THE COST OF WAR

When you stand in front of this, carved in stone at your feet is a map of the world and the words ‘The Cost of War’. On the column is a light that glows and dims. Above it a plain white dial with a black hand that circles the dial once every 30 seconds. Below the dial a digital counter with figures in red. On the wall to the left it says: ‘In the Twentieth Century - the century which saw the devastating development of modern warfare - one hundred million people died as a result of conflict. This counter reached that figure at midnight on 31st December 1999.’ On the right it says: ‘If this rate were to continue in the Twenty-first Century two people would die every minute’. As you stand there watching, the light comes and goes, the hand never stops going round, and each time it reaches the top of the dial another figure is added to the tally of the dead. Already, in the eighth year of this century man’s conflicts have added over 8.4 million deaths. We’re ahead of our target already, it seems. Where can you find this sad and sensitive memorial to man’s insanity?

ALDERMASTON

50 years on

Perhaps the mood is slowly changing, but on Easter Monday the young policeman on the section of the perimeter fence where campaigners from Somerset and Dorset had gathered was a joy. Not only did he make sure that we knew when it was time to ‘make a noise’, urging us on as we beat saucepan lids and drums, whistled and hooted, conducting us to ever-greater efforts, when the time came for us to spread along the fence with our hands joined in an effort to surround the base (we might have managed it if only all of us hadn’t been so reluctant to move away from the gates!) he joined us, his back to the fence and holding our hands. The weather was a bit bleak, but the protest felt like a celebration of 50 years of commitment. We’ll be back!
2nd Peace History Conference

This year’s conference at the Imperial War Museum was well attended on both days, and greatly enjoyed by all. As well as some very interesting speakers, the Museum’s cinema was host to one of the Bradford Peace Museum’s exhibitions, and a display about Erasmus, provided by Peter van den Dungen, who also gave a talk on this great 16th century scholar and peace advocate. There was a fascinating presentation from Katrina Gass and Helen Kay on the Women’s 1915 Peace Initiative, which led to the formation of the Women’s International League for Peace and freedom (WILPF) – inspiring to realise that women, who at that date still had no vote, were determined and farsighted enough to organise a peace conference in war-torn Europe in 1915. Carol Rank gave a presentation on Anti-war and peace art with plenty of examples for us to look at, and which led to a feeling that perhaps the peace movement needs a symbol as powerful and recognisable as the CND logo. Any ideas? Ian Christie’s session on Peace and propaganda in film was also very informative, and provided plenty of ideas should we hold a peace film festival. Friday evening saw a musical event, with songs from Leon Rosselson, the protest singer-songwriter. The Raised Voices choir (heard at Aldermaston on Easter Monday) also sang and the audience was encouraged to join in – easily done as we’d started the evening with a glass of wine! There was plenty of opportunity for discussion and for exploring the Museum itself (see page 4).

Editor

Peace History Papers

One of the excellent by-products of the two Peace History Conferences (2007 and 2008) that MAW and the International Peace Bureau have organised, with the great help of the Imperial War Museum, is that we now have some great written bits of peace history.

Some lectures were delivered in note form. Some, like the ones on film and art, need to have their PowerPoint displays to go with them. But others stand alone as essays which those who could not come to the conferences might well like to read - and distribute (MAW is for activists not passive recipients).

I first mention the talk given by Shireen Shah in 2007, which had the title ‘The Frontier Gandhi, Abdul Ghaffar Khan 1890-1986’. This is the story of a Muslim from the Pathan North West frontier who devoted his life to freedom and social change using only the methods of nonviolence. He even raised a nonviolent army of thousands of men. He spent about a third of his life in prison as a consequence. MAW will be producing this essay in pamphlet form by June of this year. Please get copies and spread the message around. Even amongst Muslims the story of this brave man is not well known if at all. Yet its importance today is blindingly obvious.

There are two talks given by Terry Charman, the Imperial War Museum staff historian. They are really informative about events in the 1920s and 30s. The first is entitled ‘The League of Nations and the Briand-Kellogg Pact’ (this was the pact which, it was hoped, would outlaw war). The second is The 1932 League of Nations Disarmament Conference at Geneva.’ Both make good background for understanding Hitler’s rise to power.

Then comes Kate Hudson’s paper on ‘The World Government Movement 1945-1950’. Kate is the head of Social and Political Studies at London’s South Bank University, and she sheds light on another almost forgotten movement. Yet we use terms like ‘Global Citizen’ today as if we were the first to have such ideas. Far from it, as Kate makes clear.

Professor Peter Hennessy, author of Cabinets and the Bomb (OUP), spoke very spiritedly from notes on the history of the British bomb. He did give us a chronology of nearly twenty pages as this country moved step by step from 1940 into our current immoral mess.

Finally there are some encouraging stories from abroad. Tramore Quemeneur’s account of the life of General de Bollardière, The French General who changed his mind, is a reminder that soldiers also have said ‘No’ to immoral orders in the past. In Bollardière’s case it was to the use of torture – not only an academic subject today.

A complete revelation to most of us were the two lives described by Kazuyo Yamane from Kochi University - that of Masaharu Oka and Yayori Matsui, both of whom spoke up for peace and human rights in wartime and post-war Japan. Many lessons there to be learnt.

The two WILPF talks at the History Conference will also soon be added to our website. All these documents are on www.abolishwar.org.uk. If anyone finds ‘downloading’ not their cup of tea then please write to me directly (c/o MAW, 11 Venetia Road, London, N4 1EJ), with at least £2 for photocopying and I will send a copy.

Supporting peace history education - We are looking for a volunteer to assist with the planning of next year’s Peace History Conference at the Imperial War Museum. Please call 01908 511948 if you would like to help.

