

ABOLISH WAR

Issue 24
Summer 2013

As we approach the 2014 commemoration of the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War, people who work for the abolition of war are finding ways to get involved.

MAW has a good track record of opposing warfare without disrespecting victims, including those in the armed forces. MAW will be involved in 2014 events, as it is in Remembrance events, with the aim of influencing them away from nationalism and towards a future without war.

Having been both a songwriter and a choral singer for many years, MAW committee member Sue Gilmurray (pictured third from the left) is working on a collection of anti-militaristic songs arranged for choral singing which could form part of a concert, ceremony, social event or church service, although the songs are not religious.

Sue says: "Some of the songs have a stronger note of protest than others, but all should steer singers and listeners in the direction of peace."

The project is already under way. Nine singers, including Sue and also Heather Speight (pictured first on the left) from the MAW executive, have recorded some audio tracks under the expert guidance of Bob Gilmurray.



Your chance to sing for peace

Music and lyrics from the first three songs can be found on the MAW website - www.abolishwar.org.uk or on the Soundcloud website at <https://soundcloud.com/songsfor2014> and will give singers an instant idea of how good the songs can sound. Over the coming months more will be added, including some

by other composers, until we reach the target of 14 songs for 2014 by the end of this year.

If you belong to a choir or singing group, or know anyone who does, please spread the word about this exciting musical project. Contact Sue at Sue.Gilmurray@anglia.ac.uk for more information.

Lessons for today from 100 years ago



Manchester: venue for the conference on the movement for peace on the eve of war

A peace history conference with the theme *The peace and anti-war movement on the eve of the First World War - lessons for today* will take place in Manchester on September 20/21 at the Friends Meeting House.

The conference will include the chance to walk the Manchester Peace and Social Justice Trail and see the film *Benjamin Britten - Peace and Conflict* on the Friday. On the Saturday several speakers will explore the theme of the

conference and there will also be a Q&A panel discussion.

Speakers so far include Martin Bell (journalist, ex-MP and MAW vice-president), Emeritus Professor June Hannam, Ian Sinclair (writer), Barry Mills (Northern Friends Peace Board) and Kate Hudson (historian and CND General Secretary).

See www.abolishwar.org.uk for updates and links to the Greater Manchester & District CND website (www.gmdcnd.org.uk) where you will be able to book in due course.

Bookmark our website: www.abolishwar.org.uk

Follow us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/abolishwar

To receive an electronic version of this newsletter please email Gillian Hurlle at: gill.hurle@abolishwar.org.uk

Diary Dates

● June 23, 10.30am-3.30pm. The anniversary of the Milton Keynes Peace Pagoda will be celebrated at Willen Lake, Milton Keynes. The programme includes a Buddhist ceremony, peace prayers and lunch. For details call **01908 663 652**.

● July 6, Clock House, Coleshill, Oxon. Faringdon Peace Group will hold its 32nd Grand Peace Fete. www.faringdonpeacegroup.org.uk

● July 13, 11am-5pm, Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ. The Campaign Against the Arms Trade: Take part in a day of workshops, plotting and scheming for an end to the DSEI Arms Fair and an end to the arms trade. A huge arms fair is threatened for September which would bring together 28,000 arms buyers and sellers. More info at: www.stopthearmsfair.org.uk

● July 19-21, The Hayes Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire: National Justice and Peace Network, including a MAW stall. www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/conference.html

● Until July 20: The 2013 Pilgrimage for Peace and Economic Justice is currently travelling from Iona to Westminster, focusing attention on proposals to spend £100 billion renewing Trident while continuing to slash NHS and education budgets. www.justpeacepilgrimage.com

Abolish War newsletter

The next edition of *Abolish War* will be out on September 15 - send your news to helen.riley@abolishwar.org.uk



Future prospects: New DVD educational resource will raise issues about conflict and climate

Photo: Tom Jefferson / Greenpeace

Schools focus on climate change - can you help?

MAW members are being asked to help fund the production of an educational DVD on the important issue of climate change.

Climate change will be a major cause of conflict in the future. The DVD is designed primarily for use in schools and will include a booklet containing further information and suggestions for discussions around the subjects of war and climate change.

It will also be a good starting point for discussions for both green and peace groups.

