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Nuclear Disarmament Initiatives

EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ON PEACE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The Russell Foundation launched the proposal for a European Conference in 1999, in the aftermath of the bombardment of Yugoslavia. The first Consultation to prepare the Conference took place at the European Parliament in Brussels on Thursday 11th and Friday 12th May 2000, at the invitation of Members of the Confederal Left and Green Groups. Sixty people from more than thirty organisations in sixteen countries participated.

The purpose of the Consultation was to improve co-operation between participating organisations and individuals, and lay the groundwork for bringing together a representative European Conference on Peace and Human Rights, either at the end of the year 2000 or the following year. It is thought a second consultation may well be necessary to allow for a full exchange of ideas, and to clarify the themes of the Conference agenda.

The Conference, and the process leading to it, should facilitate closer co-operation and joint action, in order to ensure that the deep-seated opposition to war and oppression can no longer be marginalised, and over-ruled by any political power which perceives advantage in the possible resort to war, or in the option of oppression.

It has become increasingly common for Governments to argue that human rights can credibly be upheld by military interventions of one kind or another. Peace movements and human rights movements alike need to take stock of this assumption, and to monitor the evidence. This is a complex operation, but a necessary one. However, it should not impede the resolve to act together, both to sustain the peace, and to defend and extend the rights of people in every country.

The Russell Foundation received a large number of written contributions for the Consultation, many of which could form the basis for workshops and working parties which could continue their co-operation between the first consultation and the next, and help lay the grounds for the European Conference itself. We attempted to group the papers under sufficiently broad headings to focus the discussion in the short time that was available. They were:

a) Benign imperialism and human rights

What is the 'realpolitik' of human rights concerns? How can the inadequacies in human rights protection be overcome? How have human rights been subjected to ulterior attempts at power projection ('human rights imperialism')? Can teeth be given to the Universal Declaration? What is the status of global human rights, and especially the right to live in peace? Human rights and international law.

Papers

- Basic rights for people living in the European Union (PDS)
- Benign Imperialism versus United Nations (Ken Coates)
- The charter of fundamental rights of the European Union (Horst Gruetzke & various NGOs)
- Human rights: crisis of conception, policy, morality (Ida Kuklina)

b) Poverty, war and debt

What is the link between high levels of foreign debt and of debt servicing and civil war? There is clear evidence in the developing countries in the 1980s of a correlation not only between high debt and violence, but also between low debt and relative peace. Certainly, debt relief for the poor has attracted very strong support from public opinion in Europe and America, in massive popular demonstrations in Birmingham, England (called by Jubilee 2000), in Seattle, USA, and most recently in Washington. This lively movement appears to have interests which overlap at many points with those of the peace movements. What can be done to bring them closer together? What are the main lessons we should learn from each other in terms of co-ordination, and the potential for action?

Papers

- Seattle and beyond (Michel Chossudovsky)
- The morphology of debt (Michael Barratt Brown)
- War and human rights, terrorism and debt (Michael Barratt Brown)
- Peace through social empowerment (John Papworth)
- Militarism, development and democracy (Jean Dreze)

c) After the war against Yugoslavia/Chechnya, the crises in the Caucasus and Central Asia

Nato's occupation of Kosovo has been far from successful in preventing ethnic cleansing, or in establishing a stable, inclusive government. Criminal activity runs at very high levels, and Kosovo is a central point for channelling the international drugs trade through Turkey from Central Asia. Those states which are deploying forces are beginning to weary of the cost of maintaining them in a thankless and fruitless task. The occupation falls further and further behind elementary standards of democratic administration. The western powers have been powerless to intervene in Chechnya, or to exercise any influence on events. Meanwhile, new confrontations, and possibly new wars, are gestating in the Caucasus and Central Asia.

Papers

- The twisted road to Kosovo (Peter Gowan)
- Benign imperialism versus United Nations (Ken Coates)
- Declaration sur le Kosovo (Le Mouvement de la Paix)
- Only a tragic mistake? Kosovo and the new US/Nato hegemonism (Brian Cooper)

d) Nato and the reform of international institutions

How have the international institutions stood the tests of the recent crises? What does the new Nato Strategic Doctrine imply for the reform of the international institutions, and what is the balance sheet of success and failure of the United Nations, the European Union, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund?

