MAW heads to Paris for climate change demo

The 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference will be held in Paris from November 30 to December 11 – and MAW will be there. The Paris meeting will be the 21st yearly session of the Conference of the Parties to the 199 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the 11th session of the Meeting of the Parties to the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. The aim of the conference is to achieve a legally binding and universal agreement on climate from all the nations of the world.

MAW vice-president Bruce Kent is leading a MAW delegation to take part in a climate change demo. On Saturday December 12 there will be a MAW-inspired, one-day trip to Paris to take part in the final demonstration at the Eiffel Tower, which will end the two-week international climate change conference. A MAW group of 25 will leave on an early Eurostar and return the same night by 9pm. It is too late to join us on the group ticket - but do come if you can buy your own. Interested? Email info@abolishwar.org.uk for details.

Bruce says: “I can almost hear someone somewhere saying ‘Climate Change - what’s that got to do with MAW?’ I don’t entirely blame them. The major environmental groups do little to make the crucial connection between militarism and climate change. However, the MAW banner which we will be taking to Paris states our case succinctly. It reads ‘War Causes Climate Change - Climate Change Causes War’.

“The world now spends almost $1.7 trillion US dollars a year on its military. “Military production involves a massive release of CO2 into the atmosphere. Crops fail and water sources dry up. People have to move into other territories. Even some to Calais.

“Conflicts are inevitable. Militarism is not the only cause of climate change but it is a major one and a major consequence as well. “Surely now is the time for environmental, development and peace movements to work together to counter the common threat that rising temperatures is bringing to us all.”

For more information about the Conference see http://www.wiseinternational.org/campaign/march-paris
Conference brought peace history to life

Did you know that the trenches of the Western Front were dug by a Chinese Labour Corps? This was just one of many interesting details given at the 2015 Peace History conference, held in Manchester on October 10. Dr Jenny Clegg told us about 140,000 Chinese recruited by France and Britain as civilian labourers under military command – a collaboration meant to give China a bargaining position at Versailles. When this hope was scuppered, the seeds of future conflict in Asia and Europe were sown as they were also in Europe.

http://ensuringwememorise.org.uk/

Other fascinating presentations were made by Helen Kay and Katrina Gass who showed These Dangerous Women, the film made for the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0a2xYvXwGiw

In ‘Arming All Sides’ Kat Hobbs gave revealing illustrations from CAAT’s historical research, showing how the familiar “revolving door” between arms companies and politicians was already manipulating decisions and arms profiteering in the First World War. Dynamite manufacturers (led by Alfred Nobel’s company) operated an Anglo-German conglomerate right into the war, making profits from the deaths of their own troops.

http://armingallsides.on-the-record.org.uk/

Living Along the Fenceline describes the resistance of women living near US military bases. Campaigners in Hawai’i want to make a peace zone out of Pearl Harbour.

Before the US forced a naval base on the island fishponds provided families with abundant food but today fish remain inedible because of pollution.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6g5RojBLym0

Many thanks to the Manchester team for arranging such an excellent conference, which illuminated some hidden international stories about war and peacemaking.

Valerie Flessati

Kat Hobbs revealed some hidden histories at the conference

The Movement for the Abolition of War – join us, or renew your membership

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. Working through education and dialogue, nationally and locally, we have the tools, skills and laws that we need, but we also need you - ordinary people can help us realise our goal, the abolition of war.

To join MAW or renew your membership, complete this form or download the membership and standing order forms from our website at http://www.abolishwar.org.uk/join.html.

Send the completed form (and cheque if applicable) to: Movement for the Abolition of War, 11 Venetia Road, LONDON N4 1EJ

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If you receive your newsletter by post the address label shows the date to which you are paid up – ‘2015’, ‘Life’, (for life members), ‘SO’ (if you pay by standing order) or ‘Comp’ (if you get a complimentary copy).

If you get an email notification about the newsletter you will have received an email reminder if your subscription is due.
Wise words: Andris Thompson (third from the left) with MAW members and committee members Hilary Evans, Becky Garnault, Heather Speight, Martin Aitken, Jen Harrison and Hannah Larn

Andris takes a scientific approach to essay task

The winner of the MAW essay writing competition “What can be done to end war?” is Andris Thompson from the UK. Andris has received £100 and also plans to get involved in MAW’s work, particularly with our Youth Committee. MAW committee member Heather Speight, who was one of the judges, says: “Reading the essays from around the world was a moving experience. Each one contained interesting and inspiring ideas, but we agreed that Andris was a worthy winner, with three good runners-up.

“We’re delighted that young people rose to the challenge of a possibly daunting question and became actively engaged in the search for a world beyond war. We are looking forward to building on this project!”

The runners-up were Mairiga Jonathan from Nigeria, Nur Shafiqah from Malaysia and Alemnew Gebeleh Deesse from Ethiopia.

Andris says: “I wanted to present my own perspective as a science student. When it comes to war, science and technology have long been used to enable ever greater destruction - perhaps best illustrated by the case of the atomic bomb - but I believe the same approaches applied differently can instead bring about peace.

