

ABOLISH WAR

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Bogged down in Afghanistan

According to our new Prime Minister British soldiers are in Afghanistan 'out of a sense of obligation' – to whom or to what he failed to make quite clear. Speaking to the troops in Afghanistan he trotted out the same old 'we are in Afghanistan to make the streets of Britain safe' justification. When will we learn it is our corporate greed, our military aggression and our assumption of



David Cameron sweeping for mines in Afghanistan

world leadership that causes the anger that our leaders see as such a threat? Not as quickly, perhaps, as Mr Cameron learns what a minefield Afghanistan is for the West. And regardless of any good intentions, how does overseeing a massive rise in insecurity in another country make ours safe?

Report after report tells of the insecurity and violence getting worse, not better. The US

Department of Defense presented a report to Congress in April which, despite attempts to sound positive over some slow progress, gave a bleak picture, with the Taliban/insurgency holding its ground against the West's military might. Afghans distrust Karzai's corrupt government (how easily we forget we placed him in power and helped to keep him there) and, as the report states, 'One area the Taliban have effectively exploited is as an adjudicator in providing swift and less corrupt dispute resolution.' The UN

report of June 6 recorded a 94% increase in roadside bomb attacks and a 45% increase in assassinations of Afghan officials. Nato casualties are rising by the day. Whatever else we think we are doing there, we are not 'winning'.

General McChrystal, briefing International Security Assistance Force (Isaf) and Nato defence ministers, raised grave concerns over security, violence and corruption. His assessment could have been as much to blame for his sacking as the interview he gave in Rolling Stone. President Obama wants to start bringing the troops

"This is not a war of choice, it is a war of necessity. This is not a war of occupation, it is a war of obligation."

David Cameron, Camp Bastion, June 11.

back home next year. All the assessments are showing that, if we insist on trying to create an Afghanistan that is secure from our point of view, we will be there for years to come.

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Stuck in the mud – US soldiers, Helmand Province, February 2010

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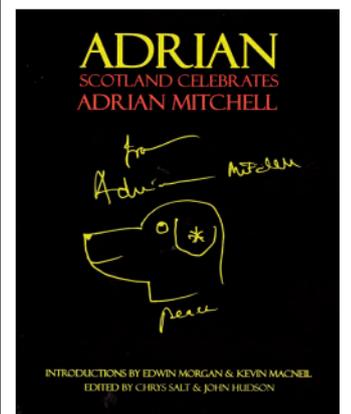
Where Our Money Goes



Facing the problem of a huge deficit, the Government still refuses to get rid of Trident, and although there are cuts across the board, no one is really looking at how inflated our fixation on war is. By far the largest Ministry is the Ministry of Defence, staffed by 67,520 civil servants, some 54,600 more staff than the next largest. Diplomacy is very obviously not important – the Foreign Office's staff totals 4,432. Whitehall also loves employing 'consultants'. Again, the biggest bills for those were run up by the MoD – 1,193 of them costing £146 million. That's an average wage of £112,000.

But Lord Paddy Ashdown, debating Afghanistan with Seumas Milne (see page 5), said that the UK deficit may well be part of the reason why we'll have to pull out of Afghanistan. When will they see how much more economical peace is?

Support MAW - Buy this book! See page 8



Movement for the Abolition of War

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Editorial

Two talks at the Peace History Conference (by Victoria Brittain and Ulrike Smalley) and one of this issue's reviewed books touch on the theme of propaganda and the manipulation of the media, putting across the establishment view when reporting conflict. We had an outstanding example at the beginning of June – Israel's attack on the Freedom Flotilla while on its way to Gaza to deliver much needed humanitarian aid (and here I must beg any Jews among my readers to be patient and read through to the end before making a judgment).

Let's be quite clear. The attack took place in international waters, at least 9 flotilla passengers were killed and over 50 were wounded, some seriously. 700 passengers (including around 60 journalists) were kidnapped, taken to Israel and imprisoned. Their passports, money and credit cards were stolen, and some credit cards were illegally used in Israel before their owners could return home and cancel them. All this was highly illegal, piracy on a grand scale. Mobile phones, computers and cameras were confiscated and smashed (causing well over \$1 million worth of damage) in the hope of destroying any records of the attack other than those of the Israeli Defence Force (IDF). But some reports were broadcast before Israel cut communications, and SIM cards were somehow smuggled past the captors and can now be viewed. And they all tell a very different story to Israel's.

Israel's propaganda war started with a film showing passengers attacking soldiers as they boarded the Mavi Mamara, the ship where most of the violence took place. Netanyahu's spokesman Mark Regev appeared on every TV station to say the passengers had fired shots at the soldiers, as well as using knives and iron bars. Photos of the weapons collected from the passengers were circulated. The passengers (most of them over 60 and devoted to peace) were labelled terrorists. Tapes of abusive radio messages were played. More videos were



produced, with passengers preparing weapons, attacking soldiers. I had my doubts. In law, the passengers had the right to defend themselves as best they could but why, if the attack took place at 4 am in pitch dark (an Al Jazeera film broadcast *during* the attack shows how dark it was), was the first Israeli film taken in full daylight? Then someone noticed the ship in the Israeli film did not have the same superstructure as the Mavi Mamara. More research showed it to be an Israeli training ship. Regev reappeared on Al Jazeera denying he had ever said the passengers fired on the soldiers – so they replayed the film of him saying just that. The photos of the weapons turned out to be from the IDF's own Facebook page (the most recent dated 2006). The radio messages were proved to be faked. More daylight videos, showing attempts to make them look as if the film was infrared, failed to remove the suncast shadow of the helicopter doing the filming. One film, purportedly showing activists preparing weapons on deck, was

one film superimposed on another, so that the figures appeared to be walking through solid metal capstans.

