

GLASGOW CATHOLIC WORKER

'Faith, Works, Love, Mercy'

By Yon Bonnie Banks...



Brian Quail halts the convoy at Balloch

If you go roamin' in the gloamin' by the Bonnie banks of Loch Lomond at the right time, you're sure to get a surprise. A huge convoy comprising 4 Foden trucks (at 48 tons each is 4 tons over the legal limit), repair wagon, army escort, police vehicles, flashing lights, and cops on motor-bikes will thunder by stunned tourists and locals as it tears along the Loch Lomond road, over the hill to Coulport on Loch Long. There they complete the long journey they began from Aldermaston in Berkshire, in South England.

They do this journey at irregular intervals when they take the H Bombs down to test them to make sure they really work, an exercise called - by an incredible piece of unconscious irony - "integrity verification". The convoy regularly passes through built up areas and along busy roads. In spite of bland

reassurances from the MoD, there have been several accidents. I personally witnessed the occasion when a convoy broke down on the slipway off the Erskine Bridge (18th May '93). Smoke was pouring from the vehicle; it pulled up at the side of the road and lay helpless and vulnerable to the vagaries of passing traffic for four hours. Armed soldiers patrolled anxiously round the convoy in the growing dark.

Likewise, I was following a convoy up the M74 when smoke began pouring out from the rear of a carrier. The police hurriedly directed the convoy into the service station there, and waved the traffic on. These are only two of the many "incidents" which can be examined on SCND's website www.banthebomb.org, where you can also view photos of the convoy. Do familiarise yourself with these.

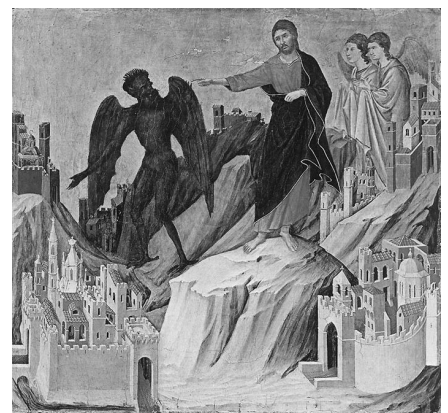
When they first brought up the war-heads, and the convoys were coming up regularly every six weeks or so, they were usually stopped at Balloch by the good folk of Faslane Peace Camp and supportive locals. Now that the convoy movements are more erratic and less frequent, it is more difficult to track them. The splendid people of Nuke-watch still monitor Aldermaston and contact the network, though Nuke-watch is weak in numbers in Scotland.

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Where the devil has he gone?

People might not like to talk about God too much today but the poor devil gets even less of a mention. When the devil is talked about it's often as a creature with bat-like wings a red face and horns. There are portrayals of the devil in books like the Screwtape Letters or radio programmes like Old Harry's Game, both which depict the devil as a rather likeable person even if he encourages bad behaviour. This personification of the devil seems to trivialise the idea to the point of irrelevance.

To Christians the devil is no laughing matter. But if he is not to be found in a red faced, bat winged



*Duccio di Buoninsegna (1260-1318)
The Temptation of Christ on the Mountain*

entity where is he or where is it? The New Testament has many references to a malevolent spiritual entity who prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to

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devour. The painting on the previous page depicts Jesus' temptation by Satan. 'The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendour; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. If you worship me, it will all be yours".' Jacques Ellul says 'Jesus tempted by the devil, that means not a personage who is come to stand before Jesus to pose questions to him, but the questions are born in the heart of Jesus (as for all men) and these questions themselves were the devil!' Note also how Jesus does not dispute Satan's assertion, he seems to accept that Satan controls all the kingdoms. As Ellul points out 'according to these texts all powers, all the power and glory of the kingdoms, all that has to do with politics and political authority, belongs to the devil.'

The Second Vatican Council puts it this way, 'For a monumental struggle against the powers of darkness pervades the whole history of man. The battle was joined from the very origins of the world and will continue until the last day, as the Lord has attested. Caught in this conflict, man is obliged to wrestle constantly if he is to cling to what is good, nor can he achieve his own integrity without great efforts and the help of God's grace.'

St Paul talks of principalities and powers, 'For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.'