Papers

- Nato's new strategic doctrine
- Nato and the new world order (Ken Coates)
- The militarisation of the European Union (Ulla Klotzer)
- Nato and Britain's foreign and security policy (Rae Street)
- The peace movement and the United Nations (Eileen Daffern)
- New dangers for Hungary and Europe (Rezso Banyasz)
- Beyond Nato – what new world order? (Jim Addington)

e) The nuclear dimension of confrontation/Action for peace

The evolution of the Putin Doctrine transforms the international nuclear balance by the repudiation of 'no-first-use'. This is not simply a statement of abstract doctrine: field training manuals are being modified to instruct officers in the battlefield deployment and use of nuclear weapons when necessary. At the same time, renewed proposals for deployment in space of a modified anti-missile programme ('Son of Star Wars') undermines international security and threatens most previous agreements on controlling the nuclear arms race. How can the opposition orient itself to these problems? Can we revive the call for European nuclear disarmament, and a European nuclear-free zone? What are the priorities for developing a powerful peace movement? What sorts of actions are needed?

Papers

- Russia's National Security Concept (Vladimir Putin)
- Russia is the target (Theodore A Postol, Bulletin of Atomic Scientists)
- European security – choices, threats and opportunities (Mary Brennan)
- A non-nuclear strategy for Nato (George Farebrother)
- The abolition of war: an impossible dream? (Bruce Kent)
- Document for peace (Women's forum, PRC)
- New World Order is just a maffioso lie (Eliazar Mario-Vincent)

- Work, chores and war: a new point of view (John Arden)
- The precarious international balance (Ken Coates)

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The meeting agreed the following appeal for a European Conference on Peace and Human Rights and a nuclear-free zone in Europe, which is now being circulated for signature.

‘After the war in Yugoslavia, and the sidelining of the United Nations, there has been a marked deterioration in international relations.

This adverse development has not been offset by gains in human rights, either in the Balkans or further afield. To the contrary, ethnic divisions have been intensified, crime and lawless behaviour have increased, and people have fewer rights, and less control over the course of their lives, than ever before. At the same time, new threats have widened.

In particular, the threat to peace is now fearfully increased by nuclear doctrines of first use. This long-held and dangerous commitment in the USA and Nato has been matched by the Putin Doctrine in Russia, ratified on 21st April 2000. Henceforward, the Russian armed forces will deploy nuclear weapons in a more active mode, “in response to large-scale aggression involving conventional weapons in situations that are critical for the national security of the Russian Federation and its allies”. Further dangers loom following recent moves by the USA to deploy the so-called “national missile defence” or “son of star wars”, which may well lead to nuclear weapons in space, and would break the 1972 Anti-ballistic Missile Treaty.

Nuclear confrontation, reviving the discredited idea of limited nuclear warfare, will once again bring terror into international relations, as a workaday part of the new international order. In this context, democracy itself will be threatened, and the very idea of security undermined. The idea that human rights could be upheld by military intervention was never very plausible. Nuclear intervention is even more unthinkable.

Facing this dire prospect, we invite other Europeans, peace organisations and human rights proponents to come together to consider rational alternatives which can sustain peace and human rights, and to work for military disengagement and the annulment of nuclear confrontation. We commend the idea of a nuclear-free zone in Europe, as a step to global nuclear disarmament.’

ACTION AND CO-OPERATION FOR A NUCLEAR-FREE 21st CENTURY

A call for participation in, support for and solidarity with the 2000 World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs, issued by the Organising Committee.

As a new century is about to start, the people’s call for the abolition of nuclear weapons is growing across the world. To achieve this wish at the earliest possible time, we will hold the 2000 World Conference against A and H Bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki from August 2nd to 9th. We call on all our friends who want a nuclear-free 21st century to start preparations for participation in the

World Conference, express support for it, and develop solidarity actions in your respective local areas for the '2000 Hiroshima and Nagasaki Days'.

