

# PLEDGE

Newsletter of The Pledge of Resistance No. 6 March 2003

[www.justicenotvengeance.org](http://www.justicenotvengeance.org)

## From Dissent to Resistance



Sitting-down after the March, 15 February 2003

The people of Iraq are living in fear. Mothers, fathers, sons and daughters are looking at each other and wondering who will survive, and how they could possibly cope with the loss. Oxfam has stated that a military assault on Iraq could 'devastate the lives of millions of people and trigger a humanitarian catastrophe.'

Despite all the postcards, letters, vigils, petitions, polls, lobbies, demonstrations and public meetings — and despite one of the biggest marches in British political history and a massive Parliamentary rebellion — Tony Blair still seems set on waging an immoral and illegal war against Iraq, risking the lives of tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of people.

It is time for the anti-war movement to make the transition from dissent to resistance - to civil disobedience and nonviolent direct action. At the Pledge of Resistance Gathering on March 1<sup>st</sup> a call was issued for the 17<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> to be a week of nonviolent action to stop the war and for Monday 17<sup>th</sup>

March to be a National Day of Die-ins. ARROW — in conjunction with CND and voices uk — is calling for all local anti-war groups to organise die-ins in their towns, cities, military bases, (pro-war) MPs offices, schools etc... on the 17<sup>th</sup> March.

If war comes, our actions can serve to limit and restrain the damage done to Iraq and its people. Make sure you know what your local contingency plan is in the event of an attack: contact the ARROW office on 0845 458 2564 or visit <[www.j-n-v.org](http://www.j-n-v.org)>.

Find out where your local military base is and take part in the Reclaim the Bases weekend on the 5<sup>th</sup> / 6<sup>th</sup> April: <[www.reclaimthebases.org.uk](http://www.reclaimthebases.org.uk)>.

The question for each of us now is: what price are we, each of us, willing to pay to stop this war? How will we respond to the calls of our sisters and brothers in Iraq? Inaction is not an option.

### NEXT ACTIONS

**17<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> March**  
**Obstruct & Resist!**  
**A Week of Nonviolent**  
**Action to Stop the War**

**Monday 17<sup>th</sup> March**  
**National day of**  
**'die-ins'**

**Start organising your event**  
**today! Supported by voices,**  
**ARROW and CND. For more**  
**information – or to tell us about**  
**your event - contact the ARROW**  
**office on 0845 458 2564,**  
**[pledgetoresist@onetel.net.uk](mailto:pledgetoresist@onetel.net.uk)**  
**or visit [www.j-n-v.org](http://www.j-n-v.org).**

**Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> March**  
**National Demonstration**  
**at USAF Fairford, home of**  
**the B-52 bombers.**

**See page 3 for plans for action**  
**in the event of an attack.**

**6000**  
**HAVE SIGNED**  
**THE PLEDGE**

**Sign online at**  
**[www-j-n-v.org](http://www-j-n-v.org)**

## Valentine's Day

On Valentine's day, five anti-war activists locked themselves to a huge pink heart at the gates of Downing Street, blocking the entrance for over three hours. The heart, constructed from wood and metal, bore the message "War breaks our heart."



## Greenpeace

*Guardian, 25<sup>th</sup> February:* "Greenpeace activists disrupted 120 or so ExxonMobil petrol stations yesterday and blockaded the company's head office to point up a connection between the potential war in Iraq and US oil interests. A spokesman said 300 volunteers, including priests and teachers, set out at 5am and used a mixture of hit-and-run and civil disobedience tactics. While some went from one to another of the company's Esso stations, cutting off the electricity to the pumps, others locked groups of nozzles together and attached themselves to the pipes. At least 50 people were arrested in various places. The protest is thought to have cost the company more than £1m."

## Shannon Airport

*Jan. 29<sup>th</sup>:* Peace activist Mary Kelly is arrested after damaging the nose of a US military plane with an axe. Feb. 3: Five members of the pacifist Catholic Worker Movement cut their way into Shannon Airport, pour human blood on the runway that has been servicing U.S. military flights to bases Qatar and begin to take up the runway, working on its edge with a mallet.

