

# ABOLISH WAR

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£1

## Lest We Forget

Each year this message goes out with the poppies, the parades and services. Lest we forget all those servicemen and women who died fighting our wars. Lest we forget their sacrifice, their disablement and death. Lest we forget – because it is all too easy for most of us to forget someone else's loss. For each of those taking part on Remembrance Sunday there will be many more for whom the day has no real significance. We are, and have been for a long time, too safe and comfortable to care. The deaths haven't touched us or our families. Since WW2 our wars have been fought in foreign fields and made little if any difference to our lives here. True, there would have been much more money in the public coffers to spend on better things had it not been spent on war. But there have been no air raids, no evacuations, no privations, no shortages to force us to remember those fighting and dying in our name.

Try saying 'lest we forget' to the millions who have been intimately involved in war, whether they be military or civilian, adults or children, on 'our' side or the other, and who have survived. Try saying 'lest we forget' to those with shattered limbs and minds,

families and lives, whether they are British soldiers or Iraqi children. They will all be living in the private hell we call memory. They will all be psychologically damaged, all suffering from invisible wounds. When they least want it or look for it, memory will kick in – at the sound of feet walking down a midnight street, at the knock on the door, a car back-firing, a scream, a shout, the smell of burning or a sudden twinge of pain in an old wound. A sound, a sight, a smell – any of these simple things take them back to hell, a hell that most of us in our comfortable country have no experience of. Imagine a child so traumatised by bombing that it soils itself at the sound of a plane or thunder. What kind of a future faces a child so in thrall to memory?

Try saying 'lest we forget' to the millions who pray each day for forgetfulness, for a release from the memory of war, those who, year in year out, live with their inability to forget what war has done to them. Should we, the unwounded, the undamaged and unaffected by war, should we really think it is enough to set one day aside to remember those who die in war? We remember all year long, or we remember not at all.

And this year, when you wear your poppy to remember all those who died, remember also those who live in daily fear of the memories that humanity's addiction to war has created.



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Welcome to the new-look *Abolish War*. We hope you like it and that it inspires you to action. Get in touch with the editor (details on page 2) if you want more copies to hand out to friends, or at meetings – with a little encouragement to people to become members of MAW!

Our website is being updated too (see page 3). In fact, we are going to look smarter and more professional all round.

We are back at the Imperial War Museum on Remembrance Sunday (see page 5) for both our AGM and the MAW Lecture - try to be there.

**And a BIG reminder to all our members - in November your annual subscriptions are due.**

### And another kind of wreath laying

Tony Benn laying his wreath in memory of the Tolpuddle Martyrs at this year's Tolpuddle Festival. To read why *Abolish War* is featuring Tolpuddle, see page 4.



The Movement for the Abolition of War

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# Editorial

The credit crunch, collapsing financial institutions, rising fuel and food prices, recession – that's us. But one government department has a bottomless purse.

It appears the government has already decided to spend £3 billion of public money on new nuclear warheads for Trident. *Ministers have repeatedly denied there are any plans to replace the warheads as part of the upgrade of the Trident nuclear system, insisting no decision will be taken until the next parliament, probably sometime after 2010. However, previously unpublished papers released under the Freedom of Information Act reveal one of the MoD's senior officials told a private gathering of arms manufacturers that the decision had already been taken (Guardian July 25<sup>th</sup>).* Good of them to announce it to the arms manufacturers before mentioning it to Parliament.

Earlier this year it was confirmed that £3.9 billion is also going to be spent on two new aircraft carriers. There is also the Eurofighter project. For the 1998 Strategic Defence Review, *the review's authors were told that the three biggest and most contentious procurement items inherited from the Tories were sacred. They were the Eurofighter project (£15-£20 billion), the new aircraft carriers (£4 billion) and their frigate escorts, and a replacement for the Trident missile and its submarines (£20 billion). These pet projects of the Royal Navy and RAF were protected so new Labour would not appear soft on defence (Simon Jenkins, Sunday Times 24 February).* So new Labour was all about image? We pauper our country for that?

In 2004/5 the MoD spent £2.6 billion on military research and development (how much this year, I wonder), and the military has an increasing influence in our universities (Scientists for Global Responsibility). While the rest of the country worries about rising prices and paying winter fuel bills, it appears that there is no such thing as 'recession' where the Ministry of Defence is concerned. But only when it comes to spending on the big things, of course. Among other basic equipment shortages, the Army is considering hiring the helicopters they need in Afghanistan; because those ordered by the MoD are unusable (*Independent 31 July*). And so much of this is wasted money with defence officials making bad, even criminally irresponsible decisions. And of course, never being made accountable for wasting what is our money. Lewis Page, a former naval officer, claims in his book *Lions, Donkeys and Dinosaurs* that the MoD probably spends two to three times more than it needs for its equipment.

From where I'm standing, all of this makes it even more necessary that we stop fighting wars that we can't win (and no war is ever truly won), in countries we have no right to be in. The

Eurofighter, Trident and carrier programmes *as of now* are costing us £5 billion a year. Can you imagine what that money would achieve if it was put into conflict resolution; put into medical care or retraining our army to prevent war rather than to fight it; put into people instead of equipment that we no longer have any use for? £5 billion a year to fund alternative jobs. £5 billion a year to stop war. I wish.

**'I see it is impossible for the King to have things done as cheap as other men' –**

*Samuel Pepys*

Yet we are fighting ill-equipped and unwinnable wars in desert countries, while proposing to spend billions on aircraft carriers and nuclear weapons. Why do we need aircraft carriers, aircraft that have no function other than killing, and nuclear missiles - what do we need them *for*? Must we really spend billions on researching better ways of killing people? If one talks to MPs on the nuclear issue, there is talk of 'rogue states', 'threats' to our security, the need to 'deter' others from attacking us. We must protect jobs, they say, but give no real thought to creating other industries. Nor will they mention the uncomfortable fact that for some people armaments are simply big money spinners. Mostly though, politicians will cite 'security and threat' as the main reason behind this profligacy. But then I came across the National Security Strategy, published by the Cabinet Office earlier this year. In Chapter 3, *State-led threats to the United Kingdom* it says:

*Our assessment remains the same as in the 1998 Strategic Defence Review: for the foreseeable future, no state or alliance will have both the intent and the capability to threaten the United Kingdom militarily, either with nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction, or with conventional forces.*

Please read that again. Yes – it really does say what you thought it said. We have been under no threat for the last 10 years, nor are likely to be. (And please remember that it was that same Strategic Defence Review that, under instruction, kept the Eurofighter, Trident and aircraft carrier projects.)