There still remain 30,000 nuclear weapons on our planet, and the nuclear weapons states, especially the US, continue policies of nuclear weapons monopoly and armed intervention, insisting that nuclear weapons are a means of ensuring security in the foreseeable future. The US is determined to prevent other countries from developing nuclear weapons, even by use of force when necessary, and continues to reject any ideas of renouncing the pre-emptive use of nuclear weapons or making a promise that it will not use nuclear weapons. The US rejected the ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, and is proceeding with sub-critical nuclear tests for developing nuclear weapons. Russia also carried out sub-critical nuclear tests many times, indicating a greater possibility of nuclear weapons being used. Adherence to such a dangerous policy will only encourage the emergence of new nuclear weapons possessing countries. Criticism of the US and other nuclear weapons states is increasing throughout the world.

On the other hand, nuclear-free zones have spread to cover South-East Asia, the South Pacific, Latin America and Africa. Grassroots movements are also advancing, as is clear from resolutions being adopted in town meetings in many parts of the US. In the United Nations General Assembly in the autumn of 1999, resolutions for the swift abolition of nuclear weapons, proposed by the non-aligned countries and other UN members, were adopted by an overwhelming majority. The UN resolution proposed by the New Agenda Coalition, a group of non-nuclear governments, urging nuclear weapons states to make an unequivocal undertaking to abolish nuclear weapons, had only 13 votes against it. The result, despite the US pressure on its allies, clearly showed the isolation of the US administration. Let us make this trend stronger, and urge the nuclear weapons states to make a clear decision for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

In the UN sessions, the Japanese government continues to take the position of postponing the task of abolishing nuclear weapons to an ultimate future, and even criticises the moves for abolishing nuclear weapons. This stems from its humiliating servility to US nuclear strategy. The Japan-US 'secret agreements' on nuclear weapons and a series of US declassified documents disclosed once again the fact that the Japanese government has deceived the people, and allowed nuclear weapons to be brought into Japan by the US forces.

In this situation, the people are increasingly critical of the Japanese government's pro-nuclear, military-first policy. The number of local governments that have declared themselves nuclear-free has increased to 2,483, nearly 75 per cent of all local governments in Japan. The movement calling for nuclear-free ports is advancing, and the number of signatures collected in Japan for the 'Appeal from Hiroshima and Nagasaki' for the elimination of nuclear weapons has exceeded 59 million. The struggle to prevent the invocation of the 'Guidelines'-related War Laws is growing, and the people's protest against the strengthening of US Bases in Okinawa, which has been made the stronghold for

US nuclear strategy, is also building up. Let us join our efforts now to help Japan to break away from the dangerous course of entrusting its 'security' to the US 'nuclear umbrella', and to contribute to the current for the abolition of nuclear weapons, which is now gaining ground in Asia.

The theme for the 2000 World Conference against A and H Bombs is 'Action and Co-operation for a Nuclear-Free Century'. We will hold this World Conference as one of common action, co-operation, and solidarity, rallying the people's hope, determination and goodwill to achieve a world set free from nuclear weapons which are emerging at this turn of the century. The 2000 World Conference will be open to all people regardless of differences of thought or creed, who are working to abolish nuclear weapons. We call on all friends across Japan and throughout the world to send delegates to, and express support and endorsement for the 2000 World Conference. We also call for diverse and creative actions to be carried out at the grassroots level in many places on Hiroshima Day (August 6th) and Nagasaki Day (August 9th), in solidarity with the 2000 World Conference.

Let us bring together the people's wishes for the elimination of nuclear weapons, and call on national governments and the United Nations to take specific actions, including starting negotiations aimed at abolishing nuclear weapons. Let us strengthen various forms of actions leading up to the World Conference, such as the Nationwide Peace March against A and H Bombs, activities to make known to the world the damage and after-effects of the atomic bombing, in co-operation with the Hibakusha and nuclear test victims, and signature campaigns for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

In order to make the year 2000 truly meaningful for the peace and future of humanity, together, let us achieve a great success at the 2000 World Conference against A and H Bombs.

NORWAY'S 'NO TO NEW NATO'

Last spring, at its Jubilee in Washington, Nato adopted a new, offensive strategic doctrine. This development has caused alarm in many places. In Norway, it was answered by an Appeal entitled 'No to New Nato', which has attracted the support of more than 500 Norwegian intellectuals, and caused a great controversy in the country. The Appeal reads:

On 24 April 1999, Nato adopted a new strategic concept. What was established fifty years ago as a defensive pact, has now become an offensive power. The New Nato has assumed the right to conduct military campaigns 'out of area', that is outside the territory of the Alliance.