As long as war is regarded as wicked, it will always have its fascination. When it is looked upon as vulgar, it will cease to be popular.  
Oscar Wilde
Roberta Bacic preparing the exhibition

**THE ART OF SURVIVAL**

It was a delight for me to be in Derry in April 2008 and sing at events associated with a wonderful exhibition of international and Irish quilts, many associated with peace and justice issues. Entitled ‘The Art of Survival’, the exhibition involved a total of 71 quilts shown at nine venues across the city.

Roberta Bacic, an anti-war campaigner acted as guest curator for the event, working with a team of volunteers and people from the Heritage and Museum Service of Derry City Council.

Quilt making, textiles and fabric have long been entwined in the history of Derry and the Museum Service was delighted to have the opportunity to showcase a significant collection of international and Irish quilts in the city. The main exhibition was from The Regional and International Museum of Women’s Culture in Germany and included quilts from Zimbabwe, Croatia, India and Peru amongst others. 26 Irish quilts and some Chilean arpilleras were also shown.

Of particular interest from the peace perspective were quilts about the troubles in Northern Ireland and those concerned with conflict in other parts of the world. Women have traditionally used fabric, often in a communal way, to tell stories of conflict, struggle and survival. The creativity expressed in the handcrafted quilts is testimony to the determination of women across the world.

One special quilt, ‘Common loss’ made by Irene MacWilliam from Belfast, served as a representation for much of the project and was the cover picture of the exhibitions catalogue. Each piece of red fabric represents one of the 3000+ killed in Northern Ireland’s conflict between 1969 and 1994.

_Tony Kempster_

**St Athan Military Academy**

We featured this obscene development in 2007. Based on the government’s desire to have ‘high-tech’ solutions for future conflicts, it is planned to build a privately run military academy at St Athan (costing £14 billion) which will provide training for all three services. It will also offer training for foreign forces. It will be run by the Metrix Consortium, a joint venture company of Land Securities trillium, and Qinetiq, along with AugustaWestland, City & Guilds, Currie & Brown, Dalkia, EDS, Laing O’Rourke, Nord Anglia, Raytheon, Serco, Sodexho and the Open University. Many of these companies are arms manufacturers and dealers, and the Academy will obviously provide them with a captive market. 5000 local jobs were promised; this figure has already decreased to 1500 and will end up being no more than a few low-paid service jobs for locals. No bargain there then.

Three of us from the Yeovil/Sherborne area decided that we would support the action against the Academy by going to the demonstration in Cardiff on 26th April. Oh dear. A subject that has outraged peace campaigners all across Wales, a development that will affect the whole country, a demonstration in Wales’ premier city – this should have made waves. What went wrong? First, the timing. Also happening that day in Wales was Chernobyl Day, when activists raise money to help bring Chernobyl children over for much needed holidays. Then there was no local advertising. We arrived early and had time to walk through the city centre and main shopping area. Not a poster or flyer to be seen and no one handing out leaflets about the demo. There was a very poor turnout.

Having assembled in front of City Hall, escorted by almost as many police as marchers, we walked through the business area of the city (which on Saturday afternoon was completely devoid of people) to the Open University building (which was shut) where ‘Shame on you!’ was shouted at an empty building, before we turned and simply retraced our steps to City Hall, where half of the marchers disappeared, apparently unaware that there were going to be some speeches. One of the organisers admitted this was their first effort at arranging a demo, but it appeared, from talking to various people there, that there was no real communication between groups who could have made a difference. Wales has a wealth of experience in activism which should have been called upon.

Two positive things – on this occasion the greybeards were outnumbered by the young and there was great speech from Jill Evans MEP and chair of CND Cymru, even if it was to a very small audience. Campaigning against this development is important. We all need to make our opinions known and felt by the politicians who are backing the Academy. We will support further demos but let’s hope the next one is bigger and better. Oh, and ‘high-tech’ solutions to future conflicts would be better based on dialogue, diplomacy, justice and reconciliation. Now that would be a bargain.

_Responding to Nuclear Militarism - Lessons from the past inspiring the future_  
_Friends House London - Monday July 14th 12 - 2pm_  
Professor Lawrence Wittner of Albany University New York, Member of the National Board of US Peace Action and author of the award winning trilogy ‘The Struggle Against the Bomb’, will speak and answer questions on this theme. All welcome. A joint event organised by the Council on Christian Approaches to Defence and Disarmament (CCADD) and MAW.
The one subject on which Hardy was categorical was war, still being waged in South Africa, and on this subject he expressed a most surprising optimism about human behaviour; ‘Oh yes, war is doomed. It is doomed by the gradual growth of the introspective faculty in mankind…Not today, nor tomorrow, but in the fullness of time, war will come to an end, not for moral reasons, but because of its absurdity.

From an interview by William Archer with Thomas Hardy 1901
The world is now in an economic crisis caused by several factors, particularly the greed of the investment companies and also, according to the US economist Joseph Stiglitz, the ineptitude of the Bush administration in handling the fiscal aspects of the Iraq War (which he estimates has cost some 3 trillion dollars). At the same time, we are faced with a food crisis caused by changing demand in the way feed grains are used.

The suddenness of these developments points up the interconnectedness of the global economy and the threats to poorer countries. Queues for petrol in British forecourts appear to bear scant relation to killing, rape and mass refugee movements in eastern Congo. The unfolding humanitarian disaster in unoccupied Somalia likewise seems unconnected to western taxpayers’ worries about falling mortgage lending and rising prices. But as Ban Ki-Moon, the UN secretary general, said at the end of April, it is those least able to cope who will be hardest hit by a global economic slowdown and the instability that ensues. ‘The world faces the spectre of widespread hunger, malnutrition and social unrest on an unprecedented scale’, he said, ‘in short, the poor will inherit the dearth’.

Clearly those of us concerned about the abolition of war need to understand the wider issues and be more than just antirwar. There are lessons here from earlier peace activists. Nicholson Baker in his controversial new book, Human smoke emphasises that the American and British pacifists of the 1920 and 1930s (to whom he dedicates the book) were much more than just pacifists. They saw the link between the humanitarian disasters of the time and tried to save Jewish refugees, feed Europe, reconcile the United States and Japan and stop WWII from happening. They failed but he argues that ‘they were right’.