“Recognising and avoiding bias is important in any field of science so my essay began by analysing popular assumptions about war, especially ideas about inevitability and human nature. I also discussed past trends in war and how these might be extrapolated to the future.”

In the second half of his essay, Andris presented a theoretical and practical approaches to solving the problem, especially applying technology and psychology to prevent behavioural patterns leading to war. He adds: “Small changes to people’s behaviour - what is or isn’t socially acceptable - could help towards abolish war.”

Andris’ essay can be seen here 'http://www.abolishwar.org.uk/2015_competition.html.

Abolish War
The next edition of Abolish War will be published on February 1, 2016. Send us your news and views - by January 13 please - to helenriley@abolishwar.org.uk

Kingston takes anti-war message to schools

Assemblies were held in 18 local schools over two weeks by members of Kingston Peace Council/CND to celebrate the International Day of Peace (21 September).

Primary children were delighted and inspired by stories of co-operating mules, aggressive frogs, the courageous Japanese girl Sadako and others.

For secondary students a PowerPoint presentation questioned the inevitability of war, considered some of the causes of violent conflict and alternative ways of dealing with it, promoted the aims, ideals and importance of the UN and finally suggested how students themselves might make a difference.

A ‘peace tree’, beautifully decorated with messages of peace written on doves by Saturday shoppers and their children in Kingston Market, stood in the parish church for a week by kind permission of the Rector.

The Art of Peace
Havepeace held its third exhibition - the Art of Peace - to celebrate the UN International Day of Peace, at Haverhill Arts Centre during September. The exhibition was held in the café. Avril Dawson from the group explains: "We wanted to make people aware of the huge numbers of individuals and organisations working for peace in a non-violent way."

“One wall displayed information about the initiative Knit for Peace, together with samples. The longest display board, along the open corridor, showed work by local school students.” They had worked with their art teacher on a discussion about peace - peace in their own lives as well as in the world and responded to the question: 'How would you create peace in the world?'"

http://www.abolishwar.org.uk/2015_competition.html
Music will make the case for peace in Exeter

On Saturday, November 7 (12 noon-11pm) Exeter CND will hold a benefit event - Music for Peace - at Exeter City Football Club’s Centre Spot. Kate Hudson, Chair of CND, will speak to promote the campaign against Trident renewal. Local bands and musicians will take part. As MAW member Sue Gilmurray (pictured right) says: "Spend £100 billion on the NHS, not on weapons.” Earlier in the year Exeter CND held an event to mark the Hiroshima anniversary. It included an exhibition, paper crane-making, the planting of a “peace tree,” speeches, and prayers.

Plan an event to mark the start of conscription

It’s time to start planning a 2016 event around First World War Conscientious Objection. Peace groups are encouraged to mark the anniversary of the start of conscription on March 2, 1916, or International CO Day – 15 May 2016. Here are some suggestions:

■ Unveil a plaque to honour the COs or plant a tree in a relevant location. For example, a plaque was recently unveiled in Glasgow to those who opposed the First World War and a petition has been accepted by Edinburgh City Council proposing that a plaque be erected in the city.

■ Hold a silent vigil or a meeting with speakers, poetry or music. Hold a public reading of the names of all the local First World War COs of your town, county or borough. (Information available on the Pearce CO Register on the Imperial War Museum’s website ‘Lives of the First World War’ or the PPU website ‘Remembering the Men Who Said No’.)

■ Invite descendants / families of WW1 COs to take part in an event.

■ Tell the press, your local newspapers, BBC local websites etc. Peace songs specially written by MAW member Sue Gilmurray could be used as part of an event and can be downloaded from the MAW website: www.abolishwar.org.uk

The Peace Pledge Union will set up an online map of events - send details of your event to jan@ppu.org.uk.

Remembering Dr Alan Mackinnon

4 August 1946 – 18 September 2015

Perhaps we ought to have our own set of Nobel Prizes. Alan Mackinnon, who died recently, would have more than earned one. He was, professionally, a devoted Glasgow GP but was very much more. An active member of the Communist Party of Great Britain, he was always inspired by the urge to build a more just and peaceful world. His personal and modest contribution to so much peace activity in Scotland, especially through Scottish CND, was outstanding.

I stayed with him and his very caring wife Karin many times while on peace trips to Scotland and especially Faslane. He was a quiet and generous host. He took great pride in the progress of his two, now grown up, children, Maeve and Ian. That he was diagnosed with cancer a few years ago did not stop him going out to West Africa in retirement to help as a doctor with MSF.

But things took a turn for the worse when he returned and drastic surgery did not succeed. He died at home with his family around him.

If four words only were allowed to describe him they would be modesty, kindness, intelligence and vision.

Alan will be missed by all who knew him. For our part, carrying on with his work is surely the best tribute we can give.

Bruce Kent

Can you help us with our vital work?

Although the MAW committee give their time freely and members generously support us through their subscription we still incur costs - producing newsletters, booklets, printed materials, stickers, organising events and working with our youth committee.

If you feel you can help more – perhaps in recognition of a particular event such as the Remembrance Day lecture, you can donate easily via the MAW website.

http://www.abolishwar.org.uk/store/c1/Featured_Products.html

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