The New Nato considers itself entitled to intervene in other parts of the world. It can do this in order to solve social difficulties and armed conflicts, to fight terrorism and organised crime, and to handle any potential crisis or political conflict that might affect the security of the Alliance. Such actions may be

launched without the approval of the United Nations. This strategy implies a further weakening of the United Nations Organisation. It violates the United Nations Charter, and is highly questionable in international law.

Through its acts of war in Yugoslavia, Nato has, with the United States as its key agent, anticipated and tested its new strategy.

We, the signatories, who include both supporters and opponents of Nato, do not wish to have Nato as a self-appointed world police force. We say 'No to New Nato'.

Johs. Andenaes, Thomas Hylland Eriksen, Jostein Gaarder, Johan Galtung, Thor Heyerdahl, Francis Sejersted and numerous others

A PROTEST FROM SLOVENIA

A new military doctrine of the Nato Alliance took effect on 19 May, 2000. The document, NC-400/2, contains a new military strategy which authorises Nato members to use nuclear weapons offensively. Nuclear weapons are not only to be used in retaliation to an immediate danger or attack, but also as a 'preventive' measure (the so-called 'first strike'). The document refers specifically to using nuclear weapons against countries which do not possess nuclear weapons technology. Until now, the use of nuclear weapons was governed by the principle of retaliation (the so-called 'strike first-die second' principle), which prevented a nuclear attack on a country which does not possess nuclear weapons. This has now been replaced by the 'first strike' principle.

The new doctrine was passed using a special 'silent procedure' protocol of the Nato Alliance. Under this procedure, the alliance prepares a top secret document which takes effect after a specified period of time provided no member appeals against its content. Since no Nato members filed appeals or called for changes to document NC-400/2, the doctrine is now binding for all Nato countries, as well as on any future members.

The first information about the secret document was broadcast by the German television station ARD. Video clips with commentary can be found at:

<http://www.tagesschau.de/archiv/2000/05/22/sendungen/ts-1700/meldungen/nato>
<http://www.tagesschau.de/archiv/2000/05/22/sendungen/ts-1700/videos/nato.ram>

The German foreign minister, Joschka Fischer, also confirmed the existence of the document. But he refrained from commenting on it.

At the Nato summit in Florence in May, the Alliance also passed a resolution to protect confidential information. This resolution prevents 'associated members' (from the 'Partnership for Peace', of which Slovenia is a member) from gaining access to confidential information of the Alliance. The resolution also prevents the public from obtaining confidential information – such as the adoption of the new military 'first strike' doctrine.

We, the signatories of this public protest, express our disagreement with the apparent escalation of Nato's aggressive tactics. Moreover, we disagree with the secretive nature of information pertaining to security and external policies of

individual countries. We believe the new Nato military doctrine is unacceptable for Slovenia, since it contradicts Article 124 of the Slovenian constitution ('National security shall be predicated primarily on policies designed to promote peace and on an ethic of peace and non-aggression.'). We therefore propose that Slovenia reconsiders its application to join Nato.

We propose that the Republic of Slovenia engages more actively in peace and non-violent policies. We appeal to the Cabinet and the Parliament of Slovenia to again consider joining the international initiative on the use of nuclear weapons. Slovenia has refrained from signing this initiative under pressure from NATO members.

Signatures (with full names and contact details) in support of this initiative can be sent to Neutro@email.si. We ask for help with dissemination of the petition (it can be found at the website address <http://www.ljudmila.org/neutro/protest>). The petition and the signatures will be presented to the leading media, the Parliamentary Commission for Foreign Affairs, the President of the Republic of Slovenia, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defence, the Supreme Court of Slovenia, political parties, and interested non-profit organisations.