## Fairford

*Feb. 24<sup>th</sup>:* Thirteen people were arrested at USAF Fairford after anti-war demonstrators used ropes to pull open the man gate and invade the base. About 450 people turned up outside the base in Gloucestershire. Seven people were arrested on suspicion of aggravated trespass, three of criminal damage, two of theft (a policeman's helmet!) and one to prevent a 'breach of the peace.' As we go to press (March 4) B-52 bombers have begun arriving at Fairford. A National Demonstration at Fairford has been called for the 22<sup>nd</sup> March. See [www.gwi.org.uk](http://www.gwi.org.uk).

## February 15th

Roughly 180 people joined the sitdown protest in Piccadilly Circus following the massive, million-strong anti-war march and it took the police over two hours to clear the road. Six people were charged with highway obstruction (*see Court Report*).

## Brize Norton

*Daily Telegraph, Feb 21st:* "Four people who penetrated security at one of the country's main military air bases to stage an anti-war protest have been charged with trespass. The activists, members... Oxford Pledge of Resistance, locked their arms together in metal cylinders and lay on the runway at RAF Brize Norton in Oxfordshire. The RAF was forced to close the runway for almost two hours while the protesters were removed by police. A spokeswoman for the group said they were trying to stop jets carrying troops from leaving Britain for the Gulf ahead of a possible war against Iraq. The activists, two men aged 37 and 19, and two women, aged 28 and 25, have each been charged with one offence of aggravated trespass and failing to leave when required by police." (*See Court Report*).

## Marchwood

*Feb. 1<sup>st</sup>:* Protestors stop military convoys on their way to Marchwood Military Port. One arrest for highway obstruction. Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup>: Portsmouth activist Rosy Bremer is arrested and charged with criminal damage after spray-painting 21 vehicles, 1 roll of military flooring and other military supply equipment with "No War" messages. Rosy will be in court in May.

## Europe

*Italy, February 22<sup>nd</sup>:* Activists turn back two trains loaded with US military equipment destined for the US Camp Darby and Pisa airbases.

*Belgium, March 1st:* According to Belgian IndyMedia peace-activists who had been planning to block military transports around Melsele were arrested before the action had even started, and taken to a police depo 50km away!

## Please support ARROW!

**This mail-out alone has cost ARROW over £1000.**

**Please help us to keep on doing this work, and distributing this information—please give as generously as you can via the form overleaf.**

## RESOURCES FOR RESISTERS

Below are some useful resources. Also check out the ARROW website <[www.j-n-v.org](http://www.j-n-v.org)> for links to these (under Resources for Activists) as well as up-to-date briefings on the current situation, event listings, plans for action in the event of an attack on Iraq and details of local groups.

### Legal Briefings for Activists

The Activists' Legal Project has produced some excellent briefings on possible charges for nonviolent civil disobedience, police arrest procedures, and how to run a legal support group (ESSENTIAL if you are expecting arrests).

Briefings are available from ARROW 0845 458 2564 (local rate) or from the ALP website: <[www.activistslegalproject.org.uk](http://www.activistslegalproject.org.uk)>

### Pledge Postcard

A postcard version of the Pledge form is available from the ARROW office. Please use the tear-off slip below to order copies.

### Anti-War Book *War Plan Iraq*

By Milan Rai. George Monbiot says: 'The clearest and most persuasive explanation of the reasons not to go to war with Iraq anyone could wish for.' £11.80 inc. p&p ('ARROW Publications'), 29 Gensing Rd, St Leonards on Sea, TN 38 0HE.

### Monbiot Media Guide

Good press work can make an action 100 times more effective. George Monbiot has written a brief, readable and all-round excellent guide for activists doing media work. Pamphlet costs £1.50 inc. p&p from *voices*, 5 Caledonian Rd, London N1 9DX, or read it online at <[www.antenna.nl/eyfa/resources/media.htm](http://www.antenna.nl/eyfa/resources/media.htm)>

### Other Web-based Resources

Some accessible, encouraging and just plain practical fruits of a long activist career can be found at <[www.starhawk.org](http://www.starhawk.org)>. Good bits include 'How To Plan An Action' and materials for people organising preparation sessions. Wise reflections on tactics/strategy also.