William Stringfellow picks up the

ideas of principalities and powers and sees them existing in -isms, capitalism, humanism and nationalism. These ideologies demand a personal sacrifice in return for protection, purpose and hope. Again he sees the powers in institutions like corporations, unions, universities all of which to a lesser or greater degree require sacrifice in order to perpetuate themselves. To Stringfellow these principalities have an undefined nature and were created by God for 'the service and en-

'We resist because we believe and we believe because we keep resisting'

hancement of human life in society'. Since the Fall the powers instead of serving mankind enslave him. Even when powers and principalities do deliver their promises they fail to endure.








Ellul talks of how we worship the facts, 'Everyone takes it for granted that the fact and truth are one; and if God is no longer regarded as true in our day it is because he does not seem to be a fact'. As an example of the religious authority of the fact he talks of the atomic bomb. 'Confronted by this discovery, by this instrument of death it is quite possible for man to refuse to use it, to refuse to accept this fact. But this question was never raised. Humankind was confronted by a fact, and felt obliged to accept it.' We in Glas-

The richest 1% of the UK population are as rich as the poorest 55% combined

RICHEST 1%

 = 12% TOTAL UK WEALTH

POOREST 55%

                           = 12% TOTAL UK WEALTH

What does this mean?

The richest one per cent of households hold about 12 per cent of all household wealth in the UK. That's the same as the poorest 55% of all households.

gow accept the fact that weapons of mass destruction are based not an hours' drive from here.

Seen in this light the Devil the Father of lies is ever in the world and explains why so often we become disillusioned with organisations, institution, corporations and indeed with democracy which produces our political power structures. There is more to be understood than the summation of the individual's thought and activity. We are told that we must balance the books and this has to be done by giving more to those who have plenty and less to those who have little. We are exhorted to let the housing market sort itself out leaving many unable to afford a home. We are required to accept that zero hours contracts are part of the jobs market and obscene salaries for directors are necessary to motivate.

We allow ourselves to be seduced into trusting in armies and money instead of God.

As the sign and the instrument of the communion of God and people the Church 'exhibits in her life the rule and reign of Jesus Christ over against the "gods of this age." In her life the Church rejects the Powers of mammon, nationalism, injustice, prejudice, and oppression. These Powers are unmasked, delegitimized and rejected in the Church as she confesses Jesus as Lord of all. In confessing and living under the lordship of Jesus in the face of the Powers the Church "builds a new world in the shell of the old."' (Hendrik Berkhof)

Daniel Berrigen said 'We resist because we believe and we believe because we keep resisting'. Christians are called to be the light of the world and in so being throw a light on that which is properly demonic. *Michael Sutherland*

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On March 10th, I managed to halt the convoy at Balloch, by the revolutionary act of pressing the Pelican crossing button! I then lay on the road in front of the lead vehicle, was arrested, and taken to Clydebank police station, from where I was released several hours later. I am waiting for a letter from the Procurator Fiscal.



Meanwhile, the government presses on with its programme to replace Trident with a newer, more advanced version. Thus, the considered judgment of the Catholic Bishops of Scotland, the Church of Scotland and other faith groups (all of which have condemned Trident), the view of the STUC, and of all civic Scotland, are ignored and defied by the UK Government. The political voices of 56 Scottish Members of Parliament are rendered impotent by the collective forces of British nationalism. Never mind right and wrong, might has prevailed. This is democracy - Great British style. Rejoice, and be glad.

The WHO (World Health Organisation) has calculated that would take 200 atomic explosions to create a nuclear winter, and in effect sterilise the planet. That's the number we have at Coulport. Global nuclear suicide is not a rational defence policy. We may want to go on playing Russian roulette with the future of the planet, but the rest of humanity wants to live free from the threat of instant Atomic Armageddon.

Extinction is forever. Either we have a future without nuclear weapons, or we have no future at all. The

Pope, the Dalai Lama, Desmond Tutu and 123 nations of the world have called for an International Treaty banning nuclear weapons, as articulated in the Vienna Initiative. There are already in existence treaties banning Biological and Chemical weapons world-wide. Why not nuclear weapons also? Such a proposed treaty is currently before the United Nations. The British govern-

ment opposes this, and behaves as if, by some divine dispensation, we alone were entitled to deploy nuclear WMD, while all other states must forgoe them. "Do as I say, Don't do as I do", is our hypocritical maxim.