If that holds true, as they say it does, with both the 1998 and 2008 judgments being made by the same government, why Iraq? Why must we retain and update the Trident missile system?

Why do we need two over-expensive aircraft carriers? Why Aldermaston or Porton Down? Why do we need to pour millions into weapons research? All of these are only conceivably useful against a state that threatens us, and the Government says that there is no state threatening us. Is it really all down to a few politicians wanting a full toy box? And if it is, isn't it time we kicked them out of the nursery?

**Lesley Docksey**



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## Our Aims and Goals

To spread the belief that the abolition of war is both desirable and possible

To raise awareness of the alternatives to war for resolving national and international disputes

To develop materials and strategies to educate us all from school children to those in government

# Hiroshima Journey

It is over 25 years since I last went to Hiroshima as a CND representative to take part in the annual A and H bomb conference organised by Gensuikyo, the largest of the Japanese peace organisations. On returning this year I felt many of the same emotions of 1981.

The Peace Museum still shocks and fascinates. There is a section now to help explain the background to the decision to bomb those undefended cities. The war could have been ended without those horrors. The urgency had much to do with the fear that the Soviets might get a foothold in defeated Japan before the war ended. I had forgotten the little rusty tricycle which a father had buried with his burnt three year old son, or the school satchel which was the only memento her parents had



*The International delegates on stage*

of their daughter, who vanished when the bomb burst as she made her way to school.

As in 1981, on the evening of the 6<sup>th</sup> August candles floated in coloured boxes down the river in their hundreds- each a reminder of a victim of that day in 1945. Most moving of all was the ceremony that morning in the Peace Park. At 8.15 am the gong boomed out and silence fell as we remembered events of more than half a century ago. Many thousands were present and they listened in polite silence to their Prime Minister, who has no reputation as a peacemaker. Japan hosts many United States' military bases and facilities (as Britain once did) and navy ships use its harbours — not without strong public protest.

It was the Mayor of Hiroshima Tadatashi Akiba who really spoke for the crowd. He has been central to the global Mayors for Peace movement. He called for justice for the Hibakushas, the victims of the bombs, and spoke in strong defence of Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution, the peace article, now under

political threat. Most powerfully he called for the elimination of all nuclear weapons everywhere and went on to suggest ways in which that aim might be achieved. Last year over 170 countries voted at the UN in favour of a Japanese proposal calling for total abolition. China, Pakistan and India all support the belief that negotiations should begin. Mayor Akiba was clear - 'We pledge to do everything in our power to accomplish the total elimination of nuclear weapons'.



*Bruce speaking in the Gymnasium*

The Conference, attended by delegates from about 30 other countries including Afghanistan, gave unanimous support to the campaign for a world-wide petition calling on Governments 'to commence and conclude negotiations of a treaty, a nuclear weapon convention, to ban and eliminate nuclear weapons without delay'. In the spirit of MAW I went a little further and stressed that it is not just the weapons but the mindset behind the weapons that have to change. War itself is a barbarism to be consigned to history.

Thanks to the ICAN initiative promoted in the UK by MEDACT, CND and several other groups, the campaign for a treaty is already well underway. There is a target date - the end of April 2010 when the 8<sup>th</sup> Review Conference of the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty will start in New York. One year and eight months to go. Please get that date in your diary now. How about a modest target of 100 signatures on the petition from every member of every peace and disarmament group? Every MP should be confronted with it. Get your petition from the CND or MEDACT websites. If there is no commitment to start abolition negotiations in 2010 there is every chance that the NPT will simply fall apart which would be a disaster for humanity.

My visit to Japan meant a very packed five days and nights. Our Japanese hosts could not have been more attentive and kind. I suppose my best memory, among many, was a question and answer session with 8000 students and young people all sitting on the floor of a great gymnasium. Optimism, ideas, good humour - all were there in quantity. The most humbling moment? Looking down from five miles up in the air as Manchuria, Siberia, Western Russia and Finland, with their rivers, lakes and mountains, passed far down below - one wonderful world too beautiful for anyone to risk its destruction.

**Bruce Kent Vice President**

## Our New Website

What has a homepage image that changes each time you log in or re-enter the page? What has a string of astounding quotes from the great, the good and the almost-good, which appear at random on the home page each time you enter? What has the capacity to automatically email you updates on MAW activities or news? What will you find in the very near future should you visit the MAW website?

Yes, all the above and more. During the summer work has been steadily progressing on a redesign and redevelopment of our website, thanks to Rob Warner, a professional website developer who has been appointed to undertake this work for us. Rob, from Cambridgeshire, has been assisted by myself, as the redesign and reorganisation has taken shape. We hope the new site will be 'live' by the end of September, and await your comments. A significant new feature - in addition to those listed above - will be a facility enabling two executive members to edit, add or amend material directly. Other changes will be revealed over time - watch this space!

Whilst we are delighted to announce the above news we wish to acknowledge the time, skills and commitment given by the person who created the original MAW website for us, Mike King. Mike has managed and developed the site for us in a voluntary capacity all these years, and we say a very sincere thank you.

The website address will be the same - [www.abolishwar.org.uk](http://www.abolishwar.org.uk)

**Christine Titmus Vice Chair**

# FESTIVAL TIME

**GREENBELT 2008- 'RISING SUN'** Our chair and vice-chair and other MAW members were at the Greenbelt Festival at Cheltenham racecourse, speaking to punters and manning the stand in the Peace Zone. The stand (organised by the Network of Christian Peace Organisations) was the venue for talks – this year the focus was on how the lives of well known peacemakers can influence people who are now making their own journeys for peace. Jan Benvie, Donna Hicks, Maya Ann Evans and Adam Dickson (peace activists) talked about their commitment and beliefs).