Each effort to sell Israel's story looked more desperate, more ludicrous. While Israel has every right to defend its own borders, it does not have the right to push those borders across other territories or out into international waters. Under pressure it *has* 'eased' the illegal blockade of Gaza, but will not lift the blockade nor accept an international inquiry into its actions.

But beyond the media machine something else was happening – something wonderful. While the US and UK governments, voicing 'regret', remained largely silent over piracy, murder and theft, Turkey was organising more boats. Swedish dockers were refusing to unload Israeli ships. In Vienna Municipal Councillors issued a resolution condemning Israel's actions. The Dutch Foreign Ministry announced it was to fund the legal fees of two Dutch passengers who were suing Israel for wrongful imprisonment.



And all over the world Jews were standing up, demonstrating against Israel's action, walking arm in arm with Palestine sympathisers. French Jews marched with Muslims in Paris. Canadian Jews were raising money for more aid for Gaza. German Jews raised money for an aid boat and had to delay their sailing plans because so many other German Jews wanted to sail with them. Austrian Jews followed suit. One boat has become two; by now perhaps three or four. And several times I saw, in films of demonstrations in different cities, little groups of ultra-orthodox Hasidic Jews, solemnly marching in a sea of Palestinian flags. When asked why they were there, their answer was simple. So much of Judaism, their precious faith, is based on law and respect for law. They could not – *could* not - support Israel when its actions show such scant regard for law. Like so many fellow Jews and so many non-Jews, it was time, they said, to stand up and say 'Enough!'

Sometimes you hear something that makes you weep and cheer all at once.

Please contact the editor if you want to follow up some of the references in this piece. If you want to see some of the videos (from both Israel and the passengers), just Google 'Freedom Flotilla Videos'. Many of them are posted on YouTube. Or you can go on the Conservative Friends of Israel website, but they only show the Israeli ones.

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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

Chair's Report

A few weeks before the General Election, at the suggestion of the MAW Executive, I sent a letter on its behalf to the leaders of the main political parties, urging them to commit themselves to rejecting the replacement of the Trident nuclear deterrent in the forthcoming defence review. I received several replies. Predictably, the smaller parties – Plaid Cymru and the Scottish Nationalists – were strongly in favour of this; the Liberal Democrats said Trident would be up for review but did not rule out keeping nuclear weapons; and William Hague, then Shadow Foreign Secretary, was quite sure Trident must be replaced as “the best insurance policy against nuclear blackmail in an unpredictable and uncertain world”.



Mayor Helen Livings, Bruce Kent and others at Peacehaven during the Flame of Hope walk (see page 8)

While the election, and the resulting coalition, preoccupied the British media, it was hard to find much news of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference, taking place in New York. When it ended on May 28, Mr. Hague stated he was delighted that the Conference had reached agreement to “strengthen international co-operation on the crucial tasks of preventing the spread of nuclear weapons, pursuing nuclear disarmament and promoting the safe and secure use of peaceful nuclear energy.” So nuclear disarmament is a good thing after all, insurance policy notwithstanding. Perhaps we should be grateful that at least there still is such a treaty, and that as long as our leaders pay lip-service to it, we are able to remind them of it.

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) has estimated that, despite the global financial crisis and recession, world military expenditure has continued to increase. Figures released on June 2 give the figure for 2009 as \$1531 billion, up

A celebration in memory of Adrian Mitchell

The poet and author Adrian Mitchell who died in 2008 was a MAW supporter and we are receiving the proceeds from a new anthology ADRIAN: *Scotland celebrates Adrian Mitchell* (see page 8). The celebration, a highlight of the Peace History Conference, included poetry and song read and performed by his family and friends. The first part focused on the anthology, with readings by contributors including Michael and Adam Horovitz and Bernard Kops. MAW's vice-president Susannah York read two pieces including *A child is singing*, one of Adrian's favourite poems from *Poems for disarmament*. The second part focused on the peace collection of poems for THEWORD07 to which Adrian and

5.9% on 2008. Although part of the reason for this may have been increased public spending to combat recession, it remains clear, as it does from all the above, that those in power are still believe that security lies in superior firepower, despite its failure to deliver victory in real-life situations such as Afghanistan.

MAW's own recent activities have been exploring these issues. Our weekend in March at Hilfield Friary was a fascinating meeting of minds, including as it did pacifist and non-pacifist, religious and non-religious participants. General Sir Hugh Beach set out the Just War theory, and some of its successes and failures in practice. Lesley Docksey challenged some of our preconceived ideas about how the law applies to war. Local people, including a group of sixth-form students, joined in some sessions.