Brilliant stuff on civil disobedience can also be found at the New York ACT-UP site <[www.actupny.org](http://www.actupny.org)>, and the Genetix Snowball site <[www.fraw.org.uk/gs/](http://www.fraw.org.uk/gs/)>.

### Nonviolence training

If you are organising civil disobedience for the first time, it's good to have a group to do it with. A briefing on Affinity Groups can be found on <[www.j-n-v.org](http://www.j-n-v.org)>. It is also useful to do some nonviolent direct action preparation with a trainer (perhaps from the Quaker organisation Turning the Tide, 020 7663 1064, <[www.turning-the-tide.org](http://www.turning-the-tide.org)>) or contact ARROW.

# Court reports

## WARZONE WHITEHALL

Nine activists arrested at the Warzone Whitehall die-in on December 2<sup>nd</sup> were due to stand trial on the 24<sup>th</sup> February. However a few days before the trial they were informed that their cases had been 'discontinued' because, in the words of a letter from the Crown Prosecution Service 'because there is not enough evidence to provide a realistic prospect of conviction' — a flagrant lie. Was someone concerned by the publicity received by the Northwood defendants (see below)?

## NORTHWOOD

*Guardian*, 31 Jan: 'Ten peace campaigners were fined yesterday for holding a sit-down protest outside the permanent joint headquarters of the British armed forces in Northwood, north-west London, on January 19. Students and artists, a former actress, and a retired decorator and plumber were fined between £25 and £50 for their protest.

'Fiona Walker, 61, from Archway, north London, told the court: "Along with the majority of people here in this court I can make no sense of the push for war against Iraq." She added that if a "single child was to be maimed or killed" in her name it would be unforgivable. A 17-year-old student from Holborn, central London also pleaded guilty to obstructing the highway. [She] told a youth court hearing: "I was there because I feel very strongly against a war with Iraq. Thousands would lose their lives. I don't want this to be on my conscience."

'Eleven people pleaded not guilty [and] a 12th demonstrator was charged with criminal damage which she denied.'

*Guardian*, 4 Feb: 'The British government was planning a "genocidal war" against Iraq, anti-war protester Nicholas Best, 27, told a court yesterday, and

this left him with no alternative but to break the law. The peace campaigner was one of four people appearing at Watford magistrates court, Hertfordshire, after they were arrested at a demonstration at the permanent joint headquarters of the British armed forces in Northwood, north west London, on January 19. The Northwood centre is the command post for rapid deployment forces, which would play a key role in directing British troops in the event of an attack on Iraq.

'Best, Peter Nelson, 20, from Tavistock, Devon, and Evelyn Fitzherbert, 35, of Stoke Newington, north London, were each fined £25 plus £10 costs after pleading guilty to obstructing the highway. Grace Crookhall-Greening, 74, from Bedford, who also pleaded guilty, was fined £35 with £10 costs.

Crookhall-Greening told magistrates: "The British government has not given us the democratic time to debate in parliament this coming war. I felt I had no alternative but to use direct action which was non-violent."

A further 24 Northwood defendants appeared in court on 4 Feb, of whom 12 pleaded not guilty. Trial dates have been set for June.

## FEBRUARY 15<sup>TH</sup> SIT-DOWN

Six defendant's appeared in court on Feb. 25, all charged with highway obstruction. Two pleaded not-guilty. Standing in the dock defendant Jon Davies quoted the 18th century political philosopher Sir



Outside Watford Magistrates Court

Edmund Burke: "All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing." stating that he had no regrets about being arrested in his attempt to stop the war.

## U.S.

*Boston Globe*, March 1st: 'If US-led forces attack Iraq, antiwar activists around the country plan to blockade federal buildings and disrupt major business districts with large protests and civil disobedience. Some disruptions have already occurred: Eight antiwar protesters were arrested in Seattle on Feb. 18 after blocking the eastbound lanes of Highway 520, halting the morning commute.