The Catholic Worker movement seeks to build "a new heaven and a new earth, wherein justice dwelleth". We try to say with action "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

We are committed to the principles of non-violent direct action, as taught and practised by Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King and Dorothy Day. Every Christian in the world prays "Thy Kingdom Come". We sing hymns of peace and love, but in everyday life, our true anthem is "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition". We render unto Caesar whatever he wants, and ignore Christ's doctrine of non-violence.

The anti-Trident movement seeks freedom from nuclear terrorism for ourselves, and for the world. A Scotland free of nuclear WMD means an end to British nuclear bombs, because Trident cannot operate from anywhere else in the UK other than

the Coulport/Faslane complex. Scotland will no longer be home to the biggest arsenal of H Bombs in Europe. Its citizens will no longer be complicit in the on-going war crime that is Trident. For 50 years now we have lived with the Bomb; the tragedy is that we have become habituated to it. It has become domesticated and normalised.

But before we can agree to bring death to untold millions, we must first stifle every basic spark of natural human decency in ourselves. Thus we ourselves are our first nuclear victims, not our target, not the ordinary people of Moscow or St Petersburg. We ourselves are the first victims of our nuclear idolatry. So, every day folk drive past Faslane, gazing at it with unseeing dead-fish eyes, as if it were a marina or a yachting club. They simply do not see it for what it is. Trident is the worst thing in the world, the epitome of malevolence. When it does the only thing it is designed to do, it brings death by burning, blast and irradiation on a scale well beyond our capacity to imagine. Universal death is its purpose. It is a sin crying to heaven for vengeance.

And by our tolerance of it, we are complicit in this evil.
Brian Quail

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The poor, climate change and energy options

The major development charities are united in their judgement that climate change, which to date has been mainly due to fossil fuel use for energy production in the affluent countries of Europe and North America, is disproportionately affecting the poor in developing countries. The most axiomatic impacts identified to date relate to low-lying countries such as Bangladesh, where long-standing vulnerability to flooding has already been exacerbated by global sea level rise (totalling nearly 20 cm since 1880), which increases the tidal 'throttle' on river outflows, resulting in deeper and longer-lasting in inundation. (Similar problems affect low-lying areas of rich countries too, but the irony is that it is more the bijoux river view residences that are threatened here, rather than the high-rises of the poor).

Flooding is not the only impact. Although the statistical patterns are less clear than for sea level rise, it does appear that the extremes of weather are becoming rather more marked in many parts of the world: wetter rainy seasons and longer, more intense droughts. We have certainly seen the former effect in Scotland, where the north and west of the country have experienced a fifty per-cent increase in rainfall since the 1960s. This does, of course, affect the livelihoods of the less well-heeled here, as the productivity of crofts declines and maintenance requirements for shelters increase. It's not difficult to imagine that sleeping rough is even less pleasant in the wetter Scotland of today than it was a few decades ago.



One tap shared by 80 families in El Alto, the slum city high above La Paz.

Inter-annual variability in weather seems to be increasing in many parts of the world, and this has again been experienced in Scotland, in the widely-varying severity of Scottish winters and ever less predictable summers. While this might have a long-term negative effect on tourism, the impacts here are largely a nuisance. In developing countries, though, such inter-annual variability can have severe consequences for the poor, especially those reliant on subsistence agriculture, who live largely outside the money economy. Sometimes romanticised for living close to nature, these people are extremely vulnerable to climatic changes that upset the delicate balance of rainfall and evaporation in their semi-arid homelands. It was precisely with such communities that I worked as a water engineer in the Altiplano of Bolivia in the early 1990s. The local NGO I worked with had been founded in the emergency response to the 1983 drought, which saw 75% of livestock in the region die of thirst, prompting mass migration to the cities, especially to the vast 'El Alto' slum above the capital city, La Paz.