It is with the objective of learning from the past that MAW has run two very successful peace history conferences, the second one this March (see page 2). We have also begun to work more closely with aid and environment NGOs. On 30th April we organised a mapping and networking meeting with Quaker Peace and Social Witness. We invited representatives from some 20 organisations to discuss the perspective and work on the relationship between climate change and conflict. A report on this will be available shortly.

On the same theme, also in April, I spoke at a conference organised by the Islamic think tank, Global Vision 2000 entitled ‘Global financial meltdown, socio-economic injustice and war: cause and remedy’. My talk was built around the ‘Disarmament for development’ project being carried out by the International Peace Bureau (Geneva) to campaign for a shift in government resources from the military to human security needs. A copy of the talk and a PowerPoint presentation are available if anyone would like copies.

On page 3, I have reported on a delightful visit to Derry for events associated with ‘The art of survival’ exhibition of quilts; on page 8 there is a report of MAW’s involvement with the Peace Education Network conference for teachers and educationalists. Reference is also made to two valuable meeting at the latest Preparatory Meeting for the 2010 NPT Review Conference (page 9).

MAW was also represented at the Global summit for a nuclear-free world, the 50th anniversary event of CND. Some 150 people from all over the world were present with experts discussing future campaign strategy, and a reception held in ‘London’s Living Room’ at City Hall. A new and excellent anti-nuclear song, by Karine Polwart and entitled ‘Better things’ was played at the event. It is on the new MAW CD (see page 6).

Finally, may I once again thank all those who have given freely of their skills and expertise to make MAW possible. If any readers feel they would like to join our executive or assist with a project please let me know.

Tony Kempster

Here are two interesting lists for campaigners;


It comes with this caveat: This list does not pretend to be definitive or absolutely complete. Nor does it seek to explain or interpret the interventions. Note that US operations in World Wars I and II have been excluded.

It makes fascinating reading. First, the fact that US marines were in the business of invading other states just 20 years after the American Revolution, when America only consisted of eastern states (even states such as Florida were still under Spanish rule, as was much of the southwest and California, while the French held Louisiana and New Orleans, and the West had yet to be won).

Also remarkable was how far flung these invasions were. For instance, between 1801-05 the States was at war with Tripoli. In 1813 it established its first military base in the Pacific. It was back in Algiers and Tripoli in 1815 and invading Greek islands in 1827. Between 1832 and 1849 there were actions in the East Indies, Argentina, Peru, Mexico, Canada, Fiji, Samoa, Ivory Coast and Turkey; this at a time when the wagon trains had just started to roll west across the plains. It seems that there has always been a fair percentage of the American population ‘spreading democracy’ around the world. ‘Plus ça change, mais plus la même chose’.

And here’s another list for you to have ‘fun’ with. Found on the Global Security website, under Iraq Pacification Operations, there is a list of all the US military operations by date and name since the invasion in 2003. We all know the names ‘Operation Shock & Awe’ and ‘Operation Enduring Freedom’, but some of these names will make your eyes water or your body cringe. Some of them are mildly pornographic – Panther Squeeze, Devil Thrust, Squeeze Play. There’s a lot of Thunder, Bulls and Lions. Some are arrogant – Scales of Justice, or dismissive – Flea Flicker. And some are just plain nasty – how about Operation Machete Harvest? There are nearly nine pages of them, and elsewhere on the site you can find all the maps to go with them.

If you have trouble accessing these lists, email Lesley.Docksey@abolishwar.org.uk and I will forward them to you.
Beyond the Green Zone - Dahr Jamail

At the beginning of April the American independent journalist Dahr Jamail visited the UK on a short speaking tour and peace campaigners in both Totnes and Taunton hosted evenings with him. Dahr made his name by going to Iraq as an unembedded journalist, sending back reports of what life was truly like for those living in occupied Iraq. While so much reporting was controlled by the occupying forces, our governments and media conglomerates, Dahr was one of the brave few who risked their lives to tell us what was really happening on the ground. He was present in one of the two small clinics that were all that was left of medical care for the city of Fallujah during the 2004 assault by US forces, watching an endless stream of women and children being carried in, dying from US bullets. No one should have to witness such events as he did, and like many others coming back from a war zone he suffers as a result. But he is dedicated to his campaign for honest and open reporting, and his response included this phrase: ‘I have come home with wounds I don’t think I have the right to expect to heal...’ These ‘wounds’ could be said to be what is driving him to speak out – ‘with passion’ as he puts it – on his poetry tour, to try to encourage people to question, to think, to challenge our attitudes to conflict. He admitted to feeling ‘culpable, responsible.’

He spoke too of the importance of leaders getting together to talk, and to find out what it’s really like for the ‘other side’ on the ground. The actions taken by our leaders far away made little sense regarding the conflict he found himself in. To hear a US veteran speak so truthfully, and with such wisdom, about his experiences, gave me such hope that I have not felt in a long time. To know that he will be repeating this back in the US gave me even more.

Christine Titmus

‘Here, Bullet’ is a harrowing, first-hand account of the Iraq war by a soldier-poet ...powerful poetry of witness, exceptional for its beauty, honesty and skill... offers unflinchingly accurate description but no moral judgement, leaving the reader to draw any conclusions ...we see and feel the devastatingly surreal reality of everyday life and death for soldiers and civilians through the eyes of an eloquent writer.’

*Here, Bullet* is published by Bloodaxe Books at £8.95 and is available from Amazon for £7.16 It is not often that one finds a book of poetry so gripping and heart-breaking that you cannot put it down until the end.