April's Peace History Conference at the Imperial War Museum was stimulating in a variety of ways, as reported elsewhere in *Abolish War*. The League of Nations and the UN, the arts and the media, all came under scrutiny and there was plenty of questioning and debate. There was also film, drama and music. A group of school students presented their own dramatisation of the story of Vera Brittain and we saw Colin Stevens's excellent short film *Conscientious Objector*. The Friday evening saw a tribute in poetry, drama and music to the poet Adrian Mitchell, presented by his family and friends. MAW Vice-President Susannah York introduced the evening and was one of the readers. Adrian, who died in December 2008, was a lifelong and eloquent opponent of war, and it was an honour for me to be able to participate in the evening by giving the first performance of a new song inspired by the occasion, *Go down fighting*.

MAW's AGM will take place as usual on the morning of Remembrance Sunday at the Imperial War Museum, starting after the pause for silence at 11.00. I hope that as many members as possible will come to this, as well as to the Lecture in the afternoon, and will feel able to contribute. We want to begin preparing for a major Strategy Day in the new year, which will enable members to carry MAW's aims forward locally in the regions where they live.

It is frequently apparent that people deplore the obscenities perpetrated in war, and struggle with the contradictions involved in supporting 'our' armed forces, while the news of what they do and what is done to them provokes revulsion. MAW's vice-president Bruce Kent recently had an article published in *Open Democracy* (reprinted in Peace News), in which he tackles the issue of our culture of war. “It is a good time for change” he says. “It does not take a PhD to understand that globally we face threats to our real security to which there is no traditional military answer.” But the old culture dies hard. MAW is already acting to combat some of the myths and suggest alternatives, but there is much more to do.

Sue Gilmurray

several of the poets present contributed. His wife Celia read a Michael Rosen poem and a piece from Adrian's unpublished work about war and the failure of imagination. His daughter, Sasha sang *15 million plastic bags* about the Government's preparation to store the bodies of people killed in a nuclear war; and as a finale piece (with Matthew Prendergast), *Bad Friday*. Sue Gilmurray performed a song written specially for the occasion, *Go down fighting*, accompanied by jazz saxophonist Tim Whitehead. This celebration of poetry and music was dedicated to the memory of one of the Grand Masters of poetry, a principled and compassionate man who lived and breathed the values he advocated.

Tony Kempster

The Peace History Conference 2010

Thanks to the active cooperation of the Imperial War Museum (IWM), the Movement for the Abolition of War held its 4th two-day Peace History Conference there in April. The aim of these conferences is to remind ourselves and others that working for a peaceful world did not start with us or yesterday. We all build on the work of others who are too often forgotten. Their lives not only inspire but give us good ideas for action as well.

'There never was a good war, or a bad peace.'

Benjamin Franklin

This year there were about 100 participants each day, some coming from other countries, but as usual we would love to have had more young people.

The Director of the Museum, Diane Lees, gave us a warm welcome and stressed how much the Museum valued its strong connection with MAW ever since MAW was launched in 2001. Then Victoria Brittain talked about the manipulation of war reporting which goes on all the time. The 'embedded' journalist who takes briefings from the military without question came in for strong criticism. Independent sources are essential.

Ulrike Smalley outlined art used for peace and sometimes for war with many WW1 examples from the IWM collection (see report on page 8). Terry Charman, IWM historian, told the astonishing story of the League of Nations Peace Ballot of 1935. The full text of his talk is on the MAW website and is well worth reading. I can think of no voluntary organisation capable today of balloting 10 million people as the League of Nations Union did over 70 years ago.

Sir Richard Jolly described the work of the UN for peace in the



Valerie Flessati with Colin Archer

light of the aims of the Charter (see report below). His enthusiasm for the UN was clear and he reminded us, in the style of the late Erskine Childers, of how much the UN had achieved on such slender resources and often with little political support.

Valerie Flessati ('Make Cheese not War') gave us a lively account of the way in which French peasants in the 1970s defended their land against military encroachment. This was a wonderful story, illustrated with striking photographs, of effective non violent action which should encourage and inspire imitation today.

Students from the La Sainte Union school presented a sketch about the early life of Vera Brittain, and pupils from Woldingham School showed their DVD about the Nobel Peace prize winner Shirin Ebadi.

We also saw the two remarkable films - one about Gandhi's Salt March and the other 'Conscientious Objector', a powerful presentation of Edna St. Vincent Millay's poem.

We ended the first night with a great celebration of the life of Adrian Mitchell poet, humorist and good friend which Celia his widow helped to organise.

Interested in peace history? Put May 6-7 in your diary now for the 2011 conference. If there is a topic, person or past episode you would like to hear about please let me know.

Bruce Kent MAW Vice President



Susannah York at the Adrian Mitchell Celebration



Victoria Brittain

The UN vision for world peace, 1945-2010

Sir Richard Jolly at the Peace History Conference

Sir Richard Jolly, of Sussex University's Institute of Development Studies, who has worked at a senior level within the United Nations, began by altering his title from 'vision for world peace' to 'replacing conflict with the rule of law'.

The UN was intended, in the words of Dag Hammarsjold, "not to take mankind to heaven but to save it from hell"; it was meant to be realistic. It tried to outlaw aggression among nations, but also to provide for military means of containing it if necessary. The right of veto given to members of the Security Council was seen as the price of keeping the major powers on board, as its predecessor the League of Nations had failed to do.