For a couple of decades La Paz

seemed like a safe haven from the dramatic variability of rural water resources. Yet trouble was brewing for urban dwellers, as climate change gradually stripped the remaining glaciers from the nearby Andes, removing the principal source of water storage on which the city relies for water in the dry season. The only reservoir of any size is Lago Milluni, but this is pervasively contaminated by acidic drainage from abandoned tin mines, and its water has to be heavily treated before it is even amenable to blending with the much purer glacial melt water in the dry months. As the availability of the latter has declined, not least with the complete disappearance of the Chacaltaya Glacier, ever more brackish water is being delivered, in decreasing total quantities, to the poor urban population of La Paz. Now the urban population is almost as vulnerable to inter-annual variations in precipitation as their urban cousins.

So it seems clear enough that efforts to drastically cut fossil fuel use must be accelerated and intensified. Yet there are some serious complications. Everyone knows about the Chinese economic boom, which has

seen 750m people lifted out of severe poverty over the last fifteen years – but only on the back of a massive increase in coal use. This has led to some of the worst air quality in the world, which disproportionately affects those still in poverty and poor housing. China is now awake to these issues, and is beginning to make impres-



Glasgow had the worst post-war housing conditions in Europe

sive progress in reducing carbon emissions and air pollution - albeit with a mountain still to climb. Progress is understandably hindered by the desire to avoid a simple return of so many people to poverty – if not from compassion, then at least for fear of civil strife.

The world's second most populous country, India, is similarly hooked on coal as a means of delivering on the policy of successive governments to finally get at least a basic electrical supply to every home within the next decade or so (the target year has repeatedly slipped, despite a massive expansion of opencast coal mining). With very little gas (which has only half the carbon emissions of coal, so would be preferable), little in the way of nuclear resources, and insufficient scope for renewables to meet the challenge with current technology, there seems little prospect of India abandoning coal use any time soon. As in China, once people have experienced the liberation of electrification, denying them it again is not a wise move politically.

But what about us? Surely we can do much more, much faster? Within the city of Glasgow another drama of poverty and fossil fuels is currently playing out. Many of the poorest families in the city stay in

the 1960s high-rises, which were never fitted with gas mains because of the unimaginable horrors a gas explosion would bring in such buildings. So they were fitted with electrical heating – the most expensive and wasteful form of heating. Yet given that Scot-

land's electricity is about two-thirds low-carbon (at least until 2023, when the demise of the last two nuclear power stations will make us reliant on fossil-fuelled power imports) electric heating is lower carbon than gas anyway. Yet the cost of electric heating is such that it virtually guarantees fuel poverty for those reliant on it. So to combat fuel poverty, wet radiator systems are being fitted in clusters of tower blocks with centralised heat engines provide the warmth. Where these are fuelled with biomass (i.e. wood chips, as at West Whitlawburn) they are at least notionally renewable. However, given urban air quality and traffic constraints (biomass needs lots of lorry movements) the best environmental solution currently available is actually natural gas (e.g. at the Wyndford). The result is alleviation of fuel poverty, but little or no net decarbonisation. As Scotland's offshore natural gas production has been in steep decline for a decade now, and there seems little prospect of onshore gas extraction commencing to replace it, this is probably a short-term compromise anyway.

My own research concerns one of the most promising renewable heat technologies: geothermal. It's still early days, but it appears that sub-

stantial geothermal heat is to be found beneath the most needy eastern and north-eastern parts of the conurbation. To harness it would require drilling to depths of 2 – 3 km (though using heat pumps, water in flooded mines only a few hundred metres down could also be harnessed) and the construction of district heating networks. This would inevitably entail some disruption, though nothing beyond the usual experience of urban redevelopment. I am also active in Kenya and Ethiopia, where far hotter resources can actually produce abundant electricity. The science is exciting, the engineering tractable; the main barrier is socio-economic. Although geothermal is competitive with gas already when you levelise total costs across the lifestyle, most costs are incurred up-front. The challenge is thus how to access the capital needed to install such systems, even though they are low-cost and low-carbon in operation.