Editor

Sadiq

_It should make you shake and sweat, nightmare you, strand you in a desert of irrevocable desolation, the consequences seared into the vein, no matter what adrenaline feeds the muscle its courage, no matter what god shines down on you, no matter what cracking pain and anger you carry in your fists, my friend, it should break your heart to kill._

This poem is from a collection called *Here, Bullet*, by Brian Turner, a US Iraq veteran who has now left the army, and is teaching and writing in the US. He is using his work to challenge and question the way the world deals with conflict resolution, his experiences having left him believing firmly that we need to do things differently.

I went to hear Brian give a recital of some of his poetry, followed by a discussion, in Cambridge recently. The event was hosted by the CB1 Poetry group at the Michaelhouse Café. Brian shared some very candid thoughts about his disillusionment with the motives and decisions of those leaders who send people like him to war.

‘When our information is so incomplete, how good is our decision-making process?’ he asked. His concern for the suffering inflicted on the Iraqi people was frequently made obvious. He found it hard to let go of the reality he knew they were still living, whilst he is back over here, in an entirely different world. I asked about the psychological impact on him and others like him, and his response included this phrase: ‘I have come home with wounds I don’t think I have the right to expect to heal...’ These ‘wounds’ could be said to be what is driving him to speak out – ‘with passion’ as he puts it – on his poetry tour, to try to encourage people to question, to think, to challenge our attitudes to conflict. He admitted to feeling ‘culpable, responsible.’

He spoke too of the importance of leaders getting together to talk, and to find out what it’s really like for the ‘other side’ on the ground. The actions taken by our leaders far away made little sense regarding the conflict he found himself in. To hear a US veteran speak so truthfully, and with such wisdom, about his experiences, gave me such hope that I have not felt in a long time. To know that he will be repeating this back in the US gave me even more.

**‘CALL BACK THE FIRE’**

MAW’s second CD

The recording of our new CD is now complete and it is being copied for distribution. Its production was more complicated than anticipated because we had so many good songs and interest from performers that a 20 track CD was needed. The songs have an anti-war theme (in its broadest sense) and are by both British and American songwriters. Most are performed by people associated with MAW and there are two donated tracks by the professional singers Karine Polwart and John Conolly. Several songs are by Sue Gilmurray who performed on our first CD ‘Singing the music of healing’. A film has also been made of the making of the CD for education purposes.

**The Palace of Crystal**

_A World without War_ by Harry Davis

This book has just been brought to my attention, and I hope to find space for a proper review in a future issue. It analyses _why_ it seems so difficult to rid the world of war and achieve a truly transparent democracy.

‘The lesson of history is that power too often attracts the wrong kind of candidate.’ Frank Jackson (World Disarm!) describes it as ‘one of the most thought-provoking books to come our way.’

£20.99 from Arena Books

**Newly available from MAW!**

We now have the ideal present for friends and family, and pass on the message that we need to abolish war. White mugs with the message: "ANYTHING WAR CAN DO PEACE CAN DO BETTER"

They will cost £6 + £1 p&p per mug, and can be ordered from the editor: Lesley Docksey

1 Court Farm Cottages, Buckland Newton, Dorset, DT2 7BT

Lesley.Docksey@abolishwar.org.uk

01300 345109
MAKING LINKS FOR UGANDA

MAW was asked by some young people if their group could affiliate to us. Ben Abram and Hadassah Shulman came to our January committee meeting and told us about their work, and the Uganda Social Action Group (www.ugandaaction.co.uk) is now affiliated and very welcome indeed, as it is so good to hear of such positive action from the young. Below, Ben Abram tells us about their work and why they set the group up:

For young people growing up in a world of Live Earth and instant news media, where charity is fashionable and an interest in Africa seemingly as essential for a celebrity as the latest handbag or pair of shoes, its hard to conceive that the kidnap of 30,000 children to fight in a brutal civil war has barely registered on the public consciousness. Sadly this is the case in northern Uganda, where the rebel group, the Lord’s Resistance Army, seeking to overthrow the government, and unable to recruit fighters, kidnapped and forced children to fight their battles for them. To escape this nightmare, the children walked up to two hours every night, to sleep on the streets of towns to avoid abduction. The rebels are now engaging in tentative peace talks with the government, although progress is slow and the region still greatly unstable. Even these talks have not brought respite for the people of northern Uganda.

To protect its citizens the government has moved them into ‘protected villages’ where 1.7 million people now live in squalid camps without basic resources. The death toll in these camps is estimated to be around 1000 per week from the conditions alone, and the dead are far from the only victims. Half of those displaced are under fifteen and more than a third of boys and half that number of girls bear the scars of the conflict in the form of mental and physical trauma from being forced to fight and being physically and sexually abused.

There is no way to look at the situation in northern Uganda without being shocked, and for a group of teenagers whose practical experience of ‘a tough life’ was largely limited to GCSE coursework, learning about Uganda and the incredible strength of the children dubbed ‘the night commuters’ was a truly humbling experience. The Uganda Social Action Group was born out of this. Its aims are simple: to educate people about the situation in northern Uganda, to promote activism, to support the rehabilitation of child soldiers and to help develop and fund grassroots projects. Working initially within Jewish youth movements and the wider community and then expanding to schools from Sevenoaks to Glasgow, The Uganda Social Action Group has run educational sessions, interactive programs and fundraising events. The Uganda Social Action Group is also partnered with GuluWalk and Resolve Uganda and also Movement for the Abolition of War. Run by young people, working with young people, for other young people whose lives are so different purely by virtue of birth we feel we have a responsibility to not stand back in horror but to fight in what ever way we can for justice and peace and a better future for the children of northern Uganda.