The UN worked to avert conflicts through diplomacy, to link

disarmament to development aid, and to shift the focus of security from military might to the safety of populations. It was often castigated for failing to act decisively, but if the 15 governments represented on the Security Council were unable to agree, then decisive action was rendered impossible. Nonetheless, the UN still had its staff members, working, often in obscurity, to promote the principles of its charter, and its NGOs, urging member nations to put into practice things they had paid lip-service to.

A lively discussion followed, ranging over issues including population, sovereignty, nuclear weapons and children's rights. Sir Richard maintained that, despite its admitted failures, the UN had brought about progress in many areas. Its peacekeeping successes often went relatively unnoticed, and the world would have been a lot worse off without it.

Sue Gilmurray MAW Chair

Bogged Down in Afghanistan

'We have to remain until the Afghans can take care of their own security' is another wellworn justification for staying. But, as Craig Murray points out, the Afghan police being given the responsibility for this are, apart from suffering from the endemic corruption, mostly Tajiks and Uzbeks trying to operate in Pashtun areas. Afghans are quite desperate for security, yet all they have seen is a 'surge' of yet more soldiers, more guns and missiles, answered with more bombs and suicide attacks – and ever more death. Nato does not appear to understand tribal politics and niceties.

Military might and the machinery of modern warfare are having trouble coping with guerilla tactics. 'Commanders in Afghanistan are examining whether a sharp rise in troops being killed by small arms fire is a sign that a better trained or equipped Taliban is targeting soldiers with snipers' (*Independent*, 21/06). Better equipped? Many of the snipers are using what they have always been proficient in using, old Lee Enfield rifles, along with all the other weapons they have 'liberated' from invaders.

Even Lord Paddy Ashdown at a debate in Yeovil with Seumas Milne of the *Guardian* insisted we had to 'win' in Afghanistan for the sake of our own security; the possibility of Afghan and Pakistani Taliban getting their hands on what he termed a 'jihadi nuclear weapon' was too terrible to contemplate. But he admitted that things were now going so badly he is almost at the point of saying we should pull out, regardless of the unsolved mess we would find ourselves in. The mess that Afghanistan is in was not mentioned, or only as far as it impinges onto our own well-being. But this brings in some legal questions. Ashdown and Milne disagreed about the legality of Nato's presence in Afghanistan.



Afghan roads are too narrow for modern warfare

Ashdown insisted Nato had UN clearance. Milne pointed out that the UN resolution on Afghanistan did not mention Nato. Both seemed to forget it was not Nato but the US with UK support that attacked Afghanistan in October 2001. Nato appeared on the scene in 2003 when it took over Isaf's Kabul operation, and the country-wide military operation only came under Nato's command in 2006. The illegality of all this is not as clear as it is for the invasion of Iraq, but there is one major issue the West has not addressed.

Under international law there is only one clear justification for waging war on another country – that you are responding to an attack on your own country. Whatever Afghan government ends up running Afghanistan, legally they have the right to attack us.



US Marines help a comrade out of an irrigation canal, Marjah, February 2010

Our government should ponder that, withdraw our troops before any more die, and start mending some fences – fast.

Lastly there is the question of finance. It is costing \$7 billion a month to fight this war. Can you imagine what could be achieved with that money if, instead of soldiers, we could offer Afghanistan (*offer*, not impose on; give with no political meddling, no attached strings, no back-room deals) genuine support to help rebuild this poor war-torn country and its battered people?

Editor

I could not dig, I dared not rob;
Therefore I lied to please the mob.
Now all my lies are proved untrue
And I must face the men I slew.
What tale shall serve me here among
Mine angry and defrauded young?

(Rudyard Kipling,
Epitaphs of the War 1914-1918),

CUMBRIAN DIARY

Astute class submarines (designed to carry the Trident missile) are currently undergoing sea trials. Two more, named *Dauntless* and *Astute* have been ordered by the Royal Navy, the fifth and sixth of their class.

Here in Barrow a new dockyard is to be built to cope with this work, costing billions of pounds of taxpayers' money. I was told the other day that 856 vessels have been built at Barrow shipyard providing employment for many people. 482 of these are Royal Navy vessels including submarines.

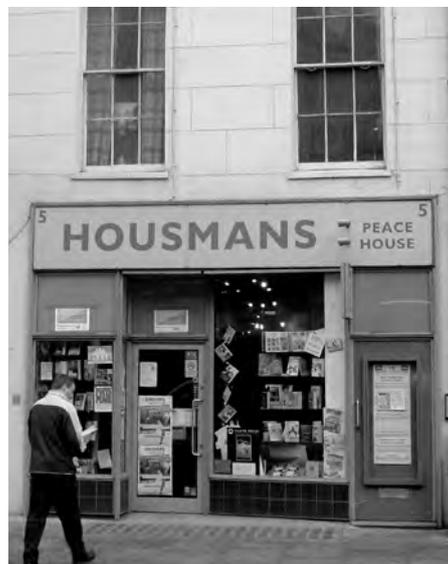
The orders boost BAE Systems who argue that these submarines are required, but they will never be used for the purpose for which they have been built - as Lord Louis Mountbatten once remarked, that would be nuclear nonsense.

But BAE Systems don't just make submarines; they also make armoured vehicles for the Royal Marines. And they have just received from Sweden and Norway an order for artillery and ammunition mounting to £200 million. These figures are staggering. They are hostile engineering solutions.

