groups had travelled from places as far away as the North-East of England, East Anglia, particularly Norwich, and London.



Mollie and David have been members of CND and Pax Christi for many years. In the 1980s Mollie took a small part in the Greenham Common activity. *"We think that Nuclear Weapons not only threaten humanity's future but the money and time and expertise wasted on them would be so much better spent elsewhere. We have found that not paying attention to pandemics and climate change has already cost us dearly."*

RAF Lakenheath has previously been a US nuclear weapons station as the base is under the control of the US Airforce. However, in the wake of relentless protesting, the 110 nuclear bombs were removed in 2008.

Now, over a decade later, there are reports that they are either to return or, more worryingly, possibly already have. The US Department of Defense has added the UK to a list of nuclear weapons storage sites that will be upgraded. For more information see Hans Kristensen's article [here](#).

As Mollie and David said, "No government announcement will be made - all in the interests of secrecy and our national defence!"

And so, they travelled to Lakenheath to take a stand. Just after midday they joined in the Christian CND service led by the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship outside the base where they *"sang lustily in the open air!"*

The majority of people who travelled arrived in time for the speeches which started after 1pm. The group from Yorkshire met with Justice and Peace people from Birmingham and the story featured in the local BBC news among other outlets. *"It was a beautiful day and everyone was in festive as well as serious mood of all ages and origins both political and racial."*

The protest was particularly relevant as it was held just over a month ahead of the TPNW 1MSP in Vienna. When asked about what outcomes they hoped to see from the Conference, Mollie and David said, *"We have no great hopes in the TPNW because it's a bit like asking Americans to give up private guns. Everyone else can see the sense of it but not them! British people are like that with nuclear*

Yorkshire CND Contact Details:

Email info@yorkshirecnd.org.uk

Call 01274730795

25 Hallfield Rd, Bradford BD1 3RP

Or visit <https://yorkshirecnd.org.uk/>



weapons!”

FINAL THOUGHTS BEFORE TPNW YOUTH 1MSP

By Matthew Maslen

A week on from today (20th June), I will be flying to Vienna from Manchester airport for the first MSP (Meeting of State Parties) on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.



Since April, when I last wrote about what I'd been doing in the run-up to Vienna, our pre-MSP events have been coming thick and fast!

I mentioned before that at the beginning of this journey I knew that I wanted to learn more about the impact of nuclear weapons from a non-western perspective.

Since then, we have had sessions on Nuclear Weapons and the Pacific, and Africa and Nuclear Weapons. In these sessions I learnt a huge amount from speakers who were invited to join us, as well as from other delegates to the Youth MSP.

Discussions in these two sessions brought home the colonialism that is endemic to nuclear weapons. We discussed nuclear weapons-testing in the Pacific, specifically the Marshall Islands and the toxic legacy left behind. The United States used the area to test over 50 thermo-nuclear weapons

between 1946 and 1958. Local people were not evacuated from the island and were exposed to radiation. The US claimed that this was due to an unexpected shift in the wind. Yet evidence later emerged of Project 4.1 which said leaving people on the island would “afford valuable radiation data”. The Marshall Islanders experienced higher rates of cancer, babies had birth defects or were still born.

Project 4.1 demonstrates the hugely disturbing thinking behind nuclear weapons. The US used the Marshall Islanders as guinea-pigs to test the impacts of radiation. In 1956, the Director of the US Atomic Energy Agency's health and safety said: “While it is true that these people do not live the way Westerners do, civilized people, it is nevertheless also true that these people are

Nuclear Savage: The Islands of Secret Project 4.1

is a film about this!

more like us than the mice.”

Learning about people's lived experiences of nuclear weapons has been eye-opening because I often feel that here in the UK nuclear war is a theoretical threat, so it's important to remind myself that there are people living with the actual consequences of nuclear weapons already.

But the programme of pre-MSP events hasn't just been about the impacts of nuclear weapons; it has also been about the practicalities of treaties and law. I have learnt the difference between different types of law (such as treaty and customary).

While I find this sort of information much harder to digest, I know that it's important



for me to understand *how* we can change things, and the processes that change will be channelled through.

During this session we focused on the additional protocols to the Geneva Convention, and it became increasingly baffling how the world is able to justify the legality of nuclear weapons when they so evidently fail to satisfy the conditions that so many countries have agreed to.