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BALTIC TO BLACK SEA NUCLEAR-FREE ZONE

In April 2000, at its Congress in Munster, the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) in Germany almost unanimously adopted a resolution initiated by Honorary Chair, Hans Modrow, and Saxon Chair, Peter Porsch, for creating a nuclear-free corridor from the Baltic to the Black Sea. When presenting the motion, Modrow said the PDS wanted to use its contacts at home and international relations to rally the broadest possible support for the idea. The motion reads:

'It is high time something moved again in the field of nuclear disarmament. If nothing is done, if work goes on to produce and refine nuclear weapons in many places in the world, the risks for humankind will grow immeasurably, and the dangers will hardly be contained. Despite a limited reduction of nuclear weapons in recent years, the existing potential is sufficient to eliminate all life on our planet.

The creation of a nuclear-weapons-free corridor from the Baltic to the Black Sea would be a new step ahead. It would not lead to a reduction of nuclear arms immediately. But it would be an important confidence-building measure that has been on the agenda for quite some time and been repeatedly proposed. Naturally, such a corridor should be respected and guaranteed under international law by the nuclear powers: USA, Russia, France and Great Britain. That should be all

the more easy, logically speaking, as the countries in question are all members of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

There would be favourable conditions for such a corridor if only the governments in these countries had the political will to act:

- a start could be made by countries surrounding the Baltic, such as Sweden, Denmark, and Finland, the three Baltic States, and Norway;
- the declaration on non-deployment of nuclear weapons laid down in the NATO-Russia agreements on NATO applicants would apply to Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary;
- Belarus and the Ukraine would maintain their nuclear-free status;
- Moldova, Romania and Bulgaria could also join this corridor as non-nuclear countries, as well as Austria;
- On top of this, the former GDR territory was declared nuclear-free by the 2 + 4 Treaty.

The creation of a nuclear-free corridor from the Baltic to the Black Sea, guaranteed by the nuclear powers USA, Russia, France and Great Britain, could produce impulses for further arms control and disarmament steps. Above all, it could be an important impulse for removing nuclear weapons. Certainly a dream so far, but its implementation would free humankind from a terrible nightmare.'

From the Foundations

SOS! – HELP THE TRANSNATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The Russell Foundation has called for support for the international campaign to restore funding to the Transnational Foundation for Future Research in Sweden. TFF's unique work encourages peaceful developments amidst conflict. It has worked particularly closely in the Balkans. Its commentaries on international affairs are independent and informative. Its approach is inclusive. TFF is determined to survive. More than ever, we need the work of Jan Oberg and his colleagues in Lund. Here, they set out the background to the decision to take away their funding. Their website, at <http://www.transnational.org>, always worth visiting, gives details of how to help.

For the past nine years, TFF has received an annual organisational grant from the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This year, however, the Ministry has withdrawn this support with immediate effect and without prior consultation or explanation. The aim seems to be to silence an independent, critical voice in the field of international conflict management.

TFF is the only non-governmental centre of peace and security research in Sweden. It is also the only one in the field of research and information whose

funding has been cut to zero. Since 1991, TFF has built an internationally respected competence, with particular regard to the Balkans.

In a period when Sweden's engagement in the Balkans is larger than ever, with a Swedish battalion in Kosovo, and considerable aid programmes to that province as well as to Bosnia and the Stability Pact, one would believe that an organisation such as TFF would have its grant increased in order to contribute more effectively with comprehensive analyses and views concerning the fields of peacebuilding and reconciliation.

Organisational support is given to some 15 non-governmental organisations in Sweden to secure continuity and a broad debate about international affairs. No strings shall be attached. The annual grant TFF has received hitherto is a small one in the larger scheme of things: a bit more than US\$30,000. This is a lot, however, for the Foundation; it pays rent, copying, telecommunication, paper, website maintenance, library, newsletter and pays helpers on an hourly basis. Some 60 experts and NGO leaders make up TFF's global network.

All funds raised are used directly for activities. The Foundation is not-for-profit and runs on considerable idealism as no one associated with it is permanently employed or has a permanent salary. This also applies to the founders, Christina Spännar and Jan Oberg.

TFF has conducted some 40 missions, interviewed more than 3,000 people in all the conflicts, conducted seminars with ethnically mixed youth, NGO and women's groups in Croatia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia and is supervising a project in Eastern Slavonia, Croatia, initiated by TFF after the departure of the UN from that region.