Derek Longmire

Housmans – the bookshop of the peace movement

In the aftermath of the Second World War, the pacifist writer and playwright Laurence Housman, a Sponsor of the Peace Pledge Union (PPU), suggested that they establish a specialist bookshop. This bookshop would promote ideas of peace, human rights and a more equitable economy by which future wars, and all their inherent suffering, might be avoided. The PPU had run a temporary bookshop as early as the summer of 1936, but it was on



Housmans Bookshop in Caledonian Road

26 October 1945 that Laurence Housman, then 80, officially opened Housmans bookshop at its original location, 124 Shaftesbury Avenue. Despite closing in 1948 due to cost factors, its goodwill was passed to Peace News, a peace newspaper founded in 1936 and also associated with the PPU. They continued to sell books by mail order and ran bookstalls at major peace events. 1954

marked the first edition of the Housmans Peace Diary, which runs to this day and combines peace-related material and information with a useful diary format. By 1958, Tom Willis and other Peace News supporters had helped to acquire a freehold building at 5 Caledonian Road, Kings Cross, which became Housmans' new and permanent home. After renovation of the then almost 100-year-old premises, Peace News moved into the upper floors during the summer of 1959, and Housmans resumed as a fully fledged bookshop. They continue to



The author Naomi Klein at Housmans

provide customers with radical literature and other material as well as hosting around a dozen book events and discussions each month.

More recently, the shop has joined forces with Gardners Books to launch its own pioneering online bookshop. The primary purpose is to provide a much needed ethical alternative to Amazon, the infamous online retailer known for exploiting both staff and publishers in order to achieve its near-monopoly.

Although still prioritising their stock of radical interest and progressive politics, Housmans' well established online bookshop is also able to provide around half a million general titles. As a viable and ethical choice, it allows sympathetic and politically conscious buyers to support independent and progressive bookselling from the comfort of their own home. For decades, through successive waves of the peace movement, Housmans has continued to strive for peace and fairness and will continue to do so in years to come. At a time when independent bookshops are closing down left, right and centre, it is reassuring that Housmans is still holding its corner - and deserves your support! Visit the shop in King's Cross or check www.housmans.com

Jessica Aitchison

The History of Peace - A Remarkable Book

Someone with an eagle eye spotted a copy of A.C.F. Beales' *The History of Peace* (1931) in a second hand bookshop recently and bought it for me. Few presents have given me more pleasure. The chances of getting a copy of your own are dim but you can get your local library to order it from the British Library.

Why my enthusiasm? The book is a 355 page account of all the peace people and initiatives between 1814 and 1931. In 1814 the first peace organisation started in the United States to be followed in 1816 by a British society, both with a great deal of Quaker inspiration. Beales does not suggest that thinking about peace began in the 19th century (Erasmus alone would make that impossible) but that effective citizens' peace organisations did.

The book ends on almost a note of hope. But in 1932 came the great lost opportunity of the League Disarmament conference which ended with the same dashed expectations as did the Hague Conference of 1899, and more recently the NPT review conference of 2010. Two steps forward and always one and a half back.

It has a reliable index, a long bibliography and some interesting pictures, one of Bertha von Suttner, who had such a profound effect on the thinking of Alfred Nobel. Her photograph is next to

that of Randal Cremer the first British Nobel prize winner (1903) who has been long forgotten, unlike his more militaristic contemporaries. There is also an impressive picture of the London Peace Congress of 1851. It drew in 4000 people over 3 days. The organisers were clever enough to plan it for the time of the Great Exhibition. Our collective peace movement plans for the 2012 Olympics are worse than timid by comparison.

The energy and vision of our predecessors, Henry Richard, Richard Cobden and William Ladd, just to name a few, are impressive. There were, over the years, strong differences of opinion about both theory and tactics. Rows were not unknown. Despite the lack of so much modern technology it looks to me as if they were collectively more internationalist than we are today, and their access to the politically powerful astonishing.

Where did all this energy lead? Well in part to the International Court of Justice and even to the International Criminal Court; to the European Union and to the Charter of the United Nations; to the growth of international law in relation to war. Perhaps also to some extent to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The book is a good reminder that we, on the abolish war road, are part of a long process with a past as well as a future. Get round to your local library and ask for a copy before another Abolish War reader does.

Bruce Kent

The International Criminal Court, the Crime of Aggression and the Rome Statute Review Conference

I cannot stress too often that one sure route to the abolition of war is enforcing international law, something the international community fails to do when it goes against national interests. Sauce for the goose is never sauce for the gander, it seems.

But there was a chance to take a step forward recently when the Rome Statute Review Conference took place in Kampala. In 1998, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court



A Crime of Aggression – an Iraqi girl experiences 'shock and awe'

ICC) was adopted, opening the way to establishing the ICC. When the Court was proposed, its importance was such that 60 rather than the usual 30 ratifications were required. Considering that the Convention on Cluster Munitions took four years to reach 30 ratifications allowing it to pass into law (on August 1st this year) support for the ICC was obviously keen in that the Rome Statute gained twice the number of ratifications in the same time. Clearly, many countries felt the need for such a Court. It is also clear that many saw the crime of aggression as integral. Much of war-torn Africa signed up, although there are now mutterings of doubts as it is beginning to be viewed as an instrument of the West to prosecute others. A good thing then that Africa hosted the Review Conference.