The DVD is currently in production and includes interviews with Indian environmental activist and anti-globalisation author Vandana Shiva, climate change scientist Saleemul Huq, Green MP Caroline Lucas, Professor of Peace Studies at Bradford University Paul Rogers, climate change expert Stuart Parkinson and other authorities.

MAW has already raised £22,000 of

the £25,000 needed, mostly from generous institutional donors and also MAW members who have responded to a letter of appeal. We still need £3,000 to ensure production of the DVD.

Can you help - or are you part of a group which could help?

If you would like to be a part, however small, of this important project, please send donations. Cheques should be made payable to the Movement for the Abolition of War and sent to MAW DVD, 11 Venetia Road, London N4 1EJ. Include your name and address so we can acknowledge your contribution.

The DVD will be ready for distribution in July in time for the academic year starting in September - at which point we will ask members to get involved in promoting it locally to schools and other groups.

**IF WAR
IS THE
ANSWER
IT MUST
BE A VERY
STUPID
QUESTION**

Send a message of peace and hope

The latest addition to MAW's resource pack is an eye-catching yellow/black postcard which says: IF WAR IS THE ANSWER IT MUST BE A VERY STUPID QUESTION - a great conversation starter! Other postcards include a picture of our dramatic banner, War=Poverty=War, and the beautiful tapestry, I dream of giving birth to a child who will ask, "Mother, what was war?"

Postcards are free to MAW members. Bulk supplies cost 15p each plus 20%

buy 10 of each of our three designs for £5 including postage. Order via the website www.abolishwar.org.uk/resources.php or send a cheque to Sally Reynolds, 1 Thesiger Road, Abingdon, OX14 2DY.

MAW stalls are a great way to spread the word about peace, hand out newsletters and badges and even sell some literature. If you would like to run a stall or want more information, call Sally on **01235 526 265** or alternatively, email her at sallyreynolds@btinternet.com

Questioning the legality of a Trident replacement

MAW members are urged to get involved in the current debate over the proposed £100 billion Trident replacement plan; warheads, submarines and more, to keep us nuclear-armed for 50 more years. But what about our legal obligations?



Action: MAW members protest at Aldermaston

We need to remind people that there is a clear legal obligation which came from the International Court of Justice in 1996 in response to a request for an advisory opinion.

The Court unanimously said: "There exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict international control."

MAW chair Will Pritchard says: "By no stretch of the imagination can a plan to keep us nuclear-armed for another 50 years, whilst refusing to enter into negotiations with the abolition of nuclear weapons as their aim, represent the 'good faith' called for by the Court."

In August 1996, the Canberra Commission, which included former MAW President, Professor Joseph

Rotblat, said this about the Court's ruling: "The first requirement is for the five nuclear weapon states to commit to the elimination of nuclear weapons and to agree to start work on negotiations required for its achievement."

Will adds: "We are good at telling Iran, North Korea and others that they are not keeping their legal obligations."

"Let's start with ourselves and get legality into the debate about the Trident replacement. Abolishing war must mean respecting international law."

Take action: Send a letter to a local paper raising the legal issues surrounding a Trident replacement or email your MP.

To find your MP's details, see www.theyworkforyou.com

Pope is asked for nuclear message

MAW vice-president Bruce Kent has written an open letter to Pope Francis in Rome asking him to speak out against war. In the letter, Bruce explains that he writes as an ordinary Catholic who is also connected to organisations including MAW, CND and Pax Christi UK. He outlines the position of the current UK government which is planning to spend £100 billion on a Trident replacement system. Bruce points to opposition from many churches including the Methodist, Baptist, United Reformed churches and the Society of Friends, adding that in 2006 Catholic bishops urged the government to decommission British nuclear weapons. Bruce concludes his letter by saying: "Holy Father, please speak to the world about the elimination of war and all weapons of mass destruction. "The human race can and should live in peace, free from the threat of weapons of mass destruction which, as a result of accident and misunderstanding, have several times brought us close to disaster in the recent past."

The letter can be seen in full on the Pax Christi website at www.paxchristi.org.uk

Educational tool

Supporters can now download *Opposing World War One - Courage and Conscience*, a useful resource and contribution to the 1914 discussion from Pax Christi. The 14-page A4 briefing about conscientious objection and peace activism in the First World War details the stories of conscientious objectors, their witness and their sufferings. It also records the amazing determination of the women who held an international End the War meeting in 1915 in The Hague. The British Government did its best to prevent any British participation.