In 1999, it developed a peace and reconciliation training plan for the Burundian Ministry of Education, to be implemented as soon as Nelson Mandela has succeeded in mediating a peace agreement. Over the years it has also conducted analyses in Georgia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

TFF's networkers have published some 60 TFF books and reports and contributed articles to as many and hundreds of articles, among them to the UN 50th Anniversary book, to the World Bank, CNN, the Carter Centre, textbooks, international conferences and so on.

Mordechai Vanunu

ISRAEL'S NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND MORDECHAI VANUNU

Issam Makhoul is a Member of Israel's Parliament, the Knesset, for the Hadad Party. These extracts are taken from his speech in the Knesset on 2nd February 2000, which initiated the first ever public debate in Israel of the country's nuclear weapons policy. The speech has been circulated by The Israeli Committee for Mordechai Vanunu and for a Middle East Free of Atomic, Chemical and Biological Weapons.

This is an historic day. For the first time since the establishment of the State of Israel, the Knesset is holding a debate on the issue of nuclear weapons in Israel. So this debate is being held 40 years late. This is also a sad day, because it reminds us that the Knesset shirked its responsibility in an area that threatens us with the next holocaust – if we do not come to our senses, pause, and stop in our tracks before the disaster. I hope that today's debate will symbolise the breaking of the wall of silence, and the beginning of an intensive debate in the Knesset and among the public on this subject . . .

I will begin with a quotation from the joint manifesto of Albert Einstein and the philosopher Bertrand Russell, of July 9, 1955: 'We are speaking on this occasion, not as members of this or that nation, continent, or creed, but as human beings, members of the species Man, whose continued existence is in doubt . . . The problem . . . stark and dreadful, and inescapable [is]: shall we put an end to the human race, or shall mankind renounce war?'

Shortly after Albert Einstein issued that call for the elimination of nuclear weapons, he was approached by Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion and asked to serve as the president of the State of Israel. Ben-Gurion was already involved in the efforts to develop nuclear weapons in Israel, but he did not disclose that fact to Einstein. The eminent scientist turned down the offer. Einstein, a rare combination of a scientific genius and a humanist, already then believed that no message of justice and peace for humanity was forthcoming from Israel. How right he was.

For the past 40 years, the policy of the Israeli governments on the nuclear issue has been characterised by fraud, lies and deceit. I strongly recommend to all Knesset Members to read the book *Vanunu and the Bomb*, that was published last year by the Israeli Committee for Mordechai Vanunu and for a Middle East Free of Atomic, Biological and Chemical Weapons. It is important for Knesset Members to be exposed to alternative information on a subject concerning which the government, the media and academia have collaborated to brainwash and drug the public. In one of the chapters in the book, entitled 'The Israeli Government Declares', by journalist Gideon Spiro, the writer recalls that the deceit began 39 years ago, when on this very podium, on December 20, 1960, Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion announced the construction of 'a research reactor in Dimona, that is designed entirely for peaceful purposes, and that, when it is completed, it will be open to researchers from other countries.' When he made that statement, Ben-Gurion knew that the reactor was not built for 'peaceful purposes' and that there was no intention to open it to 'researchers from around the world.' Rather, we were presented with an Israeli atomic bomb factory, the work of which would be concealed from the citizens of Israel and from the citizens of the world.

When the London weekly *The Sunday Times* published Mordechai Vanunu's revelations, in October 1986, an alarming picture was revealed, showing that Israel already had more than 100 atomic bombs. Since then, the number of bombs, according to experts' estimates, is thought to have increased to the insane amount of 200-300.

That is what we must discuss today. The problem is not the messenger,

Vanunu, but the policy of all Israeli governments, which has turned this small piece of land into a poisonous and poisoning nuclear waste bin, which could blow us all to heaven in a nuclear mushroom cloud. The crime of manufacturing nuclear weapons in Israel was combined with another crime, the collaboration between Israel and the neo-Nazi apartheid regime in South Africa . . .

Nuclear ambiguity is nothing but self-delusion, and has long ago ceased to be effective. The entire world now knows that Israel has a huge stockpile of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and that it serves as the cornerstone for the nuclear arms race in the Middle East. In Israel there is frequent mention of the 'Iranian and Iraqi danger', while ignoring the fact that it was Israel that introduced nuclear weapons to the Middle East in the first place, and created the legitimacy for other states in the region to obtain nuclear weapons.