Our zoom session on this topic was only an hour so we focused on the conditions which prohibit warfare that cause:

- indiscriminate attacks,
- unnecessary suffering and superfluous injury,
- widespread, long-term and severe to the environment.

For me, the most exciting thing that we've been up to has been compiling a policy document. This document presents suggestions about the role young people and future generations ought to play in the conversation. The document centres around youth education, inclusion and empowerment.

First, we were split into groups according to which area of policy we had chosen to be a part of. My group was to write about 'Education and Agency'. Since the Youth 4 TPNW delegates are from all over the world, we couldn't really meet in a café and discuss over a coffee! So instead, we made a group chat and shared a google document! Myself and five other young people found ourselves in front of a blank document that we had to transform into a policy document... but how?

I have never had an opportunity to take part in policy writing before, so this was a totally new experience. I was unsure of what a policy document really was: the format, the wording, and quite honestly, the point! Was

this an exhaustive list of everything we could change? Or a selective list of recommendations? How comprehensively did we need to justify each idea? Did we need to begin by listing everything that's wrong currently?

The rest of my group were amazingly supportive though. A couple of them had been a part of similar tasks before, mainly on the topic of climate change, so they were able to answer all my questions and provide insight into how I could contribute.

Each team had an allowance of 1500 words. We provided an overview, followed by an outline of what the current issues are relating to education and agency for youth in disarmament and non-proliferation, and then our recommendations to overcome these problems.

Our contribution was then added to the others into one final policy document, edited by the Youth 4 TPNW team. It feels amazing to have been a part of the team who have created this piece of work.

When we meet in Vienna, we will be discussing how to put it into action, discussing how that may look different in different countries and regions of the world.

Our Youth MSP Conference is being held in the Austria Centre on Tuesday 21st June. To get into the building we had to register for UN badges! The following day, we will be taking part in civil society action, marching through central Vienna.

Over the past 6 months I've learnt an enormous amount and met some incredible people. I'm so excited for this next part of the experience: the actual conference! I'd like to say a huge thank you to the SPARK Project for funding my travel so that I can attend in person!



BRADFORD CITY OF CULTURE 2025

By Liz Firth, Bradford

I don't think I was the only Bradford resident who was left with very few nails left after the dramatic countdown to the announcement of the winners of the Capital of Culture 2025 on Tuesday 31st May.

It was an absolute delight to hear the news that we'd been awarded the title after a breath-taking bid by the local team.

"This fantastic result is down to the ambition, belief and hard work of thousands of people across the district who were behind our bid,"

said Shanaz Gulzar, chair of Bradford 2025 when interviewed by the Guardian

"Bradford has been overlooked and underestimated for so long – it's now our time to shine."

The hope is that Bradford will benefit in the coming years from investment and perhaps a more positive media spotlight.

Having grown up in Bradford and now bringing up my own children in the local area, it's sometimes hard to reconcile the media portrayal of the place I know with the one I have come to know through the lens of an often-critical public perception. That's not to say Bradford doesn't have its challenges. There is poverty, a lack of investment and a lack of the wide range of job opportunities you might want in your city. We are a diverse place, but I feel we suffer from a lack of opportunities for people to come out of their bubbles and get to know others who are different to them.

Despite all of that, I can't imagine living anywhere else. There is a warmth to Bradford which I don't think you find very

often. I've been fortunate to work across the Bradford district with many different organisations and groups. I've seen Bradford through the eyes of families who have just arrived from war torn countries to build a new life, they see Bradford as a place of hope. I spent the Jubilee weekend with families who are newly arrived in the city at a party held at the hotel they currently live in which was hosted by the local secondary school and later at the Shabbat service at Bradford synagogue where a diverse group of us from different faiths were welcomed.

There are so many things that make Bradford unique which I hope will be shared with a wider audience as part of our Capital of Culture Year. We have the most diverse landscape and fantastic heritage. We have amazing museums, galleries, and theatres. As a trustee at the Peace Museum, I'm biased but the range of culture on offer is already immense and will only be strengthened by the award. There are multi faith trails you can join to visit the beautiful places of worship and meet members of the various faith communities. We have several literature festivals as well as so many local and central festivals and celebrations.



It's no secret that one of the strengths of Bradford's bid was the young people and how their voice was placed front and centre. Over a quarter of the population are aged under 25. This award is a gift to them, and I can't wait to see what they have to offer as the plans for the Capital of Culture year get underway.