By happy coincidence, just a week or two after we met Ben and Hadassah, Abolish War received a letter about a Ugandan peace worker, Jessy Winterbonn. This is Jessy’s story:

‘I was born and brought up in a largely rural part of Uganda in a Christian family. My parents were both teachers. I began experiencing the violence as a young man having grown up through the different military and dictatorial regimes of Idi Amin, Obote and the military junta. Like my fellow youth, I developed a love of firearms which had proliferated in the population over these years. By the age of eleven I had learnt to strip and assemble a weapon. Having missed an opportunity to join the liberation war like most of my friends during school days, I joined up for military service after my studies. Working with a newspaper producing organisation, as a research assistant for the Department of Gender Studies and in various capacities in the military exposed me to the grim realities of life. I was able to interact with different communities especially those affected by conflict.

While growing up I had been made to dislike various tribes. However, during military service my lifestyle changed. We were taught to cooperate and come to the aid of our fellow men. I made different friends which made me understand that they were not as bad as I had been led to believe. I made friends with colleagues from tribes considered very violent. I also found out that this stereotyping was the cause of friction amongst various communities and in the workplace. I got more disturbed when many of my friends continuously asked me how they could get access to weapons as a way of being assured of security. I saw how lives had been destroyed by the violence and most disturbing was the increasing hatred and accusations between different tribes. Worse still, I realised that many young people had been denied the opportunity to interact with others while at school, just as I had been.

I felt something had to be done. Though a finance graduate, I felt more fulfilled interacting with various groups of youth in different regions of the country. This was how I came into peace work with the Network for Peace-building Initiatives (NPI). The youth in Uganda have grown up knowing nothing but violence and war. NPI empowers youth to combat the violence damaging their lives. NPI works at the grassroots throughout Uganda, regularly spending time educating for peace in internal refugee camps in war-zones in Northern Uganda, and with those driven from their homes by cattle rustling. The Peace Education programme teaches tolerance and human rights, and helps young people tackle issues of social justice.

We help to rebuild the lives of refugees, Night Commuters (the children who walk over 15 miles every night to sleep rough in the towns to avoid abduction) and of the children who have suffered appalling traumas, such as a 12 year old-abductee fighter who had been forced to kill members of his own family.’

Jessy is the editor of Peacemania, a newsletter giving children a voice, educating them about their rights and allowing them to exchange views, which is distributed to schools across Uganda (www.thepeacemania.org). NPI is affiliated to ‘A Ray of Hope, Unesco Youth Ambassador for the culture of Peace’. Needless to say, Ben and Jessy are now in touch with each other. Earlier this year Jessy was in northern Uganda (Kitgum) launching ‘culture of peace’ roadshows, an ‘edutainment’ programme with cultural music, dance and drama, and film shows with peace themes.

Editor

"Akawungeezi eky'eggulo n'okubuuza"

or Quiz Supper Evening if you don't speak Uganda!

On Tuesday July 15th the Uganda Social Action Group will be holding a quiz supper in the Sternberg Centre, Finchley. This will have many interactive rounds, some traditional quiz rounds and some rounds with highly challenging intellectual content. Please email team@ugandaaction.co.uk for details.
PEACE EDUCATION NETWORK DAY

On 1st March the annual PEN conference took place at the Friends House, London. Aimed at teachers and educationalists, it was entitled ‘Tools for peace education: sharing successful strategies’. Some thirty delegates attended and took part in workshops including “Anti-racism through history”, “Exploring nuclear issues in the classroom” and “Teaching the ethics of war”. It started with a ‘Getting to know you’ exercise, which gave the participants a chance to speak to almost everyone else – always a good way to help people feel at ease and make friends. The highlight of the day was a talk by David Gee, on his report Informed Choice (see below).

Of the various sessions, one of the most interesting was that run by Aik Saath, an organisation from Slough. During 1996-7 there was violent trouble between Asian communities there. Following a Channel 4 documentary (1998) featuring Dr Dudley Weeks, an international facilitator, a conflict resolution group was set up and young people trained. This became Aik Saath, meaning ‘together as one’ in Urdu, Hindi and Punjabi, and it is run by young people for young people, training them to handle conflicts between their various communities. Slough is multi-cultural and multi-ethnic, and what started as a way to help prejudice and misunderstanding between just two cultures now embraces all cultures within the community. One of their current projects is building up a ‘time line’ of Britain, showing how, from the distant past, there have been constant waves of immigrants, each influx adding to our society, and it is surprising to learn just how many nationalities and races have been here for centuries. This is really helpful for young people who feel ‘alien’ in the society they are growing up in. For instance, it is enlightening and encouraging for a black teenager to discover that in the 1600s there was a black trumpeter just down the road at Windsor Castle. The results that Aik Saath have achieved, and their enthusiasm and dedication have created real conflict resolution.

The only question one had after the event was – why were there not many more people (aka teachers) present? Perhaps PEN should consider holding this event in conjunction with education authorities or teacher training colleges.

INFORMED CHOICE?

David Gee, a Quaker peace activist and researcher recently published a report, Informed choice? Armed forces and recruitment practice in the UK. Funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, this gained wide media coverage as well as responses from service people responsible for recruitment. The report is a model of balanced objectivity, and some of his conclusions had been endorsed by those closely involved in forces recruitment from the services and the MoD.

Among the report’s conclusions: potential new recruits in the army are subjected to a misleading picture of life in the military as advertisements and recruitment literature glamorize warfare, omit vital information and fail to point out the risks and responsibilities associated with a forces career. The report recommends sweeping changes to armed forces recruitment policies including: a new Charter setting out the state’s responsibilities; a radical review of recruitment literature; phasing out recruitment of minors; and new rights for recruits to leave the service.

These recommendations are timely when one considers the nature of current wars and the ethical dilemmas that many soldiers face today. They are especially important when, for example, one reads in the press that nearly 1000 new army recruits may face on average 12,000 word of service (very complex and hard to understand)

• the likely personal risks to servicemen
• the ‘culture shock’ consequent on joining up
• the psychological and ethical issue of having to kill people

(For the infantry soldier’s core role involves killing people, but the word ‘kill’ or its permutations do not occur in the 12,000 word Infantry Soldier brochure. The Army Jobs web site contains 296 pages. It contains the word ‘enemy’ on 36 of these but does not contain the words ‘kill’, ‘killing’ or ‘killed’.)