One obvious proof that the ambiguity and deterrence which formed the basis for Israel's nuclear policy have become redundant, is Israel's acquisition of the German submarines that have recently arrived in this country and which, according to the media, will be equipped with nuclear missiles. The purpose of these submarines is to cruise deep in the sea and constitute the 'second strike' force, in the event that Israel is attacked with nuclear weapons. That means that not only do the hundreds of nuclear bombs that Israel possesses not constitute a defence – they actually cause the military establishment to fear a nuclear early strike, which escalates the spiral of the non-conventional arms race further and further, at the cost of billions of dollars.

Today the so-called ambiguity applies only to the citizens of Israel. They are unable to act as democratic critics of their government because the latter conceals from them the truth about an issue on which their lives depend. We have no information about the people who have their fingers on the nuclear button, what is their chain of command, or what is our defence if a nuclear Barukh Goldstein should infiltrate the system, and equipped with a religious sanction from some rabbi, launch a nuclear Armageddon.

The dangers to the citizens of Israel and to our neighbours exist not only in the event of a nuclear war. Even without a war, we face the constant danger of the eruption of the nuclear volcano that we have built on our own doorstep.

In the 40 years of the reactor's operation, a huge amount of nuclear waste has accumulated. This waste, if it leaks, could contaminate the land and water for centuries and millennia. I do not have to explain the significance of such a scenario in a country like ours, that needs every drop of water it can get. How is the waste stored? There are different methods, some safer, some less, none perfectly safe. It is all a matter of financial investment.

Since everything in this area is cloaked in secrecy, extra-parliamentary ecological monitoring groups cannot supervise the government's actions. 'Trust Big Bother,' the government tells us. But we know from our experience, and from experience that has accumulated worldwide, that we must not rely on the government, and in the absence of supervision by non-governmental and independent organizations, the danger of negligence lurks at our doorstep. The

reactor is old, the safety measures are kept secret from us. A mini-Chernobyl disaster as the result of human error or material stress would make this country unfit for human habitation.

Last year a story appeared in the media, according to which Israel exports part of its nuclear waste to be buried in Mauritania, in Africa. I ask the Prime Minister: is this true? Has Israel adopted the criminal colonialist practice of polluting the Third World, which European countries abandoned some years ago following the struggle of the green organisations?

I ask the Prime Minister: what is the condition of Israel's nuclear missile sites near Kfar Zechariah on the outskirts of Jerusalem, and near Yodfat in the Galilee? Are there additional sites? Of course, these sites must be shut down, but until common sense prevails, they must be available to monitoring by parliamentary and extra-parliamentary ecological organizations from Israel and abroad.

I ask the Prime Minister: how is it that plants in which the missiles are manufactured and atom bombs are made are located in the most densely populated areas in Israel, like in the Negev, the Galilee, and the Golan Heights? I ask the Prime Minister: how is it that the missile plants are located in the most densely populated areas in Israel, like in the Negev, the Galilee, and the Golan Heights? I ask the Prime Minister: how is it that the missile plants are located in the most densely populated areas in Israel, like in the Negev, the Galilee, and the Golan Heights?

Israel is the party that started the race and it bears the responsibility for changing that course. I call on the government of Israel to open all doors and windows and air the information. A certain change in the right direction took place in November 1999, when parts of the transcripts of the trial of Mordechai Vanunu were released. Naturally, that is not enough. The Dimona reactor must be opened to international inspection; a moratorium must be declared on the production of all weapons of mass destruction – nuclear, biological and chemical; all information must be released about the amount of bombs that Israel possesses. Israel must announce, as a confidence-building measure, its willingness to begin unilateral nuclear disarmament, to be completed in the framework of a general Middle East treaty.

In fact, there is no need for nuclear weapons. Paul Nitze, who was the chief US representative to the arms control negotiations on behalf of the Reagan Administration, not exactly a dangerous Leftist, wrote in the *New York Times*: ‘The truth is that I see no reason not to unilaterally eliminate the nuclear weapons that we possess. Keeping them is a costly matter, which adds nothing to our security. I cannot think of any circumstances in which it would be wise for the USA to use nuclear weapons, even in retaliation for the use of such weapons against us. What would be our targets in such an event? It is impossible to think of a target that could be hit without the strike entailing the mass killing of innocent people . . . The very existence of nuclear weapons endangers our existence.’ (Published in *Ha’aretz*, 1.11.99).