One of the main issues at Kampala was that of the Crime of Aggression (waging war), the lack of a legal definition of the crime and the fact that the decision to prosecute this crime lies not with the judiciary but the Security Council of the UN; that is it is under the control of politicians rather than a purely legal body.

Former judge Richard Goldstone, speaking on the BBC World Service, said one couldn't put the crime of aggression into the hands of the ICC. It would be very 'political' to make judgements on the *decision* to go to war. But the ICC would not be prosecuting either a state or an individual for the decision to go to war. That decision is political. It is always politicians of varying persuasions who make that decision. Even in civil wars, the propaganda that drives neighbour to attack neighbour is mostly politically driven. It is the *act* of waging war that is the crime to be prosecuted. While the 'trigger' allowing a prosecution to take place remains under the control of the Security Council it is impossible for any of the permanent members of the Council (only two of which, the UK and France, are signed up to the ICC) to be prosecuted for a crime they show an unhealthy willingness to commit.

In a letter from the Foreign Office to my MP it states 'A provision on aggression that does not make reference to the Security Council would also be bad for the Court. We want to avoid the ICC being politicised.' Two sentences on, it says 'The Prosecutor needs to know that, before he embarks on an investigation, he has behind him the political support of the international community and that can only be expressed through the Security Council.' I would suggest that the political support of the international community would be more honestly and democratically expressed through the General Assembly, where all nations can have their say. It is the *act*

of waging war that is the crime to be prosecuted. How successful was the Review Conference in resolving this conundrum? Excuse the legalese, but:

An amendment has been incorporated which includes *both* the definition of the crime of aggression and also a set of conditions for the exercise of jurisdiction by the court in relation to that crime. The conditions make no reference to the exclusive need of the Security Council's need for predetermination before allowing the ICC to investigate and prosecute. Instead, if, after 6 months, the Council has not acted, the Prosecutor can seek a formal authority to investigate from all 6 judges of the Court itself.

Not perfect, but better than it was.

Lesley Docksey

If you would like a copy of the full resolution and of Robbie Manson's summing up of the conference, please contact the editor (details on page 2)

Drone wars, drone laws

Prof. Mary Ellen O'Connell, from the University of Notre Dame, told the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform's National Security and Foreign Affairs panel that "Combat drones are battlefield weapons. They fire missiles or drop bombs capable of inflicting very serious damage. Drones are not lawful for use outside combat zones. Outside such zones, police are the proper law enforcement agents, and required to warn before using lethal force."

She went on to say that "restricting drones to the battlefield is the most important single rule governing their use. Yet, the United States is failing to follow it more often than not." She continued: "At the very time we are trying to win hearts and minds to respect the rule of law, we are ourselves failing to respect a very basic rule: remote weapons systems belong on the battlefield." I don't think they belong anywhere.

Richard Cobden – Internationalist and Peacemaker

Bruce Kent told Abolish War that Richard Cobden was celebrated by his statue on 29 May. Cobden was one of those people who deserve far more recognition than they now receive. The statue is in Camden Town, to the north of Mornington Crescent station. The inscription on the statue says that the major part of the cost of the statue came from Napoleon III. Why should a French ruler contribute to a statue of a British man? Because Richard Cobden was a great believer in mutual commerce as a means of ending war. He helped to negotiate the Anglo French Trade Treaty of 1860. One of the reasons behind setting up the Common Market (now the greatly enlarged EU) was that trading with each other would stop us fighting each other.

Next time you're near Mornington Crescent, pay your respects to a man of vision. And if you have similar memorials to men and women of peace in your town or city, then bring them to people's notice with a celebration or flower-laying ceremony!



Bruce Kent, Valerie Flessati, Jo Bownas, Elizabeth O'Donohoe, Bella and Che Roche at the feet of Richard Cobden

The Art of War

One of the largest collections of war art from two world wars is held by the Imperial War Museum, and it was the art from WWI on which the Museum's Art Curator Ulrike Smalley based her talk *Official war art of the First World War: a plea for universal peace* at the Peace History Conference.

Soon after the start of WWI, Britain discovered that Germany had a propaganda agency. In response a British War Propaganda Bureau (WPB) was set up. This was mainly devoted to the written word, with some drawings as illustration. In 1916 the artist Muirhead Bone was sent to France, and in 1917 several other artists followed. They were instructed not to show bodies or people getting shot, but they could portray the way soldiers lived, and the destruction of war.

Early in 1918 Lord Beaverbrook was made Minister of Information, and he established the British War Memorial Committee, greatly increasing the number of artists involved. Those chosen were told by Beaverbrook that pictures were "no longer considered primarily as a contribution to propaganda, they were now to be thought of chiefly as a record."

Too often war has been portrayed as glorious, full of bravery and heroic action. The artists that were commissioned to record the war chose to show its other side. Compare the patriotism of *Pro Italia - Allies and Brothers-In-Arms for Justice* (1915) by Fortunino Matania with the bleak and challenging message of Paul Nash's *We Are Making a New World* (1918), showing the ruined land created

by war. But it was this painting the authorities chose for the cover of the official publication *British Artists at the Front*, as they wanted to reach the opinion formers, rather than the general public. The latter were served by the popular press, using its own resources. One wonders here whether one should be comparing this more thoughtful assessment of war with the pro-war reactions still exhibited at times in today's popular press.