This is by no means the only such issue where poverty, energy and climate change meet: try telling a Glasgow landlord to invest in far greater insulation and cleaner, greener heating technology. As the financial outlay would fall on their books, but their tenants would reap the benefits of lower energy bills, they tend to respond with a blank stare. I am no one to judge them for that either; but we are going to need to get far more politically savvy very quickly if we are to prevent the over-indulgence of our consumer society from devouring the livelihoods of the poor, both here in Scotland and more severely in Africa, Asia and Latin America. We do have options – but we largely lack the political will and the control over the purse-strings needed to deliver them. Can we change that?

Paul L Younger

fly
kites
not
drones



The remnants of our beautiful day out flying kites at Bellahouston Park on Palm Sunday

On Palm Sunday, 20th March 2016, in communion with and inspired by the Afghan Peace Volunteers, the Catholic Worker in Bellahouston Park in Glasgow, along with other peace activists in other cities, flew kites.

Kites are an ancient form of art, entertainment, and creativity. It is generally believed that kites were first invented in China, and one

story claims that the first kite was used to signal to people on land that a boat needed rescue. Kites were also used in China to test the wind, to predict the coming weather, and every year to welcome the coming of spring.

Throughout the centuries the flying of kites has become popular in many parts of the world. Indians fly kites in many festivals throughout the year. In Japan some communities celebrate the birth of a baby boy by flying kites. In Vietnam, kites do not have a tail, but instead have small flutes attached, allowing the wind to “hum” a musical tune while the kites are flying. In Chile kites are flown on Independence Day, and in Greece kites are flown on the first day of Lent. Guyana has a beautiful tradition - Hindus, Muslims, and Christians fly kites together on Easter Monday to celebrate the resurrection.

As well as being symbolic, religious, and entertainment, kites have also played a role in science – the Wright Brother apparently used kites to help them understand the science behind flying and the role of the wind, and myth has it that Benjamin Franklin attached a key to a kite, flew the kite during a thunderstorm, and “discovered” electricity when his kite was hit by lightning! Kites have a long and distinguished

history!

Today kites are being flown by many in support of peace, love, and the brotherhood and sisterhood of all people. When the Afghan Peace Volunteers discovered that children in Afghanistan had become afraid to fly kites because of the possibility of drone attacks, they decided that kite flying must be reclaimed in support of peace. Many children in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria, Iraq, Gaza and Yemen have suffered psychological, physical, and spiritual damage because of the drone attacks in their country. Fear has become a constant way of life. As Catholic Workers we are committed to ending the evil use of drones, and committed to spreading peace in any way we can. Today we fly kites – to bring some beauty back into the world; to say to the world we do not accept the use of drones; to offer support to peace groups in all the countries impacted by violence; and to offer love for the children impacted by their violent world.

What can we do, on a day to day basis, to continue our support? To quote Father John Dear we need to:

- ◆ Be mystics and contemplatives for non-violence
- ◆ Practice meticulous non-violence to self and others
- ◆ Be students and teachers of non-violence and peace
- ◆ Become activists
- ◆ Be prophets and visionaries in the name of the God of peace

“Love the Lord with all your heart and all your mind and all your strength;
love your neighbour as yourself;
there is no commandment greater than these”

Tamara Horsburgh



One of the wee girls looks to the blue sky free from fear of hidden drones



Catholic Workers from London, Glasgow, Oxford and Amsterdam at the national Stop Trident demo in London



Down at Faslane Peace Camp with Sister Megan Rice

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the deforestation and heavy machinery. The slowing rotting remains of grand trees, like the huayruro, cedro and ish-pingo and medicinal plants like clavohuasca, uña de gato, chuchuhuasi which local people use to construct their homes and cure themselves from illnesses. Emerging from Uchunya's biodiverse forests into the plantation itself, where a single crop, palm oil, dominated the view all the way to the horizon; where transnational capital is devastating Uchunya's ecology and very way of life.

What we saw that morning filled me with indignation. Paradoxically, what I heard and felt that morning also filled me with hope. I think I half-expected the community-members to be cowed, after all of the intimidation, threats and even



The Shipibo-Conibo, usually called the Shipibo, with an estimated population of around 32,000 people, represent approximately 8% of the indigenous population of Peru.

criminalization they have experienced (four of the key figures in the community's struggle have had hollow charges brought against them by an individual who many say is in

the pay of the company). On the contrary, I was told by Huber, whose home was razed to the ground by the company, they do not fear the company and the powerful interests behind it; indeed, in a phrase I must admit I struggle with, they fear only God.