We need to extend our hand to Egypt in its efforts to bring all countries in the Middle East into the Non-Proliferation Treaty. We must respond to the Syrian demand that the peace negotiations include the dismantling of weapons of mass destruction. The Dimona reactor must become a burial site, and that burial site should serve as a reminder to future generations of the foolishness of humankind on the one hand, and also of its recognition of that foolishness before it was too late.

Mordechai Vanunu, who was kidnapped in Italy in an act of terrorism on the part of the State of Israel, and who was later tried in a secret and unfair trial, is a prisoner of conscience who sacrificed himself on the altar of the struggle for a nuclear-free world. A person who hands over to the free press information about the negligence and crimes of his government, as Mordechai Vanunu did when he exposed the information about what was being done behind the walls of the Dimona reactor, was neither a traitor nor a spy. Rather, he performed the role of a whistleblower and carried the democratic principle of the public’s right to know. It was no accident that Mordechai Vanunu received the Right Livelihood Award and the Danish Peace Prize, and that every year he is a candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize. The world recognises people who work to save humanity from a nuclear holocaust.

From this podium I call on the government of Israel and on the President to listen to the voices coming from all corners of the globe, the voices of politicians, scientists, Nobel Peace Prize laureates, artists and authors, to release Mordechai Vanunu after 13 years in prison, more than 11 of which he spent in cruel solitary confinement. Even President Clinton has recently called for Vanunu’s release. He

has served two-thirds of his sentence and he is entitled to parole. It is time to end the vindictiveness.

I wish to appeal from this podium to Regional Co-operation Minister Shimon Peres. History, I believe, will judge you harshly for two things: your major role in establishing the Dimona reactor, and for the order that you gave, when you served as Prime Minister, to commit the act of terrorism of abducting Mordechai Vanunu, from London via Italy, in September 1986.

I doubt whether you would have been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, if the members of the Nobel committee had been aware of your immense contribution to the production of Israel's nuclear, biological and chemical weapons of mass destruction. Now, as you approach the last stretch of your political career, I ask you to right both wrongs: to begin the process of Israel's disarmament of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons as part of making our region free of weapons of mass destruction, and to release Mordechai Vanunu.

The International Court in The Hague has ruled that nuclear weapons are illegal. I propose to the government of Israel and to the Knesset to make an effort, however difficult, to join the ranks of the enlightened international community.

In summing up, I wish to quote again from the manifesto of Albert Einstein and Bertrand Russell, in which they called for the elimination of nuclear weapons: 'We appeal, as human beings, to human beings: Remember your humanity and forget the rest. If you can do so, the way lies open to a new Paradise; if you cannot, there lies before you the risk of universal death.'

ISRAELI WOMEN SUPPORT VANUNU

On 24th May, 2000, to mark Women's Day for Peace and Disarmament, two women members of the Knesset – Tamar Gozhansky of the former Communist Party, and Zehava Galon of Meretz – hosted a gathering of women concerned about the nuclear issue. Among the speakers, who were all women, there was a doctor who was a member of the Physicians Against Nuclear War who gave a background summary and reported on the latest Non Proliferation Treaty developments; another doctor, from Russia, who had been among the persons entrusted with the job of 'liquidating' the effects of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster; a Yugoslav journalist who described the effects of the use of depleted uranium by Western powers in Yugoslavia, most recently in the Kosovo war – and explained why so little is being said about it; an Arab academic who explained why the existence of nuclear weapons in our region is nothing less than suicidal; a young writer who read from Arundhati Roy's essay about the Indian nuclear bomb; and Yael Lotan, who closed the meeting.

The hall was packed. There were more Arab than Jewish women. The atmosphere was very positive. It was the first time that an emphatic call to free Mordechai Vanunu received prolonged, rousing applause from an Israeli audience. The meeting was followed, two days later, by a very successful demonstration at the intersection in Dimona.

THE NEXT LIFE THEY SAVE COULD BE YOURS!



The Fire Brigades Union

Fire Control Rooms and Fire Control Staff are Fire Brigades Advisory Council has put forward