We, who are used to images sent directly from the front line, cannot really imagine the impact of this art on the public back home, the ruination of the world it showed. C R W Nevinson's *The Paths of Glory* was censored because it showed dead bodies, but he exhibited it elsewhere, and John Singer Sergeant's *Gassed* (on permanent display at the Museum) with its long sorry line of the blind leading the blind must have affected many whose men returned ruined by gas.

William Orpen, who painted the peace negotiations at Versailles, also painted *To the Unknown British Soldier in France*. The first version, showing ghostlike figures either side of the flag-draped coffin, caused outrage, and the authorised version (with the controversial elements removed) was war made sad and sanitised. But Orpen had made clear his thoughts when he wrote: 'Some sick; some with trench feet; some on stretchers; some wounded; worn, sad, dirty - all stumbling along in the glare.' (from *An Onlooker in France*).

These artists did not just record what they saw; they interpreted war in a way that still cuts to the heart today. A pity we did not learn the lessons they were teaching.

Lesley Docksey

Adrian: Scotland celebrates Adrian Mitchell

Adrian Mitchell was one of the most respected and admired literary figures of his day, writing plays and poetry for adults and children as well as novels and satire. He was a pacifist; he was a radical, subversive, child-like and full of love, gathering round him a circle of friends and fellow writers, many of them in Scotland.

This anthology is largely a collection of poems from Scottish writers, but it also includes poetry from friends who loved him, poets who read with him, remember his warmth, his generosity and many kindnesses. It was collated by Chrys Salt and John Hudson of Markings publishers who say the book grew as if by collective will, beginning as a small pamphlet and evolving as more people heard about it and wanted to contribute. It in no way pretends to be definitive; it is described as a modest act of recognition.

Edited by Chrys Salt and John Hudson, published by Markings

Forty people contributed including Carol Ann Duffy who chose a children's poem, *The words of poems* in recognition of Adrian's writings for children; Michael Horovitz who wrote specifically *For Adrian Mitchell (1932-2008)* about his character; Bernard Kops whose poem tells of his grief On hearing of Adrian's death; and Paul McCartney whose *Black jacket* includes the lines: 'sadness isn't sadness, it's happiness in a black jacket'.

The anthology was launched on October 24, 2009 at the Scottish Poetry Library in Edinburgh. It would have been Adrian's 77th birthday. All profits from the sales of the anthology are being donated to the Movement for the Abolition of War. It was a charity dear to Adrian's heart.

Tony Kempster



George Farebrother and Patricia Pulham at Lydd Church

The Flame of Hope March

A flame promoting the abolition of nuclear weapons started the World March for Peace and Nonviolence in Wellington, New Zealand last October. In April it arrived in Britain and, co-ordinated by the tireless George Farebrother, the Flame of Hope was taken from Dover to Portsmouth, accompanied by walkers and cyclists.

It set out on Saturday 3 April, had reached Brighton and Peacehaven by Wednesday and finally arrived in the Peace Garden in Portsmouth on the following Saturday. From there George took it to New York for the 2010 Non Proliferation Treaty meeting in May.

Photos - Roy St Pierre. Roy has a wonderful website (www.roystpierre.com) with photo galleries of anti-nuclear actions.



George, Vida Henning and Terry Hall, the Lord Mayor of Portsmouth

Images of War



1



2



3



5



4



6

1. Pro Italia - Allies and Brothers-In-Arms for Justice by Fortunino Matania
2. The Paths of Glory by C R W Nevinson
3. We Are Making a New World by Paul Nash
4. Gassed by J S Sargeant
5. Dead Germans in a Trench by William Orpen
6. Over the Top by John Nash
7. To the Unknown British Soldier in France (first version) by William Orpen



9

National security: can non-military security play a role?

This discussion, held in De Morgan House, Russell Square on June 7 was hosted by Conscience, part of the Peace and Security Liaison Group which seeks to advance the UK's role in achieving national security through non-military means. The topic: Why do governments still resort so readily to military intervention, while conflict prevention and peace-building are under-resourced? The meeting was chaired by Mary Lou Leavitt, an executive member of Conscience. There were two speakers: Anatol Lieven of Kings College London, and Paul Ingram of the British and American Security Information Council.

Anatol Lieven stressed how British military action in Iraq and Afghanistan has been totally counterproductive; the British still do not realise how they are perceived by people there (there are many in Afghanistan today who believe that British troops are there to seek revenge for their defeat in 1879). He asserted that the way to protect ourselves from terrorism is good intelligence at home rather than occupying forces abroad. And he deplored the way that much of the aid Britain has given to Afghanistan has been wasted due to corruption or ineptitude. He gave little indication, however, of the reasons for these unwise policies.

Paul Ingram concentrated on the need for real negotiation, which meant listening to, and genuinely trying to understand, our adversaries. Here he tackled the question of military intervention. The British, like the USA, tend to see ourselves as a force for good in the world, and assume our intervention will be benevolent. This needs to change, as does our paying lip-service to global peace, under cover of pursuing our own and our allies' advantage. Both speakers emphasised that, while peace-building was lengthy, difficult and often distasteful, military action had its attractions, seeming to offer the possibility of decisive victory. Such victories were illusory. Ingram quoted Maslow's saying: "It is tempting, if the only tool you have is a hammer, to treat everything as if it were a nail."