Informed choice? Armed forces and recruitment practice in the UK costs £5. It can be purchased from Amazon or downloaded in pdf form from www.informedchoice.org.uk - well worth obtaining for people campaigning against recruitment in schools. Also useful is the independent information service for youngsters thinking of joining up - visit www.beforeyousignup.info.

Tony Kempster

Some extra facts:

Official recruitment literature (including written material, the internet, DVDs etc) takes little account of the poor educational standards of potential recruits and their inability to properly understand what they are being shown, and should provide an accurate account of the ‘downsides’ of service life, if only to prevent later loss of morale among servicemen. The current literature does not cover:

• terms of service (very complex and hard to understand)
• the likely personal risks to servicemen
• the ‘culture shock’ consequent on joining up
• the psychological and ethical issue of having to kill people

Second Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

I was in Geneva in April for a board meeting of the International Peace Bureau and attended some of the early sessions of the above at the UN building. This was an important meeting because this is part of a series of meetings which sets the agenda for the 2010 Review Conference; especially important because the 2007 (first meeting) made a slow start, raising concerns about the future of the NPT treaty.

The treaty is a cornerstone of the international security architecture and it is important to ensure that it continues effectively and the parties comply. The treaty establishes three inseparable and mutually reinforcing components: the prohibition against the proliferation of nuclear weapons, the obligation to pursue negotiations in good faith on nuclear disarmament, and the framework for cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. It is hoped that the 2010 Review Conference will make advances in each of the three components.

IPB (together with the World Council of Churches) held a meeting on the first day of the conference entitled ‘Nuclear weapons: at what price? An economic, moral and political assessment’. Speakers were Stephen Schwartz, co-author of Atomic Audit, a comprehensive report on the costs of nuclear weapons and Marie Dennis, co-president of Pax Christi International. The focus of this meeting related to IPB’s Disarmament for Development project (mentioned previously in Abolish War and how the money could better be spent.

IPB was also a co-organiser of a day-conference held in Geneva on May 1st on the World Court Project proposal for a return to the International Court of Justice on the theme of Good Faith negotiations which was a great success. Judge Bedjaoui, former president of the World Court and former Algerian Foreign Minister, gave a masterly analysis of the Court’s 1996 findings on the meaning of good faith. Ambassador Jaap Ramaker, chair of negotiations on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in 1996, described the conditions for successful negotiations. Other jurists complemented these presentations admirably. The conference ended with an excellent series of NGO contributions on different ways to organise for a positive outcome. The whole event gave inspiration and hope to those present that a new way can be found to advance the goal of the elimination of all nuclear weapons.

Tony Kempster

‘Good faith is a fundamental principle of international law, without which all international law would collapse’ - Judge Mohammed Bedjaoui

Judge Bedjaoui, President of the International Court of Justice when it gave its 1996 advisory opinion on nuclear weapons, and more recently Algerian Foreign Minister, delivered the keynote address to a conference, “Good Faith, International Law, and the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons: The Once and Future Contributions of the International Court of Justice,” at the Warwick Hotel in Geneva on May 1st. A major portion of Judge Bedjaoui’s address was devoted to the legal significance of the addition of the phrase “good faith” to NPT Article VI, which requires each state party to “pursue in good faith negotiations on effective measures ... relating to nuclear disarmament”.

From a report by John Burroughs (Lawyers’ Committee on Nuclear Policy), who also spoke at this conference, along with others. John’s full report, and the text of Judge Bedjaoui’s keynote address are available from George Farebrother, World Court Project UK, 67 Summerheath Rd, Hailsham, Sussex UK BN27 3DR 01323 844 269 geowc@uk.net

Conscientious Objector Competition (from page 1)

‘I first came across the poem in 1998 when I was directing a High School production of a play by Aria da Capo - a magical one-act drama which beautifully highlights the folly of war, and the tragedy of mankind’s cruelty to fellow kinsmen. As soon as I heard the poem I knew I would return to it at some point. In 2005 with one of those "helplessness" moods lingering far too long I picked up the phone and rang a few friends and put the idea of a film poem out into the universe. Over the course of three months I posted the poem and film idea on the internet and waited for the response.

The great thing about the film is that the energy grew all of its doing. Once I had posted the poem and the idea of the film on the internet I simply had to respond with camera in hand. Each person in the film chose their location and at certain times in the chorus of the poem insert their own words and ideas. The line-up of performers includes international jazz singer Barb Jungr and political folk singer Robb Johnson. Everyone involved gave their time for free.

The film has been seen at many film festivals in the UK and abroad, including the Global Peace Film Festival in Florida, International Non-Violence Film Festival in Toronto, Seattle Amnesty International Film Festival and most recently won the Best Photography prize at the International Festival de Cine de Barcelona.

I am currently looking for help with a possible multilingual version of the film and would certainly be very interested in hearing from people with ideas of Conscientious Objector stories from around the world and of course any financial help ideas (in kind help also good, e.g.: accommodation in foreign places, knowledge of travelling in difficult areas etc). I want to film REAL active objectors in their specific global locations.’

Colin Steven

To win your copy of Conscientious Objector, send the name of the author of the poem on the front page (with your address) to the editor (contact details on the back page). The first 10 correct replies will receive a copy. You can also buy a copy of the film for £6.95 (incl p&p) from: Green Steven Films, 01353 776 256, films@hatfield4.demon.co.uk
**CUMBRIAN DIARY**

On the 19th March we all stood in silence in the centre of Kendal to mark the third anniversary of the Iraq war. Passers by took notice of our vigil by slowing down or turning to look at us. Some came over to speak to us. I wondered how many people who walked by and who had supported the war in the first place, now had come to change their minds. Why had they gone along with it in the first place? Millions took to the street to protest but there was no enthusiasm for the war, no demonstrations in support. I stood in silence pondering and arrived at the conclusion that this war was unlike any other, it was one man’s war - Tony Blair’s. Without his insistence it would have had little support from others to go ahead. As I meditated I came to the conclusion that British people still believe our military is second to none, we have every right to intervene if we believe it justified - trouble is the United States did not get the planning afterwards right.