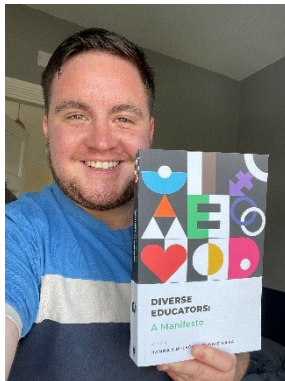


LGBT INCLUSION IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS – DIVERSE EDUCATORS

By George White

As part of Pride Month, we wanted to celebrate the ways in which the LGBT+ community is, and can be, supported by the Catholic Community. So, we reached out to George White to discuss his contribution to a new educational tool:

<https://www.diverseeducators.co.uk/>



I am fortunate to have been one selected as one of the contributors to the **Diverse Educators Manifesto**. The Diverse Educators' book is structured around the Equality Act. There are ten chapters, one for each of the nine Protected Characteristics (Age; Disability; Gender Reassignment; Pregnancy and Maternity; Marriage and Civil Partnership; Race; Religion and Belief; Sex; Sexual Orientation) with a tenth chapter exploring intersectionality. I wrote a contribution for the Religion and Belief category exploring how one might simultaneously protect religion and belief, gender reassignment and sexual orientation.

My piece was entitled 'LGBT Inclusion in Catholic Schools' and allowed me to discuss both pedagogy and personal experience. My experience as a Catholic and transgender teacher of Religious Education at a Catholic school is certainly very unique. For the vast overwhelming majority of the time, I've

simply been treated as a normal appointment to the job. But there have been times that we've encountered some difficulties, whether it be how to challenge transphobia from pupils or how to respond to right wing church groups who have claimed the school is in breach of Canon law because they employ me. In my day-to-day life, I experience very few negative situations as a result of being an LGBT person of faith but the small number of times that I have are scary and isolating. One of the most positive themes in my contribution to Diverse Educators Manifesto is discussing how the church has changed in its pastoral ministry of LGBT Catholics over the years. Pope Francis has commended those who work with and for the LGBT community, he has gifted funds to a transgender community in Italy and even advocated support for same sex relationships to be recognised by civil law. The official teaching of the Catholic Church – as stated in the Catechism- is to *“accept (LGBT people) them with compassion, sensitivity and respect”* and Pope Francis is showing us exactly how to do that. I hope that my story and section of the chapter inspires Catholics who are unsure how to extend a welcome to LGBT people to listen to us as Fr James Martin SJ requests in his book 'Building a Bridge' which seeks to develop how the Catholic Church and LGBT community can enter into a relationship of compassion, sensitivity and respect.

The Diverse Educators Manifesto is an outstanding collection of contributions from experts in their field. 114 people have shared something of their personal and professional experience as educators in the hope that it offers readers some practical solutions, accessible resources and a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of those protected by the Equality Act.



FIX THE FOOD SYSTEM – CAFOD'S NEW CAMPAIGN

By Matthew Maslen

CAFOD's new campaign 'Fix the Food System' begins with a simple fact: **"The global food system is broken. It doesn't work for those who work the hardest – small farmers – and it's a major driver of the climate emergency."**



The way that we produce and consume food is wasteful, exploitative and damaging. We produce enough food to ensure that no one in the world is hungry – and yet they are. 800 million people worldwide go hungry. Even here in the UK, in January 2022, 9% of adults were experiencing food insecurity.

As part of the campaign, CAFOD has produced a fact sheet outlining some of the most concerning and important issues with our current food system:

- Around one-third of food is lost/wasted
- Production and transportation of food is a huge emitter of greenhouse gases and is responsible for much of the deforestation of rainforests
- Some crops, such as soya, are used mainly for animal feed
- Countries such as the UK are overly reliant on imported foods
- Big corporations dominate agriculture

But the 'Fix the Food System' is not just a criticism of the way things are currently done – it's a call to action! The main change that CAFOD is hoping to see is that the agriculture business is returned to small-scale farmers. In order for us to protect local communities, and the planet, funding must be allocated to support local farmers. That's why CAFOD is calling on you to email the Foreign Secretary to fix the food system.

Click on the link to email Liz Truss:

<https://action.cafod.org.uk/page/102736/action/1>

If you want to get involved more in the campaign, Parishes across the Diocese of Leeds have been invited to host a 7 Stations: 'Fix the Food System' activity this summer.