Besides the talks and the presentation of materials, art highlights were the making of a peace mandala (which will exhibited at events around the country), and Sue Gilmurray's project to knit patchwork peace signs, in which many people participated.



Christine Titmus contributing to the Peace Mandala

Some 20,000 people attended this four-day festival and many came to the Peace Zone which was located just by the main entrance.

And why should MAW be at such events?



Lesley Docksey and the MAW stall at Tolpuddle

**TOLPUDDLE** For the third year running MAW had a stall in the Martyr's Marquee at the Tolpuddle Festival. Why is it so valuable to have a presence at an event like this? After all, Tolpuddle is about trade unionism, not peace activism. But people from all walks of life come to Tolpuddle, among them teachers, local government staff, NHS workers, parents and children – in other words it's a wonderful opportunity to spread the message that the way to a world without war lies through education, dialogue and conflict resolution. This year great interest was shown in David Gee's report *Informed Choice* and all the free copies of the Summary were snapped up.

Along with the South Somerset Peace Group, MAW has also been at the South Somerset Green

Fair and will have a stall at Dorchester's One World Week Fair. So....

Whether Greenbelt or Tolpuddle, at their heart all festivals are about being there, and the encounters we have with other people. Having MAW supporters there allows us to promote our message in a wonderful atmosphere in the real hope that people will take the infection home with them. What are *you* doing to spread the word? We have plenty of resources and campaign materials for you to use, but the greatest resource is your willingness and creativity!

Contact us if you have any ideas about other events MAW might attend, or if you think you could help.

## 'Call Back the Fire'

Our new CD is now available. Its production took rather longer than anticipated because so many good songs were available and there was much interest from performers. It has grown to a 20-track CD involving many performers and accompaniment by drums, piano, flute, guitars, piano accordion and banjo.



The songs have an anti-war theme (in its broadest sense) and are by both British, American and Australian 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 also performed on MAW's first CD *'Sing the Music of Healing'*. A film is also being made of the preparation and recording of the CD for education purposes.

There are also two special pieces on the CD. One is a song about Norman Kember entitled *'A vulnerable man'* by Sue Gilmurray, followed by some comments by Norman.

The other is in remembrance of The Revd Gyosei Handa who died last year in an accident at the Nipponzan

Myohoji pagoda in Milton Keynes We have used a violin piece entitled "Owase" about rural Japan and played by Maeve Auer, a professional musician from Austria.

The title of the CD comes from an anti-nuclear song by Fred Small entitled 'Peace is' which has the line *'Singing call back the fire, draw the missiles down.'*

To order please send a cheque for £12 (made payable to MAW) to MAW Orders, 1 Thesiger Rd. Abingdon Oxon OX14 2DY

The CD will be promoted in a series of concerts around the country with performers from the CD taking part. The first was held in Milton Keynes on 7<sup>th</sup> September.

With the message

**ANYTHING WAR CAN DO  
PEACE CAN DO BETTER**

what better Christmas or New Year present could you give your peace-loving friends than a MAW mug?

If you come to the AGM you can buy them for only £5 each. For mail order each mug comes in its own polystyrene box and with postage costs £7.

To order please contact: Lesley Docksey, 1 Court Farm Cottages, Buckland Newton, Dorset DT2 7BT.

Please make cheques payable to MAW.



# Chair's Report

As this US presidency stumbles towards its conclusion, there is an overwhelming liberal consensus on both sides of the Atlantic that it has got it wrong about almost everything: declaring a 'war on terror', mismanaging Afghanistan, invading Iraq; identifying the security interests of America with those of Israel and especially in the deployment of a vast military force as a substitute for policy, diplomacy, intelligence. The US has exercised unprecedented and unaccountable global power, arrogating to itself and its allies the right to invade and occupy other countries, untroubled by international law or institutions.

**DIPLOMACY**

These thoughts were close to my mind when I went to Canterbury University in July, with members of the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship (APF), to promote the anti-war message at the

Lambeth Conference. This once-every-10-years event involves Anglican bishops from all over the world.

And it was important to be there because in all the bishops' discussions and statements to the press - and even in the letter given to Gordon Brown when they visited London - there was hardly a mention of war or militarism. It is as though the Church has no concerns about the world disorder since 2001 and the role of the US in global affairs, so crucial to future developments. Without a distinctive Christian perspective on these issues, how can it participate in the broader debate?

During our week at the conference we organised two fringe meetings, one entitled '*The Church's response in areas of military conflict*' focusing particularly on the Middle East. The second was a musical event entitled 'Caught in the crossfire - sounds of peace and justice'. We also had a stall in the Market Place and submitted a set of briefing papers to all 800 bishops entitled *War and the Lambeth Conference*. One paper argued for major changes to the Just War position, placing it in the context of an ethical foreign policy (at the moment it is concerned essentially with the waging of war and does not cover associated military activities which can be equally dangerous and immoral). We mentioned the arms trade, clandestine involvement in military conflict, non-involvement and renegeing on international agreements to reduce



*From the left:- Bishop Colin Scott, Tony Kempster, Archbishop Rowan Williams and Mary Row (APF chairperson).*

armaments and provocative action which threatens other nations - a significant factor in Russia's invasion of Ossetia. (Copies of *War, Peace and the Lambeth Conference*, the set of briefing papers submitted to bishops, are available on request.)

**Other matters** We have become increasingly conscious that MAW needs to increase its profile. For this reason we are in the process of revamping our website, particularly to make it more user friendly, and have improved the presentation of our journal *Abolish War*. I hope you will be impressed when you see these. And our new CD, 'Call back the fire' is now available for sale (see page 4).