'In California, dozens of protesters plan to infiltrate Vandenberg Air Force Base on the central coast, hoping to disrupt work. A San Francisco-area collective called Direct Action to Stop the War plans to blockade the TransAmerica Pyramid, the Pacific Stock Exchange, and the Federal Reserve in San Francisco.

'In Philadelphia, more than 1,200 people have signed a pledge to protest at the Philadelphia Federal Building two days after the war begins ... "We will attempt to shut it down," [said Robert M. Smith of Brandywine Peace Community]. "We plan to block every entrance into the facility through people using the strength of their presence and their bodies in the tradition of" Martin Luther King Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi.'

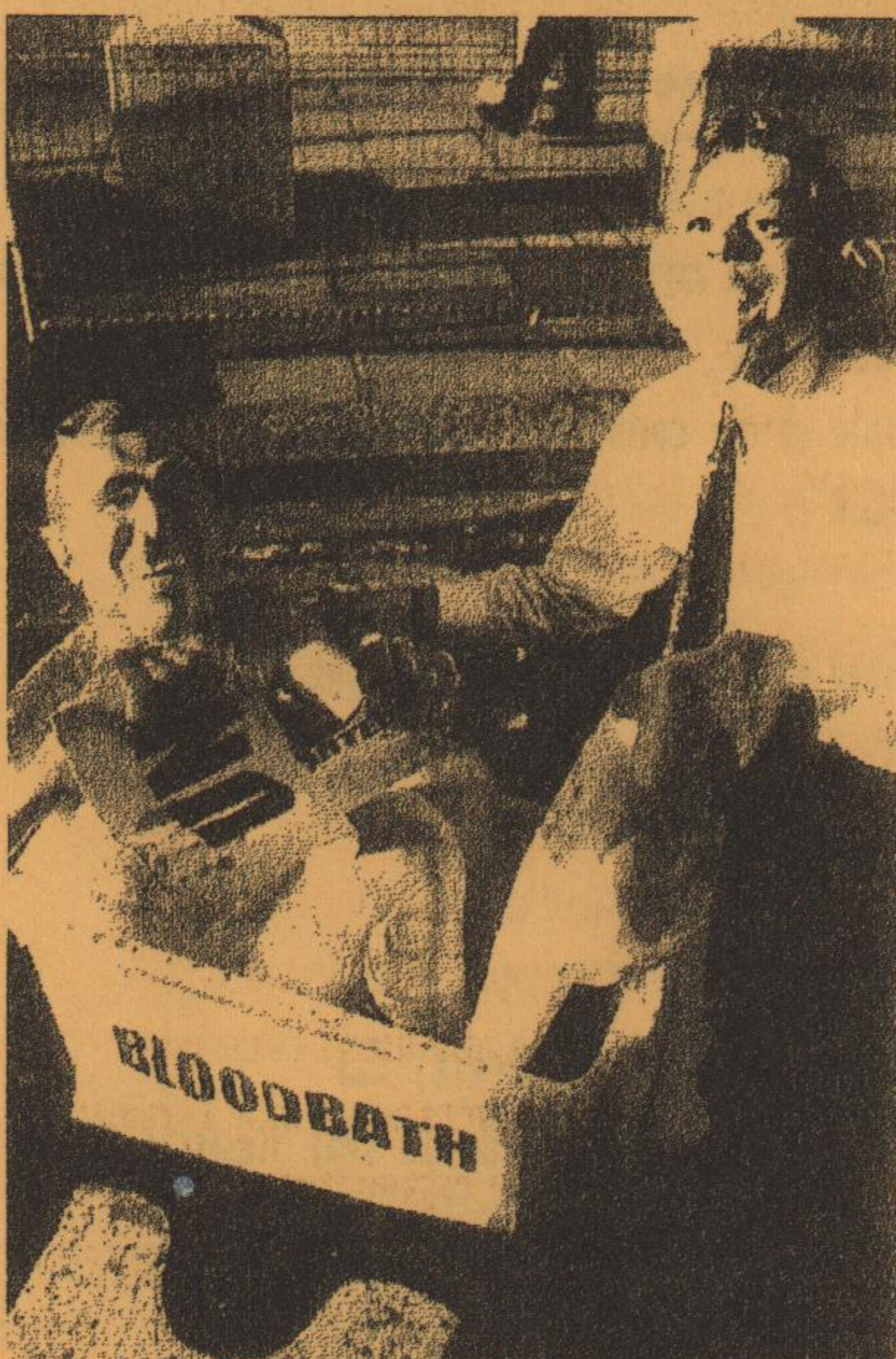
'During the Gulf War in 1991, protesters shut down the Bay Bridge that links San Francisco and Oakland for two days in a row, creating major traffic jams. This time, the focus is primarily on federal sites and large corporations that activists think have a financial interest in a war with Iraq.'