Local CAFOD worker for the Diocese, Bronagh, said: *"The activity works for any group size; it is ideal for between 10 – 30 people and lasts about 1 hour. There is a leader pack and prayer resources available for the activity. This is a really good way to help get more people involved in social justice in parishes and learn more about how CAFOD works to end global food poverty."*

More information about the campaign action can be found here:

[Fix the Food System leader's guide for parishes – CAFOD Shop](#)

<https://cafod.org.uk/News/Campaigning-news/Food-8-things-you-didn-t-know>

Urge the Foreign Secretary to fix the food system by emailing Liz Truss:

<https://action.cafod.org.uk/page/102736/action/1>



WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT PALESTINE?

By Joe Burns

This was the title of a partnership event last week with Pax Christi in the Leeds Diocese and the Leeds Palestinian Film festival. Social justice issues are often complex, and many people do not feel that they can influence unjust situations – and Palestinian injustice is a good example of this.

At the film we showed last November, as part of the Palestinian Film Festival, someone posed a question about this and the event last week was the result.

About 50 people came along to hear a range of speakers talk about the actions that they are taking. We heard speakers from Palestine Action in Bradford who, through some direct



Adie Mormech: Manchester Palestine Action

actions, have been instrumental in closing an arms factory in Oldham. From Leeds we heard about the 'Women in Black' group – which has featured previously in the newsletter. We also heard from the Palestinian Solidarity Campaign in Leeds and from Jenny Lynn, an Executive member of Calderdale council and Chair of Halifax Friends of Palestine.



Jenny Lynn, Chair Halifax Friends of Palestine

She detailed out the IHRA (International Holocaust Remembrance Association) definition of antisemitism. Many public institutions have adopted this. However, some of the examples they provide of antisemitism make it difficult to criticise the actions of the state of Israel – and, in turn, this has led to attempts to censure some university academics, not to mention Labour MP's.





Carol Burns, of Pax Christi in the Leeds Diocese, chaired the meeting and stressed that social activism was a journey: we all have a responsibility towards situations of injustice. However, we also all have many other responsibilities and we must each decide what actions we are capable of supporting at any point in time. For some this might mean taking part in some direct action, for others it might just be talking about the issues with other people and raising awareness.

FIND OUT MORE

Find this article in the news section of our website to download some resources produced for this meeting



EVENTS

 Wed 29 June	<p>Get involved in Challenge Poverty Week <i>Online: 2pm – 3pm</i> Challenge Poverty Week England and Wales does not take place until 17 – 23 October 2022. Church Action on Poverty invite you to an online event help you feel more confident about doing something in your area to challenge poverty. This introductory session is to learn more about Challenge Poverty Week England and Wales, their key themes and messages, and how you could take part in 2022. https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/get-involved-in-challenge-poverty-week-2022-tickets-347129041307</p>
 Tues 5 Jul	<p>Church Action on Poverty 40th Anniversary Service from Iona Abbey <i>Online: 7pm – 8:30pm</i> To mark the 40th anniversary of their founding, CAP are holding a special service which will be livestreamed from Iona Abbey. Register by following this link https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/church-action-on-poverty-40th-anniversary-service-tickets-352507357997?utm_source=eventbrite&utm_medium=email&utm_content=notification&utm_campaign=following_published_event&utm_term=Church+Action+on+Poverty+40th+anniversary+service&aff=ebemoffollowpublishemail</p>
 Sat 9 Jul	<p>Hope in the Dark – Global Justice Now <i>Sheffield Hallam University: 1pm-6pm</i> FREE EVENT: activist gathering on climate breakdown, reparations and a just transition. Global Justice Now's national gathering organised in collaboration with Jubilee for Climate – open to all. For more information and to register visit: https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/hope-in-the-dark-tickets-327217314797</p>
 Fri 22 Jul	<p>NJPN Conference – Hope is a Verb with it's Sleeves Rolled Up <i>Hayes Conference Centre, Fri 22nd Jul 6pm – Sun 24th Jul 2pm</i> This is the 44th National Justice & Peace Network Annual Conference – which is held in the lovely surroundings of the Hayes Christian Conference Centre at Swanwick in Derbyshire. Join 300 or so other social justice activists for a memorable weekend. Booking Form: https://www.leedsjp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/NJPN-Conference-Booking-Form-2022.pdf</p>

Please forward this email E-News onto anyone else who you think might be interested. Even better, get them to send us their email address so we can add them to our contact database. See our website for details of these and other events which may be of interest.