Plans are in hand for next year's Peace History Conference. We are looking for some new people to join our Executive Committee or support the organisation practically in other ways. The networking and mapping meeting we held in April on climate change and conflict has provided valuable information, and we are now planning our next major project which is to produce a film on the relationship between war and conflict. Anyone who can assist would be most welcome. A conference on this subject will also be held in the spring. Please contact MAW if you would like to be involved in any way.

Finally, may I once again thank all those who have given freely of their skills and expertise to make MAW possible.

**Tony Kempster**

## MAW's 2008 AGM and Remembrance Sunday Lecture at the Imperial War Museum, Sunday, November 9

**The 2008 AGM, 11 am, Imperial War Museum (please ask at reception which room to go to).** The AGM will start with the two minute silence.

This year both the AGM and the Lecture are on Remembrance Sunday so you can make a day of it. The cafe at the museum provides a good lunch!

**Remembrance Sunday Lecture, 2 pm, Imperial War Museum Cinema**

This year's lecture will be given by Kathy Galloway, the leader of the Iona Community, the historic Christian community centred on the tiny Scottish island. The title of her talk is '**Hope in a time of war: a religious perspective on peacemaking**'.

Located in Glasgow, Kathy co-ordinates the activities of the community, founded in 1938 by the Very Revd George MacLeod as an ecumenical Christian group. The community is strongly committed to justice and peace issues, and reconciliation,

in a way that overcomes the ring fencing of religion in our society. Currently it has around 240 members who are all committed to daily prayer, sharing their time and money, and campaigning on peace and justice issues.

Recent lectures in the series have tended to be on the legal or political aspects of war and international relations. So this year - for something completely different - *Kathy Galloway*

we thought we should consider some of the spiritual aspects of peace and reconciliation relevant to war. We are also conscious that MAW is very London-based and Kathy brings a Scottish perspective to our proceedings.



# Regional Diary

## From Somerset

On Monday 4th August Major Steve Hart of 40 Commando addressed Taunton Peace Group on 'War Fighting and Peace Keeping' at Taunton Quaker Meeting House.

In a lucid and very informative presentation he concentrated on his experience in Afghanistan outlining the situation and the difficulties of maintaining security in a country where tribal loyalties are complex and shifting, and hostile forces blend with the local population. Whilst the mission of the multinational force remains the stabilisation of local governance and assistance with the rebuilding of political and physical infrastructure, the prime military objective continues to be the establishment of security, in part required to enable NGO's to support the reconstruction programme. Major Hart's view was that this security had already been achieved on the ground although NGO's still felt it was an unsafe area; the military had themselves been largely involved in the reconstruction that had taken place, working with local people to utilise their skills. This had included MEDCAP patrols staffed by military personnel to support the reduction of the high infant mortality rates and to which local women came for treatment, and the rebuilding of a school in which army personnel had assisted in

the classrooms. He felt that whilst the Afghan National Army were effective soldiers and popular with local people, their technical training opportunities had been limited. He went on to say that defeating the Taliban was crucial not only in Afghanistan itself but also for the future security of the United Kingdom.

Major Hart proved an eloquent advocate for his trade and answered questioners in a forthright manner on issues such as the ethics of warfare, military funding, dehumanisation of the enemy as a military strategy, democratic control of the military and the distinction between 'political' and 'military' weapons. In response to questions relating to the environmental impact of war, he suggested that any efforts made in Afghanistan were for efficiency purposes only, and that within the UK the issue was not given priority consideration. Major Hart was asked if he felt there would ever be a time when the military prepared not *for* war but to *prevent* war. He felt that this was not a realistic proposition as there would always be conflict amongst groups of people, a view not subscribed to by the audience! The evening proved a very useful exercise in information gathering but Peace Group members remain convinced that without armies wars would be impossible, while the good major maintains that it is impossible to contain or prevent wars without one.

John Anderson and Ali Chown -  
Taunton Peace Group.



Taunton Peace Group on Hiroshima Day

## From Cumbria

The most common arguments used to justify the arms trade - export promotion, employment, spill-over benefits - are loudly expressed up here just now. 160 new jobs will be created as a result of BAE systems relocation of its small arms and artillery operations. This is known as *RO Defence*. 'Great news for Barrow' says the welcoming CEO. BAE Systems has offered relocation packages to the Nottingham employees. I do not think that 160 people in Nottingham will want to relocate to Cumbria, so jobs may have to go to local Barrow people. This means of course that local skilled

'Dyin' ain't  
no way  
of livin', boy.'

The Outlaw  
Josey Wales

engineers will be needed to make the weapons production a success. The argument is that local firms will benefit, local sub-contractors will have new opportunities. Three cheers all round.

RO Defence will become the leading weapons supplier in Europe. It will require engineers, fitters, welders, millers, turners and many other process workers who are likely to be recruited from companies not engaged in weapons manufacture. At a lecture given by Pat Gaffney some time back our Bishop asked what he should do as an opposer to weapons manufacture. 'I have to consider 4000 people's jobs' he argued. I remember Pat Gaffney's reply - 'contact your fellow bishops and together oppose the manufacture of weapons'. She was right, words are not good enough, action is required. Action means bringing people together

to protest. It also means writing letter after letter to the press and to people in authority.

Building a nuclear powered submarine is a complex business and a great engineering challenge. The naming and launch of the first Astute class submarine has now passed and it will be handed over to the Royal Navy at the end of this year. Three subs together will cost the staggering sum of £33.65 billion. Of the three, this is the first, planned to be in service in January 2009 and based at Faslane. The other two will be Ambush and Artful (to enter service in 2010 and 2011). Each submarine will carry a total of 38 weapons.

What the future holds is unsure.

Derek Longmire

## Looking hopeful?

According to leaked memos, the MoD is facing such shortages of engineers and technical expertise that it is struggling to maintain aircraft and supply equipment. (*Independent on Sunday 24 August*). Among the lists of shortages there was the information that one of the lacks is that of submariners and civilian nuclear engineers. Without submariners Trident can't go to sea, and without nuclear engineers to maintain it, there is the possibility that the nuclear base on the Clyde 'will be unable to apply for a licence to operate'. Am I sobbing into my tea?