## Please report your actions

<[www.j-n-v.org.uk](http://www.j-n-v.org.uk)>

<[www.indymedia.co.uk](http://www.indymedia.co.uk)>

<[www.schnews.org.uk](http://www.schnews.org.uk)>



ARROW members illustrate the Bloodbath that George Bush and Tony Blair are heading towards, outside the US Embassy in late January.

## ENGLISH CONTACTS

There are now Pledge contacts in **Birmingham** (0121 449 5683), **Bournemouth** (01202 822 024), **Brighton** ([hutchings@sniffout.com](mailto:hutchings@sniffout.com)), **Bristol** (0117 9514 4744), **Cambridge** (0845 458 1688), **Dorset/S. Somerset** (01963-251 685), **Flintshire** ([david@milwr.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:david@milwr.freeserve.co.uk)) **Glasgow** Scottish Coalition for Justice Not War . **Leicester** (0116 247 0121), **Liverpool** (0151 707 9893), **Manchester** (0161 286 7950), **Notts** (01623-648 860); **Oxford** (01865 794 504), **Portsmouth/Southampton** (01329 312 553), **Salisbury** (01722 744 665), **Sheffield** (0114 266 2671), **Stroud** (01453 762349) and elsewhere.

If you want to contact other local Pledgers please call 0845 458 2564.

## What is the Pledge of Resistance?

The Pledge of Resistance is an attempt to oppose the threatened war on Iraq.

The Pledge is a public declaration of intent to carry out civil disobedience in the event of a major US/UK attack on Iraq (or any other country) in the course of the so-called "war on terrorism". (See tear-off slip below.)

So far over 6000 people have signed the ARROW and Scottish Pledges, including Caroline Lucas MEP.

We urge all Pledge signers to form local **affinity groups** and to hold nonviolent direct action preparation workshops. Please check the website for more info (which is coming gradually...)

The Pledge is only triggered in the event of a major military assault, but signing the Pledge now helps to put pressure on the Government and to create a network of affinity groups and individuals willing to risk arrest and trial, who can cooperate to take further **preventive** action, before the war is launched.

The Pledge was started by ARROW (Active Resistance to the Roots of War), a nonviolent direct action affinity group formed in September 1990 to oppose

## Pledge Sponsors

Noam Chomsky, Chumbawumba, George Galloway MP, Jeremy Hardy, Caroline Lucas MEP, Adrian Mitchell, Celia Mitchell, George Monbiot, Canon Paul Oestreicher, Will Self, Hans von Sponeck (ex-UN Humanitarian Co-ordinator Iraq), Ralph Steadman, Angie Zelter. ARROW, Brighton & Hove Green Party, Women in Black (Cambridge), G. Manchester Coalition Against Sanctions and War on Iraq, London Region CND, Oxford Campaign Against War in Iraq, Mariam Appeal, Musicians Against Nuclear Arms, Nuneaton & N. Warwickshire Against the War, Oswestry Coalition for Peace, the Pacifist Party, Pax Christi, Reading Roadbusters, Scottish CND, Stop the War Coalition, Sussex Action for Peace, UK Network of Engaged Buddhists, and **voices in the wilderness uk.**

## RESISTANCE DIARY

TRIAL of Feb. 15 sit-down defendant. **Mon. 10<sup>th</sup> March.** Bow Street Magistrates Court, 2pm.

DISGRACE THE BASE. **Sat 15<sup>th</sup> March.** March & NVDA at Portsmouth naval base. Contact 023 9281 8849.