Download the briefing here: www.abolishwar.org.uk/briefings.php

Vigils are good for your health, says Bath

Peace activists in Bath hold an hour's vigil every Saturday in front of the Abbey with placards, badges, leaflets, postcards and petitions.

People are welcome to stop and talk, buy a badge, take a postcard to send to their MP or sign a petition. Tourists often take a photo to send family and friends, carrying our message around the world.

This is the easiest kind of outreach possible - a fixed routine that more or less runs itself. It alerts people to the issues and attracts new members. The vigils have played a vital role in our longevity, providing the backbone of our witness to which we add public meetings, coaches to demonstrations, schools events and so on. And we enjoy seeing each other. In our experience, regular vigils are good for your health.

The current weekly vigil was instigated in 2001 in direct response to the events of 11 September that year. However, we have had some kind of public presence on a Saturday morning since the late 1970s.

Diana Francis, Bath Stop War Coalition (encompassing MAW, CND, Stop the War Coalition and CAAT www.bathstopwar.org.uk)

Knitting for peace and victims of war in 2014

Wool Against Weapons, set up by Stroud resident Jaine Rose, is a project to knit a seven mile long pink peace scarf. The scarf will be stretched between atomic weapons factories at Aldermaston and Burghfield in Berkshire next summer as part of a series of non-violent direct action campaigns, in conjunction with Action AWE to make people aware of the production of weapons and to put pressure on the government to scrap Trident.

After the protest the knitted pieces will be re-formed into blankets for distribution to victims of war. Jaine says: "I am very excited to be linking up thousands of knitters, crocheters and weavers in a fun and accessible protest to send a clear



message to our Government and the larger world that we want to challenge current global militarism and redirect our resources into healthcare, education, environment and positive change.

"We need about 11,000 metre-long pieces of scarf, so it's all hands on deck! It will look fantastic when we unroll it on August 16 2014 between the two sites. Knitting for peace is hugely empowering and inspiring."

Take action: Pieces can be knitted with any type of wool or acrylic - and in any shade of pink.

They should measure 60cm by 100cm. Feel free to use any stitch.

Experienced knitters will find a pattern for a knitted CND logo at www.woolagainstweapons.co.uk

Contact Jaine on 01453 751604 to find out about drop-off / collection points for your finished pieces.



Stretching a point: part of the giant scarf at Aldermaston

MAW Membership Form



Please print

Name

Address

Postcode

Tel No

Email

Please tick I would like further information I would like to become a member

Type of membership required

Individual £15 per annum	<input type="checkbox"/>
Life £100	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unwaged £5 per annum	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organisation/group £25 per annum	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 people at the same address £20 per annum	<input type="checkbox"/>

I enclose: a membership fee of £ I would like to pay by standing order (please download form)

a donation of £..... I enclose a completed standing order form

a total of £.....

How did you hear about us?

Please make cheques payable to: **Movement for the Abolition of War**
Send your completed form(s) and cheque to:

Movement for the Abolition of War
11 Venetia Road
LONDON N4 1EJ

Movement for the Abolition of War

11 Venetia Road
LONDON N4 1EJ



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PLEASE PAY TO:
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(to be completed by
MAW Treasurer)

For the credit of: Movement for the Abolition of War

THESUM OF £ _____ [amount in words:] _____

Monthly (please tick one)

Annually

upon receipt of this mandate/with effect from _____ (give date) until further notice in writing.

DEBITED FROM ACCOUNT
[your account details here]

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Account number: _____

Sort code: _____

THIS REPLACES ALL PREVIOUS STANDING ORDERS IN FAVOUR OF THE ABOVE PAYEE

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____ (Please print)

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Tel: _____ Email: _____

The Movement for the Abolition of War - join us!

We 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.

We have the tools, skills and laws that we need. We also need you.

We work through education and dialogue, nationally and locally.

Ordinary people can help us realise our goal - the abolition of war.

Abolish War is published by the Movement for the Abolition of War, 11 Venetia Road, London N4 1EJ.