Editor

# Peace Summit & Channel

In September, I attended the Point of Peace Summit in Stavanger, Norway and the launch of The Peace Channel, the brain-child of Bob Geldof.

**The Point of Peace Summit** was entitled 'Unignorable messages: alarms and solutions'. It included talks by a number of Noble Laureates; a particularly notable one on 'the power of dialogue' was given by Kim Dae-Jung, former president of South Korea. (I was present as a vice-president of the International Peace Bureau (Geneva) which is a Noble Laureate organisation. MAW is a member of IPB.)

The object of the discussions was to advance the core concerns of Nobel Laureates and influence policy makers. Three interconnected themes were addressed: environment, with a focus on climate change; security to meet human needs and the role of media with a focus on the challenges of informing the



*Bob Geldof and panel at the launch of the Peace Channel*

## Progress with the Peace Map of Britain

Mike King and Valerie Flessati are making progress on creating MAW's *Peace Map of Britain* which will eventually be available via our website.

The idea is to make people more aware of our often hidden peace history, recorded by memorials, statues, parks and other features which commemorate peacemakers, visionary ideas, and events promoting a world without war. London and Bradford already have their own peace trails which visitors can follow, and MAW organises an annual Children's Mystery Walk along the London Peace Trail. Such initiatives help to develop a culture of peace.

MAW supporters have already sent us information about approximately 25 sites and this is being collated. But many counties are not yet represented, so if you think of a peace garden, a statue or memorial commemorating a peace hero or heroine, a mural, plaque, or other significant site which illuminates our peace history, please let us know.

Ask for a copy of the Peace Map form to fill in. This will give you a good idea of what we are looking for.

Write to: MAW, 11 Venetia Road, London N4 1EJ  
(sae appreciated)

Email: [info@abolishwar.org.uk](mailto:info@abolishwar.org.uk)

Phone: 01908 511948

public without bias or prejudice. For details see [www.pointofpeace.no](http://www.pointofpeace.no).

**The Peace Channel** is an internet-based site for showing videos on peace issues. These might be impartial videos produced by the Peace Channel editorial team, videos from peace and other organisations, and UGC videos sent in by people around the world. Text and audio-recordings will also be presented. The channel's mission statement is: *The Peace Channel shall be a global arena for anyone who wants to share and access knowledge and information about ongoing conflicts and the work for peace. It will provide insight into both the reasons for conflicts and their possible solutions.*

IPB is planning to work closely with The Peace Channel to facilitate the showing of material from its 300 member organisations around the world. We expect that MAW will be one of those providing material.

Visit [www.peacechannel.tv](http://www.peacechannel.tv) to see what it offers.

**Tony Kempster**



*With Bob Geldof are Tony Kempster, Jonathan Granoff (President of the Global Security Institute) and Ingebor Breines (IPB)*

### 'THERE WILL COME SOFT RAINS'

There will come soft rains and the smell of the ground,  
And swallows calling with their shimmering sound;

And frogs in the pools singing at night,  
And wild-plum trees in tremulous white;

Robins will wear their feathery fire  
Whistling their whims on a low fence-wire;

And not one will know of war, not one  
Will care at last when it is done.

Not one would mind, neither bird nor tree,  
If mankind perished utterly;

And Spring herself, when she woke at dawn  
Would scarcely know that we were gone.

Sara Teasdale (*From Scars Upon My Heart*)

# The Terror of the Children

The reality behind the sanitised words - 'collateral damage', 'surgical strikes', 'regrettable errors' - was encapsulated for me, even after numerous visits to Iraq, in December 1998. It is often forgotten that Britain and the US had been bombing Iraq - illegally, with no UN mandate - for seven years after the end of the 1991 hostilities, which, as promised by then US Secretary of State, James Baker, had reduced the 'cradle of civilisation' to 'a pre-industrial age.' The bombings were additional to the most draconian embargo ever administered by the United Nations and continued until the (illegal, of course) 2003 invasion.



*Iraqi boy mourning the dead*

In 1998 Prime Minister Blair stood in front of the resplendent Downing Street Christmas tree and announced that the US and UK were mounting a massive attack on Baghdad, at the time when Christmas, the Muslim festival of Ramadan and the Jewish festival of Honecker coincided. After numerous failures, I managed to contact a doctor friend in Baghdad. Were they safe? How were they coping? 'Felicity, you know, now I can cope with anything. I can cope with my patients, with children, dying for lack of essential medication. I can cope with operating without anaesthetics. I can cope with the power cuts in 130° heat. But I cannot cope with the terror of the children in this attack. When I return home' (he walked several miles to and from work, since the power to petrol pumps was cut by the bombing) 'I swear to you I can hear the cries of every child in every house, in every street in my neighbourhood.'

He arranged for all the neighbourhood children to come to his large home when the rumbling of the bombings started, hoping they would gain support from his medical family and from each other. After a crackle and a couple of seconds silence he said: 'I hope you will not be offended when I tell you that, when the bombing ceases, we are left alone, in the dark, surrounded by the pools of urine and faeces, from the terror of the children.'

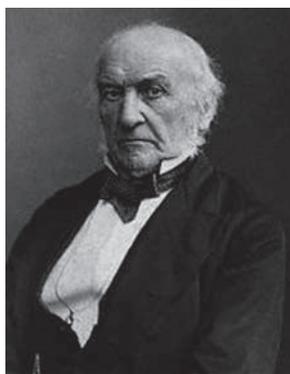
**Felicity Arbuthnot**

## 2 Prime Ministers, 2 approaches

### 1. Superpower Acceptance of the Rule Of Law

*'The World's only Superpower, with an Empire on which the Sun never sets, astonished the International Community by agreeing to binding Arbitration over a dispute with a small country which has just experienced a devastating civil war. Not only has the Superpower accepted arbitration but, now that the decision has gone against it, the penalty imposed has been paid in full.'*

This actually happened. There was such an episode and it helped to promote the idea that international law, not international war, is the best way to settle disputes. Gladstone, the British Prime Minister in the late 19th century, was the hero who went to arbitration. The dispute was over the Alabama, built on the Mersey and turned into a warship which, under the Confederate flag, did great damage to the forces of the United States in a dreadful civil war. The Arbitrators decided against Britain and imposed a penalty of what would amount to about £15 billion in today's money.