NONVIOLENCE WORKSHOP, POWYS. **Sun. 16<sup>th</sup> March.** Contact 01686 412 233.

NATIONAL WEEK OF NVA TO STOP THE WAR. **17<sup>th</sup> -23<sup>rd</sup> March.** 0845 458 2564 or [www.j-n-v.org](http://www.j-n-v.org).

NATIONAL DAY OF DIE-INS, EVERYWHERE. **Mon. 17<sup>th</sup> March.** 0845 458 2564 for more info.

FOIL THE BASE, MENWITH HILL. Mass anti-war action at this US spy base. **Sat. 22<sup>nd</sup> March.** 07905 913 139 or [mail@now-peace.org.uk](mailto:mail@now-peace.org.uk)

## In the event of war

### LONDON: ON THE DAY THE WAR STARTS

The Stop the War Coalition are calling for people to assemble in Trafalgar Square at 6pm the day the attack starts 'to bring the whole centre of Government to a halt'. If you would like to join a sitdown protest with the Pledge of Resistance signatories assemble between 6-7pm by the statue of Oscar Wilde in Adelaide Street WC2 (at the back of St Martin in the Fields church). THIS IS A CHANGE TO THE PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED PLAN FOR THIS DAY.

**LONDON: FIRST SATURDAY AFTER WAR STARTS** - The Stop the War Coalition have called for a massive national demonstration in London the Saturday following the start of the war. Contact 0207 538 2521 for details. EARLIER PLANS TO ASSEMBLE IN TRAFALGAR SQAURE AT 12NOON FOR A SITDOWN PROTEST IN WHITEHALL HAVE BEEN CANCELLED.

For plans elsewhere around the country see <[www.j-n-v.org](http://www.j-n-v.org)> or contact ARROW.

NATIONAL DEMO, FAIRFORD USAF BASE (home of the B52). **Sat. 22<sup>nd</sup> March.** 07768 418960, [info@gwi.org.uk](mailto:info@gwi.org.uk). On-going peace camp at Fairford. phone: 0774 8015601.

NONVIOLENCE WORKSHOP, LEICESTER. **Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> March.** 0116 247 0121.

COURT, WITNEY. Brize Norton trespassers. Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> March. Witney Mag. Court. Tel 0845 458 2564

RECLAIM THE BASES, EVERYWHERE. Weekend of action. **5<sup>th</sup> / 6<sup>th</sup> April.** Contact: [info@reclaimthebases.org.uk](mailto:info@reclaimthebases.org.uk)

A good new source of info on nonviolent direct action is [www.nvda-uk.net](http://www.nvda-uk.net) - includes listings, reports and resources for activists.

## WINDOW POSTER

A4 'No War: War Kills The Innocent'. Available from ARROW, using the order form below.

## ARROW NO WAR BADGE



Badges from office for donation. Please use the order form below if you would like some.

## VOICES

### BADGE

Badges available from address below for just 40p each inc p&p.



✂ Please complete and return this form to ARROW, c/o **voices**, 5 Caledonian Rd, London N1 9DX

I oppose US/UK military retaliation for September 11<sup>th</sup>. (Please tick ONE PLEDGE ONLY.)

**PLEDGE OF ACTION** I pledge to take part in nonviolent civil disobedience in the event of a major US/UK attack on Iraq or any other country in the course of the "war on terrorism."

**PLEDGE OF SUPPORT** I pledge to support people in my community carrying out nonviolent civil disobedience against the US/UK "war on terrorism."

### Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Please only sign if you agree to have your name and town published on the web and for campaigning purposes.

(All other details will be kept confidential.)

I enclose a donation of £ \_\_\_\_\_ to help the work of the Pledge.

(Please make cheques payable to 'ARROW' and mark them 'Pledge' on the back).

Please send me \_\_\_ Pledge postcards (free)  \_\_\_ ARROW Bfgs

\_\_\_ Voices badges @40p inc p&p  \_\_\_ ARROW badges (donation please)

\_\_\_ Anti-War Window Posters (donation please)  \_\_\_ Very Rough Guide to War Resistance

Name (CAPITALS PLEASE) \_\_\_\_\_

Address (CAPITALS PLEASE) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_