Walney Island is quite close to Barrow shipyard and is joined to it by a bridge. From Walney one can have a fine view of the layout of the shipyard and the huge Devonshire Dockyard building where ASTUTE CLASS submarines are built. In the last issue I wrote about the first ASTUTE submarine launched just to test for leaks! It has been brought back to dry land and the Devonshire dockyard and is now undergoing further work leading to its commission in 2009 when it will be handed over to the Royal Navy. Politicians, munition workers, transport workers, scientists, technicians, doctors, nurses and sailors are an integral part of the effort to make this submarine with their own roles in the institution of war. The submarine has been built, perhaps by fear, certainly not by revenge, and it has been sanctioned by those in command and it is not condoned by large numbers of the public. It is called ‘Government Defence Industrial Strategy’.

Three more of these ASTUTE class submarines are to be built and they will be made here in Barrow, the only place in the UK where submarines are built.

When I gazed out over the water to the Devonshire Dockyard I promised that we would be around when ASTUTE is launched. We will protest against this madness of expenditure, which is £200 million for each of the four submarines ordered. The contract for the fourth submarine has been secured and it will be named AUDACIOUS. Mark Easton, the Managing Director of BAE Submarines reports, ‘it will help to sustain key skills and capabilities across the project, throughout the workforce, our suppliers and our partners’.

He makes no mention of the doubtful policy of nuclear deterrence. He makes no mention of the constant risk of accidental nuclear war when nuclear armed rockets in submarines are kept on hair trigger alert.

**Derek Longmire**

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**The Medical Foundation**

The Medical Foundation is the only organisation in the UK that helps the victims of torture. It relies on donations for finances. The Medical Foundation helps torture victims from across the world, with both medical and psychological treatment as needed. Often it seems the psychological trauma is more wounding than the physical.

At the last MAW AGM, Craig Murray told us about another UK organisation, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, which condoned torture in Uzbekistan as part of the self-defeating ‘war against terror’.

Let’s not split hairs. Terrorism, wars, torture are all part of the same system, the same mind set. Please consider supporting the Medical Foundation and publicise its work if you can - and put the Foreign Office to shame.

**Brian Heale**

The Medical Foundation, founded in 1985, provides care and rehabilitation to survivors of torture and other forms of organised violence. There are local groups all over the country. Contact them at 111 Isledon Road, London N7 7JW, tel: 020 7697 7777, www.torturecare.org.uk

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**MAW TO BUY**

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Please send order to: MAW ORDERS, 11 Venetia Road, LONDON N4 1EJ
The Cost of War

Where do I start? How about a report in the New York Times in January that in 121 cases of violent deaths, veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan were involved. This prompted me to see what current records there are for British Forces being involved in violence once they return from action. I found an Executive Summary of evidence given to the Defence Select Committee (28 June 2007) about ‘the effectiveness of mental health care provision for veterans, with particular emphasis on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).’ That led me to the website of Vets in Prison. And then there was an item in the Independent on 26th January, headlined Soldiers ‘must learn difference between right and wrong’. Excuse me?

The Select Committee evidence showed that PTSD is an increasing and badly recorded problem (most figures are based on US research). Officially it is reckoned that in UK forces 4% of regular soldiers and 6% of reservists suffer from PTSD, with 9% suffering from late-onset PTSD, but ‘it now seems clear that more of our forces are likely to suffer psychological injury than physical injury as a result of combat.’

However the latest figures from the US (Pentagon study 2007) say that with prolonged active duty (as in Iraq and Afghanistan), 38% of regular soldiers, 31% of marines, 49% of National Guard and 43% of marine reservists are showing symptoms. The late-onset PTSD figures will not show for another 10 years. We simply do not have the health resources to cope with this damage. Family breakdown and homelessness is a real problem. Despite the government playing down homelessness numbers last year, this report appears to accept the size of the problem. ‘Research by the New Policy Institute and Crisis, the homelessness charity, has estimated that there are between 310,000 and 380,000 single homeless people in the UK at any one time. Taking a conservative estimate of the number of homeless as being 300,000 and the PoppyScotland figures as being representative of the national situation, this means on any given night more than 36,000 British veterans are homeless.’ 36,000 and that is a conservative estimate.

The other result of PTSD is violent behaviour leading to prison. The Summary admits there are no precise figures for how many ex-service people are in prison (why not?) but works on a figure of 7% (National Ex-Services Association). ‘The UK prison population has just passed 80,000; so as many as 5,600 inmates could be veterans. If we take the conservative 9% figure for the rate of PTSD, then a minimum of 504 veterans are incarcerated as a result of their medical condition.’ Many are serving life sentences for murder committed during PTSD flashbacks.

However Vets in Prison conducted its own survey (easier for them – all they have to do is count the number of veterans on their wing, something officials are apparently incapable of). They found a rate of 9.8%. One ex-army captain found a rate of 10.85% in his prison. Of 80 men on his own wing, 12 were ex-service men, most serving life. That pushes the total of ex-service prisoners to over 8000. 95% of these are ex-army and few of them have been diagnosed, let alone received any treatment for PTSD.

We are not recognising the enormity of this problem, nor treating it in any real fashion. One of Vets in Prison contributors said that on returning from active (and probably violent) duty, the only debriefing his unit received before returning to their families and ‘normal’ life, was being made to watch a 20 minute video. I cannot recommend Vets in Prison highly enough, if you want to know about the damage we do to our own through war. Go to www.vetsinprison.org.uk and read this country’s shame for yourselves. The Select Committee report concluded that there was no comprehensive policy for dealing with the mental problems of PTSD and ended by saying ‘As the number of casualties presenting with symptoms of PTSD increases with the raised tempo of operations, such a failure of policy can only be viewed as shameful’. Indeed.

