

Archive of the Campaign to Free Vanunu and for a Nuclear-Free Middle East. Collection Description

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Special Collections, University of Bradford

Reference code: GB 0532 Cwl VAN.

Title: Archive of the Campaign to Free Vanunu and for a Nuclear-Free Middle East.

Dates of creation: 1987-2005.

Level of description: Collection.

Extent of unit of description: 1.5 linear metres.

Name of creator: Campaign to Free Vanunu and for a Nuclear-Free Middle East.

Administrative history:

The Campaign to Free Vanunu (CFV) has its origins in the international response to the abduction and imprisonment of the Israeli nuclear technician Dr Mordechai Vanunu, who was convicted of treason, espionage and revealing state secrets in 1988.

The Campaign was a London-based organisation, which campaigned through political and media networks and which at its height during the mid nineties mobilised several high profile figure in the arts and sciences. Beginning as an ad hoc body, the CFV was apparently founded by Vanunu's brother Meir, and supported by a small group of activists. It wasn't until February 1991 that it was formalised under a legal framework. On 19 February a declaration of trust was made between The Right Livelihood Awards Foundation (RLAF) and Peter Benenson (founder of Amnesty International), Ken Coates (writer and MEP), Bruce Kent (former general secretary and chair of CND and president of the International Peace Bureau), Yael Lotan (writer and editor), Harold Pinter (writer), Andrew Wilski (a psychiatrist) and Carl Jakob Wolmar von Uexkull (a former member of the European Parliament for Germany and the RLAF's founder). Benenson and the others constituted themselves as the Mordechai Vanunu Trust (MVT).

The RLAF donated a grant of £10,000 to the MVT, which during February 1992 the CFV used to rent office space from the Peace Pledge Union at 6 Endsleigh Street, London, and to fund further their activities. From this period, the CFV built upon its earlier pro-Vanunu operations, including lobbying the UK and European parliaments and CND and and picketing the Israeli embassy. On 21 and 22 March 1992, it held a 24-hour vigil outside the embassy to mark Vanunu's 2000 days in solitary confinement.

The demonstrators included musicians Peter Gabriel and Nigel Kennedy and actors Prunella Scales and Timothy West, who signed a statement supporting the campaign; a thirty-foot banner carrying the legend 'Vanunu – 2000 days in Solidarity' was displayed, and a wooden replica of Vanunu's cell erected. Prominent supporters of the campaign who sat in the cell next to a cut-out of Vanunu included actors Julie Christie and Roger Lloyd-Pack, musicians David Gilmour and Nick Laird-Clowes, MPs Jeremy Corbyn and Harry Cohen, comedian, actor and writer Alexei Sayle and anti-nuclear campaigner and peace activist Pat Arrowsmith.

On 3 October 1993 the CFV held a Free Vanunu Benefit at the Hackney Empire in order to mark the seventh anniversary of Vanunu's abduction from Italy to Israel and the beginning of his eighth year in solitary confinement. Comedians Arthur Smith, Arnold Brown and Mark Steel, poets Christopher Logue and Benjamin Zephaniah and actors Julie Covington, Susannah York and Janet Suzman performed at the event, as did many other celebrities, including Harold Pinter who appeared in a playlet written by the poet Mike Rosen. This would be the first of a series of twelve annual benefits.

Active members of the CFV during the early 1990s included Ernest Rodker, Rami Heilbronn, Jenny Shubow, David Polden, Ossi Ron and Sabby Segal, some of whom and others were present at a campaign meeting on 14 February 1992, where it was proposed to keep minutes. Subsequent meetings were held usually every two weeks during the campaign's first years, first at Endsleigh Street, then at 89 Borough High Street, then in Endsleigh Street again, and finally at 185 New Kent Road, to which the CFV moved in 1998. The CFV published a newsletter: *Campaign to Free Vanunu and for a Nuclear Free Middle East* and worked closely with *The Sunday Times*. The CFV ceased operations some months following Vanunu's release from prison on 21 April 2004, the final newsletter in the Archive being dated Autumn 2005.

Immediate source of acquisition: Donated to Special Collections by Ernest Rodker, key activist in the Campaign.

Scope and content:

Minutes (1991-2004), newsletters (1992-2005), press cuttings (1987-2005), press releases, legal papers, photographs (ca.1991-2001), correspondence with the Israeli embassy, British MPs and MEPs, and Mordechai Vanunu (ca.1995-1997) and miscellaneous posters, petitions, play scripts, Christmas cards and other ephemera. Also newsletters and correspondence concerning Sam Day, coordinator of the U.S. Campaign to Free Mordechai Vanunu.

Appraisal: Duplicates and irrelevant material have been weeded as seen; further appraisal will be carried out as the Archive is catalogued in more detail.

System of arrangement: The original files and system of arrangement used by the Campaign have been retained where these are evident.

Conditions governing access: Available to researchers, by appointment. Access to archive material is subject to preservation requirements and must also conform to the restrictions of the Data Protection Act and any other appropriate legislation. All correspondence in this Archive is restricted under the Data Protection Act until it has been catalogued in detail.

Conditions governing reproduction: Rights held by the Campaign have been transferred to Special Collections, though there are many third-party copyrights in the Archive. Copies may be supplied or produced at the discretion of Special Collections staff, subject to copyright law and the condition of the originals. Applications for permission to make published use of any material should be directed to the Special Collections Librarian in the first instance. The Library will assist where possible with identifying copyright owners, but responsibility for ensuring copyright clearance rests with the user of the material.

Language of material: Mostly English; some Hebrew; occasional items in French, German, Italian and other European languages.

Finding aids: A basic boxlist has been produced to make the Archive accessible as quickly as possible. This will be further refined in response to user demand.

Archivist's note: Described by Martin Levy.

Rules or conventions: ISAD (G) 2.

Date(s) of description: January 2013.

Indexing

Vanunu, Mordechai

Campaign to Free Vanunu and for a Nuclear-Free Middle East

Mordechai Vanunu Trust

Anti-nuclear movement - Great Britain - History - 20th-21st centuries

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