*Gladstone - the law-abiding Prime Minister*

Gladstone paid up. This

created a legal precedent. Why does no state take similar action against those countries involved in arms manufacturing?

### 2. Brilliant, is it?

When Tony Blair did his 'farewell tour' from Washington to Iraq, he was accompanied by Martin Amis. Amis wrote an account of a meeting between the then Prime Minister and a group of officers, young soldiers and a padre at Basra airbase. The senior men talked to him about the hard and dark side of soldiering, the lives and limbs lost. Amis wrote: 'All the oxygen went out of him. It wasn't just that he seemed acutely underbriefed (on munitions, projects, tactics). He was quite unable to find weight of voice, to find decorum, the appropriate words for the appropriate mood. "So we are killing more of them than they kill us... You're getting back out there after them. It's brilliant, actually."' (*The Guardian* 2 June 2007)



*Tony Blair in Basra - May 2007*

Words fail me, except to suggest that those who have intimate knowledge of the damage of war really should stand in the way of leaders who think 'It's brilliant, actually'.

### Freudian Slips

The arguments, protests and justifications about Guantanamo, the legality of imprisoning without trial the hundreds of men and boys involved, the legality of any 'trials' held at Guantanamo and most particularly the treatment and torture of the detainees goes on. Nor will it stop simply by closing Guantanamo, if all that it holds is simply moved back into what appears to be a large network of secret prisons around the world. In fact the only thing that can be said in Guantanamo's favour is that it is *not* secret.

That said, those running Guantanamo, in their eagerness to justify what they are doing, sometimes come out with some very silly or revealing statements. In trying to deny the poor mental state of many of the detainees (none of whom have been tried in open court or been sentenced), and that this is due to the treatment and conditions they endure, the camp's spokeswoman Commander Pauline Storum claimed that 'detainees are more psychologically robust than the ordinary US prison population, with fewer than 10% mentally ill, compared with 50% (50%?) of the inmates in US jails. Nor is there solitary confinement in Guantanamo, only "single-occupancy cells", and in any event prisoners communicate with each other by banging on their walls.' (*Independent on Sunday* 20 July 2008)

### Government by PowerPoint

In my rummaging through the National Security Strategy (see page 2), I came across this little gem. The Government has set up a counter-terrorism strategy, hereafter known as CONTEST. It has four main 'workstreams' (whatever they are) under the headings Pursue, Protect, Prepare and Prevent. The Government also has a strategy to 'counter the threat of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction'. They haven't given this strategy a nice name in CAPITAL letters - perhaps they ran out of ideas. However it too has four strands under the headings of Dissuade, Detect, Deny and Defend.

Am I getting old? Well yes, but - where is the weight, the substance, the gravitas of yesteryear? The Government reports I come across these days seem to be based not on knowledge, experience and genuine intelligence, but on PowerPoint presentations, bullet points and, as demonstrated above, alliteration (they can look that one up; I hope you don't have to). That being so, might I suggest that Idiocy, Ignorance and Illiteracy lead to Incompetence?

# Images of War



Last year Tony Blair's speech on the HMS Albion prompted us to start featuring images of war. Governments have always hidden such images because of the anti-war feelings they arouse. The US in particular tried to forbid photos of coffins returning home, and to control what is reported by embedding journalists. On July 26th this year the New York Times featured an article, '4000 Deaths And A Handful Of Images', about the military censoring of journalists, their reports and images, and how those photographers who did publish their photos were immediately removed from their 'embed' positions. The reporting from Iraq was compared, unfavourably, with the more open reporting from Vietnam. These photos are from the 'Picturing Casualties' slide show on the New York Times website.



**1. Life Magazine** In April 1965 LIFE magazine carried an extensive photo essay by Larry Burrows, documenting a helicopter crew that had come under attack in Vietnam. In the cover image, a helicopter crew chief, James C. Farley, had his hand on a jammed machine gun as he shouted to his crew while a wounded pilot, Lt. James E. Magel, was dying beside him. Photo: Larry Burrows

**2. Dead GI in Fallujah** In November 2004, Stefan Zaklin, working for the European Pressphoto Agency, was embedded with a United States Army company. Mr. Zaklin photographed this soldier, who was shot and killed in Falluja, in a house used as a base by insurgents. The photograph ran in several European publications, and Mr. Zaklin was immediately banned from working with the unit. Photo: Stefan Zaklin

**3. Wounded soldier in Fallujah** Two New York Times journalists were disembedded in January, 2007, after the newspaper published this photo of a mortally wounded soldier. Photo: Robert Nickelsberg

**4. Dead Iraqi in Fallujah** An elderly man killed in a June 26th 2008 suicide bombing in Karmar, Anbar Province. Photo: Zoriah Miller

**5. Iraqi girl** Chris Hondros was with an army unit in Tal Afar on January 18, 2005, when its soldiers killed the parents of this blood-spattered girl at a checkpoint. Mr Hondros's photo was published around the world and he was kicked out of the unit. Photo: Chris Hondros

# Ghaffar Khan -

## The Frontier Gandhi and Muslim Champion of Nonviolence

This is a 30-page publication which includes touching photographs of Gandhi and Ghaffar Khan together. It is an edited version of the talk given by Shireen Shah at the MAW Peace History conference of 2007.



Ghaffar Khan with Gandhi

Few people today have heard of Ghaffar Khan. Even the Muslim community are barely aware of his life and work. He spent his life in the North West frontier region of what is now Pakistan. He did not like being compared to Gandhi but the comparison is inevitable.