As we refreshed ourselves with coconut water, I witnessed something profound in these men's solidarity, integrity and defiant hope. As Richard Rohr wrote recently in a meditation on the 'deeper genius' of Jesus – and our - option for the poor, 'we are the ones who need to move into the worlds of powerlessness for our own conversion!' Spending time in Uchunya and working with a community who find themselves on the very frontline of the global rush for land, is confronting me with the very roots of struggle, if, as Raymond Williams put it, "To be truly radical is to make hope possible, rather than despair convincing."

Thomas Younger

Tom is working with Alianza Arkana. www.alianzaarkana.org

Uchunya's Stand

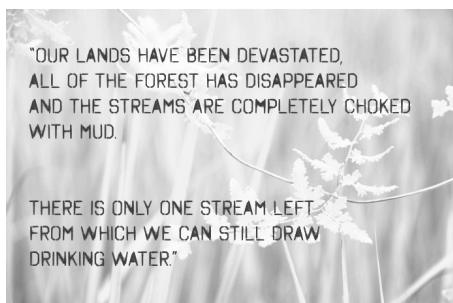
The expansion of oil palm across the Peruvian Amazon is driving land grabs, the violation of indigenous peoples' rights and the destruction of unique bio-cultural diversity, due to massive deforestation. As top oil palm producing countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia literally run out of land, the oil palm industry is increasingly moving its operations into the Peruvian Amazon.

"Spirituality is living life fully and courageously." Matthew Fox

I experienced a very different kind of Easter this year. Waking before dawn, I made my way through the inky darkness with four men from the Shipibo indigenous community of Uchunya, as well as my friends Ronald, a Shipibo documentary-maker, and India, a videographer from London. Minutes later, we were wending our way down the Aguaytía river towards the homes of several community-members; and the frontline of Uchunya's struggle to defend their ancestral territory and rights against aggressive land grabbing.

It's now two months since I left Glasgow for the Peruvian Amazon, where I'm living and working with Alianza Arkana, a grassroots alliance regenerating this beautiful region of the Amazon by supporting its indigenous peoples and their traditions. I came here to lead Alianza Arkana's Ecosocial Justice Program, working with our Shipibo allies to support their ongoing struggles in defence of their territorial and cultural rights.

Not long after I arrived in Pucallpa, I met Ronald, who has worked for years documenting abuses against his people and their territory, not least in Canaan, a Shipibo community severely impacted by oil and gas extraction. When Ronald approached us with the idea of making a film in Santa Clara de Uchunya, where since 2011 the community have witnessed the destruction of over 5,000 hectares (more than 6,500 football pitches) of their ancestral forests and rivers by the transnational palm oil company, Plantaciones de Pucallpa, things quickly started to fall into place. And so it was that I came to be walking through Uchunya's severely threatened ancestral forests that Easter morning.



What we saw that morning hit hard. I was reminded of the visceral scenes from John McGrath's play 'The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil', which relives Scotland's successive waves of land grabs and the dispossession of entire communities from their territories. There was the community-member's forest-home next to which the company had erected a sign which read 'Private Property. Licensed to Shoot.' The barbed wire fence, erected just weeks ago, which cut right through the community's ancient forest path, with signs reading 'Hunting and Fishing Forbidden.

Area for the Conservation of Biological Diversity'; a cruel irony when all of the streams beyond that point were severely contaminated because of the plantation and, as the men told us, the game animals which they used to hunt to feed their families had fled because of

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Get involved:

Round Table Discussions

On the 3rd Tuesday of every month we meet to discuss a topic and help us together to clarify our thoughts. We meet at 6:15. Please email us for details of where we'll be meeting.

Soup Kitchen

Help out at our weekly Soup Kitchen in Cadogan Street, Glasgow City Centre

Place of Welcome for Refugees: Saturdays 9am-1pm

Help teach English at Garnethill Multi-cultural Centre (Basement) 21 Rose Street Glasgow or just socialise.

Monthly Witness at Faslane Nuclear Submarine Base

Join us on the first Saturday of each month at 2:30pm outside the North Gate.

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