And then, another shameful thing - the issue of right and wrong. A report produced by Brigadier Robert Aitken (prompted by the Baha Mousa case and others) said that serious flaws in the preparation of troops for dealing with prisoners were to blame for the brutality against Iraqi civilians. British soldiers needed ‘to be given a better understanding between right and wrong’. Soldiers, if they have not learned the difference between right and wrong from their families, schools and society, have to look to their officers, the Captains, the Majors, the Colonels, the Generals and Brigadiers. And if the officers (and the training the recruits receive) are incapable of imbuing a sense of ethics into our forces, might I suggest that they are, in that phrase so beloved of government, ‘not fit for purpose’?

A final thought – when soldiers come home they bring the conflict with them. Should we not be adding the numbers of those killed by PTSD violence to the Cost of War?

Lesley Docksey

WHY YOU SHOULD JOIN MAW!

Our aim: to create a world where war is no longer seen as a way to solve a problem; where it has ceased to be an option; where conflict resolution means resolution, not more conflict. We have the tools, the skills and the laws that we need. We also need you. We work through education and dialogue, both nationally and in our own local communities; ordinary people taking action to realise our goal - THE ABOLITION OF WAR.
Events Diary

15 June MILTON KEYNES. 28th Peace Pagoda Anniversary Ceremony  Nipponzan Myohoji, Milton Keynes, MK15 0BA, 01908 663 652.


21 June WORLDWIDE  World Refugee Day

21 – 22 June PEAK DISTRICT  Palestine Solidarity Campaign Peak District sponsored walk, 2008. With accommodation reserved at Castleton Youth Hostel, Hope Valley, Derbyshire. For more info email info@palestinecampaign.org

4 July MENWITH HILL  Independence FROM America demonstration at Menwith Hill. Campaign for the Accountability of American Bases – CAAB.  www.caab.org.uk

5 July FARINGDON  27th Peace Fete Clock House Coleshill. 2pm-5pm.  www.fasingdonpeacegroup.org.uk

7 – 9 July HOKKAIDO, JAPAN  G8 Summit 2008

14-20 July FARNBOROUGH  Farnborough International Arms Fair.  www.caat.org.uk


26 July – 2 August OXFORDSHIRE  Gandhi Foundation Summer Gathering at The Abbey, Sutton Court, Oxoon. Contact Graham Davey, 29 Norton Road, Bristol BS4 2EZ. 0117 909 3491 graham.davey@blueyonder.co.uk

4 – 10 August KENT  One World Summer Festival 08.  Activities include complimentary therapies, crafts, dance, walks, music oneworldcamp@hotmail.com  One World Camp Office, Ohsawa House, 3 Hamsey Close, Brighton BN2 5GQ.

6 August

WORLDWIDE Hiroshima Day.

LONDON Hiroshima Day Commemoration, Tavistock Square, 12noon. Contact London Region CND. Tel: 020 7607 2302

MILTON KEYNES Hiroshima Day – Lantern Floating Ceremony at the Peace Pagoda. Nipponzan Myohoji, Milton Keynes, MK15 0BA 01908 663 652.

9 August

WORLDWIDE Nagasaki Day.

LONDON. Ecumenical service organised by Pax Christi (020 8203 4884) at Westminster Cathedral Crypt, in memory of the 65th anniversary of Franz Jagerstatter’s execution. Peace walk from Westminster Cathedral (7.30pm) to the London Peace Pagoda followed by the Floating Lantern Ceremony at sunset.

23 August WORLDWIDE  International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition  www.setallfree.net

5 September LONDON  Musicians Against Nuclear Arms Concert for Peace. With The Fitzwilliam String Quartet. 7.30pm St Cyprian’s Church, Gtowntworth Street, London NW1 6AX. MANA Administration, 71 Greenfield Gardens, London NW2 1HU. 020 8455 1030.


17 – 21 September MALMÖ, SWEDEN  European Social Forum, a space for organisations, movements, networks and individuals engaged in building a more sustainable, democratic and equitable society.  www.esf2008.org

21 September

WORLDWIDE International Day of Peace.

BROMLEY Peace One Day event. Speakers, readings, music, stalls and more. Community House, South Street Bromley. 2.30 – 5pm. Contact Ann Garrett on 020 9460 1295

OCCHDALE. UN Peace Day event in Rochdale. For further information please call 01706 666382

2 October WORLDWIDE  International Day of Non-Violence (Gandhi’s Birthday).

18 October EAST MEON SouthEast Hants Peace Council Peace Day at the Sustainability Centre info; vida.henning@ntlworld.com

24 October WORLDWIDE  United Nations Day.

24 – 30 October EVERYWHERE Disarmament Week.

27 October ALDERMASTON The Big Blockade. Meet from 1pm on Sunday 26 October, or at the blockade on Monday. See website for non-violence and safety rules. www.tridentploughshares.org 07804 640643.

LONDON  Walk in Peace – the first Sunday of every month. Meet by ‘Speakers Corner Café’, just south of Speaker’s Corner, Hyde Park (Marble Arch tube), at 10.55am to start walking at 11.00am, returning at 12 noon. Contact: Clare 020 8755 0353 or beatricemillar@freeuk.com

MAW NEWS PLEASE!

You want to read about events that are not all London-based. We want to hear from members around the country, and we want your actions to inspire others. So if you have organised events/actions, or are planning some, and would like to have them reported in the newsletter, then send the details to the editor: - Lesley Docksey, 1 Court Farm Cottages, Buckland Newton, Dorset DT2 7BT E-mail: Lesley.Docksey@abolishwar.org.uk

12