His was an astonishing life. Committed to nonviolence on the basis of his Muslim faith, he raised at one stage an 'army' of 100,000 men who opposed

British rule by exclusively nonviolent means. He spent about a third of his long life in prisons, both British and Pakistani.

We need his story to be better known in these days of spreading

Islamophobia. Please buy some copies and spread the message of his life and work in any way you can. Copies are £3 each or £2 each for five or more (add 20% for postage). Send your order to: MAW, 11 Venetia Road London N4 1EJ

**Bruce Kent**

From New Delhi, the broadcaster Mark Tully writes: *Your pamphlet about Abdul Ghaffar Khan has just reached me by a rather circuitous route. I have always been a great admirer of the Frontier Gandhi. If only he had his way and there had been no partition we might not be in the mess we are in NWFP and Afghanistan.*

(And Bruce would like to say 'thank you' to Brother Clive and Community for their card about Ghaffar Khan and their donation to MAW.)

## Conscientious Objector

In the last issue we featured a poem on the front page, and offered a prize to those who could name the author.. Here are the lucky winners:

John Hipkin • John Spencer • Roy and Vida Henning • Chris Brown

All of them correctly named Edna St Vincent Millais as the author of the poem, and they have been sent their copies of Colin Steven's film *Conscientious Objector*. I hope they enjoy it as much as I did, and that they show it to their friends as well!

**Editor**



## Useful Facts and One Question

All these facts concern the US military.

In May the Rand Corporation study *The Invisible Wounds of War*, the first large-scale, private assessment of its kind, was released. It found that 'some 300,000 U.S. troops are suffering from major depression or post traumatic stress from serving in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and 320,000 received brain injuries. Only about half have sought treatment.'

### What Reward?

You gave your life, boy,  
And you gave a limb:  
But he who gave his precious wits,  
Say, what reward for him?

One has his glory,  
One has found his rest.  
But what of this poor babbler here  
With chin sunk on his breast?

Flotsam of battle,  
With brain bemused and dim,  
Oh God, for such a sacrifice  
Say, what reward for him?

Winifred M Letts

(From *Scars Upon My Heart*)

According to data released by the Army surgeon general in June, the number of deployed soldiers diagnosed last year with the most severe combat stress, or PTSD, jumped 46 percent over the number of new cases in 2006, an increase from 6,876 in 2006 to 10,049 in 2007. Based on its studies in the field, the Army expects that as many as 30 percent of soldiers will return from Iraq or Afghanistan with some

symptoms of combat stress. Currently, there are about 155,000 troops in Iraq, including Army soldiers, Marines, Air Force and Navy personnel, and some 33,000 in Afghanistan. The Department of Veterans Affairs is responsible for pensions, benefits and health care. *The number of veterans from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq entering the VA system today is staggering—100,000 entered the system last year and over 300,000 are expected to enter next year. The VA has a backlog of more than 600,000 applications and appeals for disability benefits that will take an average of six months to process and only a very small percentage of which will be successful. This case load is expected to grow by 1.6 million in the next two years.... Since the year 2000, 2,497 airmen have been found unfit for duty for medical reasons and given lifetime retirement benefits while the numerically larger army with its higher tally of wounded has given those benefits to only 1,763 of its soldiers. In the last six years, the military has discharged 22,500 personnel due to "personality disorders," disqualifying them from receiving disability benefits and saving the VA \$4.5 billion over the course of their lifetimes. The number of personality disorder discharges has grown steadily since 2001.* (From *Disposable Heroes* by Pham Binh, International Socialist Review Issue 55 – a must read article. Contact the editor for a copy)

And the question? Why isn't it as easy to access facts about how damaging war is to the British military?

# Events Diary (from Network for Peace)

## 11 October

**BRISTOL** Schumacher Conference: Less Is More! [www.schumacher.org.uk](http://www.schumacher.org.uk)

**LONDON** Stop Cheney's Iraq oil grab! 0845 458 2564 [www.HandsOffIraqiOil.org](http://www.HandsOffIraqiOil.org)

**14 October SWANSEA** Public Meeting with Kate Hudson CND Chair. 01792 830 330 [swanseacnd@btinternet.com](mailto:swanseacnd@btinternet.com)

**15 October BRIGHTON** Smash EDO, Shut ITT: Mass Demo Against the Arms Trade [smashedo@hotmail.com](mailto:smashedo@hotmail.com)

**18 October EAST MEON.** South East Hants Peace Council Peace Day info: 01239 234 6696.

## 18 - 19 October

**BANGOR** 2008 All Wales Peace Festival 10am Saturday to 4pm Sunday 01248 490 715

**LONDON** CND Annual Conference 020 7700 2393 [www.cnduk.org](http://www.cnduk.org).

**19 - 26 October EVERYWHERE** One World Week

**24 October WORLDWIDE** United Nations Day

**24 - 30 October EVERYWHERE** Disarmament Week

**25 October LONDON** Scientists for Global Responsibility (SGR) Annual Conference and AGM [www.sgr.org.uk](http://www.sgr.org.uk)

**Monday 27 October ALDERMASTON** The Big Blockade [www.tridentploughshares.org](http://www.tridentploughshares.org)

**28 October - 14 November EDINBURGH** Vigil for a nuclear free Scotland at the entrances to the Scottish Parliament, every day parliament is sitting. From 8am to 10am.

## 8 November

**LONDON** World Disarmament Campaign Annual Conference Info: [editor.worlddisarm@ntlworld.com](mailto:editor.worlddisarm@ntlworld.com)

**LONDON** CAAT National Gathering [www.caat.org.uk](http://www.caat.org.uk)

## 9 November

**EVERYWHERE** Remembrance Sunday

**LONDON** MAW AGM and Lecture at the Imperial War Museum - see page 5

**14 - 16 November COPENHAGEN** International Peace Bureau seminar and Council meeting [www.ipb.org](http://www.ipb.org)

**25 November WORLDWIDE** International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

**26 November LONDON** National lobby of parliament for Palestine [www.palestinecampaign.org](http://www.palestinecampaign.org)

**29 November WORLDWIDE** International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

**1 December EVERYWHERE** Prisoners for Peace Day

**2 December WORLDWIDE** International Day for the Abolition of Slavery

**10 December WORLDWIDE** Human Rights Day. 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of signing of Universal Declaration of Human Rights

**14 February 2009 LONDON** Network for Peace Annual General Meeting [www.networkforpeace.org.uk](http://www.networkforpeace.org.uk)

**7 March** Peace Education Network Annual Conference - venue TBA Contact Hilary Topp Pax Christi 0208 203 4884

**24 -25 April LONDON** MAW Peace History Conference Imperial War Museum, details next issue.

# MAW to BUY

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Or visit [www.abolishwar.org.uk](http://www.abolishwar.org.uk)

## Musicians Against Nuclear Arms

Concert for Peace - 15<sup>th</sup> November

7.30 pm

St James's Church, 197 Piccadilly, London

Tickets: Reserved £12 and £15

Unreserved £8 and £10

MANA, 71 Greenfield Gardens

London NW2 1HU

020 8455 1030 [www.mana.org.uk](http://www.mana.org.uk)

## Why should you 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.**

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# Reviews

## *The Truth That Sticks – New Labour's Breach of Trust*

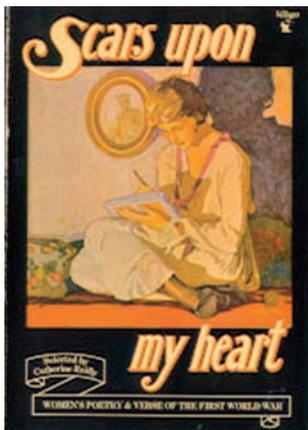
Who better placed to study the links between war, government, politics and journalism than our Vice President Martin Bell? Having spent years reporting from war zones Martin became an Independent MP, gaining an insider's knowledge of the working of Parliament. His book, a study of the causes of the ever-growing lack of trust the public has in government; contains a clear and damning dissection of New Labour's years under Tony Blair – from the scandals of cash for peerages to the illegal and disastrous invasion of Iraq. There is much to shock the reader, and to make us wonder what sort of democracy we are living in. Discovering the influence of party whips in the Select Committees to ensure their reports favour the Government position comes to mind.

Martin being the journalist he is, there is no need to comment on the quality of the writing. Above all, this immensely readable book comes across as an impassioned plea for open, accountable and truly democratic politics. A few more Independent MPs like Martin would be a start. Published by Icon Books, £8.99



## *Scars Upon My Heart*

'Your battle wounds are scars upon my heart.' So wrote Vera Brittain in a poem to her brother in 1918. He died in action



just four days after she wrote those words, and *Scars Upon My Heart* is the title of a book of poetry devoted to poetry written by women during, after and about the First World War. It shows how they suffered through this awful conflict, and it may surprise some people to find that women were writing protest poetry before poets like Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon. Although it has its share of jingoistic patriotism and glorification of war, it is a wonderful collection of verse.

Hear the anger of these words in Helen Hamilton's *Ghoul's*: *You strange old ghoul's/Who gloat with dulled old eyes,/Over those lists,/Those dreadful lists,/Of young men dead.* And feel the pain in *Easter Monday* by Eleanor Farjeon – speaking of a letter from a man at the Front she writes: *Then you spoke/Of the coming battle and said, 'This is the eve./Goodbye. And may I have a letter soon.'* The poem ends with the bleak words *'There are three letters that you will not get.'*

Published by Virago Press, £9.99.

## *Taxi to the Dark Side*

For anyone interested in the current debate about torture and 'robust interrogation techniques' this award-winning film is a must-see. Directed by Alex Gibney, himself the son of a US Navy interrogator, it charts the descent into hell by thousands

# ABOLISH WAR

Newsletter No. 12

Autumn 2008

detained by the US in their pursuit of the 'war on terror'; also, of course, the descent into the approved practice of torture by the US. Over one hundred prisoners have died in suspicious circumstances in U.S. custody during this 'war'. One of them was a young Afghan, Dilawar, arrested while driving his taxi by the US military. He died in Bagram prison just 5 days later, beaten so badly his legs were, according to the coroner, 'pulpified'. Why him? The US has imprisoned over 83,000 people since 9/11, only 1% of whom *may* be terrorists, and none have been openly tried.

The most extraordinary thing about this film is how straightforward its interviewees are about Dilawar, the prisoner they collectively murdered in Afghanistan in 2002. No one wants to shoulder the blame, but no one flinches from the camera's scrutiny, either. They lay out the facts calmly, with regret or defiance. In the process, they help make a strong case against government-sanctioned torture. Gibney takes his questions all the way up the chain of command, demonstrating how easily practices that are illegal under international conventions become approved practice. Two things stood out for me – the underlying puzzlement of those who had killed Dilawar. Why had they not been given better guidance? Why them in the dock and not their commanders? And, at the end of the film, Dilawar's father with a letter given to him by the US about his son's death. It was the film crew that told him the cause of death was given as 'homicide'. Because of course, the letter was in English.



This film is not comfortable viewing, and some of the images will stick in your mind for days. But make the effort to see it, if only to understand, a little, how easy it would be for any of us to take a 'taxi to the dark side'.

DVD available from Amazon

## *Behind Closed Doors*

Following *Soldiers in the Laboratory* and *More Soldiers in the Laboratory*, Scientists for Global Responsibility (SGR) have now produced *Behind Closed Doors* which reveals the secrecy surrounding the growing military influence on research in British universities. The UK is the world's third biggest spender on military research, and the military target 'prestige' universities, diverting some of Britain's finest scientists away from crucial areas such as health and the environment into military research. The authors not only encountered secrecy and lack of accountability during their investigation; they also found significant levels of disquiet among university staff about the growing military influence.

All three reports are available from SGR, Ingles Manor, Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone CT20 2RD, 01303 851965, [www.sgr.org.uk](http://www.sgr.org.uk)

**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 your news to the editor (see page 2 for contact details)