Pressed during the ensuing discussion to suggest a solution to current problems, they refused to offer any quick fixes, but they did encourage us to hope. There were signs of fresh thinking among those now in power, and every reason to engage in dialogue and press for more.

Sue Gilmurray

It is tempting, if the only tool you have is a hammer, to treat everything as if it were a nail.

Abraham Maslow

ANIMAL AID'S PURPLE POPPY - Remembering the animal victims of war.

Historically, millions of animals were enlisted to serve, and often die, on the frontline, and were used for transport, rescue and for carrying messages. Vast numbers were killed and often suffered agonizing deaths from wounds, starvation, exhaustion and disease. Eight million horses perished in the First World War alone, transporting ammunition and supplies to the front, under shellfire and in appalling conditions. Dogs, mules, pigeons, cats and even camels have also been traditionally used in warfare and animals are still dying today.

Recently, scientists have wired electrodes into the brains of rats to harness their keen sense of smell, and the armed forces have used dolphins and seals for mine detection work. Vast numbers of animals – on farms, for instance, – become victims when the bombing starts. Shockingly, animals are also killed in Ministry of Defence vivisection experiments. In top-secret laboratories at Porton Down, sheep, goats, pigs, mice, rats, guinea pigs, monkeys, dogs and cats have been shot or killed by biological and chemical weapons. The annual death toll has risen to 20,000. While millions of animals have lost their lives in human conflicts, they are rarely mentioned in remembrance ceremonies. Animal Aid's purple poppy has been created to rectify this. It can be worn alongside the red poppy, to commemorate the animal victims of war. A service is also held each year at the Animals' Memorial, Park Lane, Hyde Park on Remembrance Sunday.



Please help raise awareness of animals' suffering in wartime by ordering a satin, purple poppy, from Animal Aid. The poppies cost £1 and are available online at www.animalaid.org.uk, or you can call 01732 364546 ext 222. We have commissioned a special, poppy enamel badge, which can be worn all year round. You can also order a free purple poppy action pack.

In addition, we have produced a special fundraising box that is perfect for displaying in your local vet's surgery, library, or for using at a collection at your local supermarket. Included are some leaflets, 50 poppies, and a copy of our booklet 'Animals: the hidden victims of war'. The booklet, a brief history of animals in wartime, can be purchased separately for £1.50. For further

information, email karin@animalaid.co.uk

Remember the animal victims of war this year by wearing a PURPLE poppy. (Animal Aid was founded in 1977 by a teacher horrified at the abuse of animals taking place in the UK. Initially established to tackle the issues of factory farming and vivisection, we now cover a wider range of activities, including promoting vegetarianism. We lobby government, undertake detailed scientific reports, expose cruelty on farms and in slaughterhouses and the horrors of battery cages for

pheasant rearing. We have an active Education Department, providing workshops and speakers for school talks. Animal Aid has a comprehensive selection of reports, booklets, posters and leaflets available, as well as an on-line shop of cruelty-free products. Animal Aid, The Old Chapel, Bradford Street, Tonbridge, Kent, TN9 1AW)

Events Diary - from Network for Peace

23 – 27 July OXFORDSHIRE Peace News Summer Camp Info: 020 7278 3344

28 July LONDON Israel Palestine: Combatants for Peace. Can Israelis and Palestinians work together for peace? 7–8.30pm. Frontline Club, 13 Norfolk Place London, W2 1QJ. £12.50 Concessions - students/seniors £ 8.00.

2-12 August LONDON 'After the Bomb Dropped: How Hiroshima and Nagasaki Suffered' exhibition at Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ

4 – 6 August DERBYSHIRE Earth First! Summer Gathering. www.earthfirstgathering.org.uk

6 August WORLDWIDE Hiroshima Day.

9 August WORLDWIDE. Nagasaki Day.

LONDON Pax Christi service in the Crypt of Westminster Cathedral at 6.30 pm to commemorate Franz Jagerstatter (anniversary of his execution). www.paxchristi.org.uk

14 August LONDON E16 East London Against Arms Fairs Musical Protest. Starts 2pm. ExCel Centre

TENBY. CND Cymru by the Sea. All Wales Peace Day. www.cndcymru.org

19-25 August EDINBURGH Camp for Climate Action 2010 Info: 07594 521 290; www.climatecamp.org.uk

27 – 29 August CHELTENHAM Greenbelt Festival. Includes the 'Peace Zone' organised by Network of Christian Peace Organisations and Bruce Kent speaking on war and peace culture www.greenbelt.org.uk

2 – 6 September READING Trident Ploughshares Summer Gathering Info: 0845 45 88 361

14 September LONDON Musicians Against Nuclear Arms (MANA) Concert for Peace 7.30pm at Rosslyn Hill Unitarian Chapel, Hampstead, London NW3. Tickets £10/£8. 020 8455 1030 admin@mana.org.uk www.mana.org.uk

15 September LONDON Mystery Walk – around the London Peace Trail, organised by Movement for the Abolition of War with the help of WILPF and the Woodcraft Folk. www.abolishwar.org.uk 01908 511 948

18 September LONDON Drone Wars: Day Conference exploring the growing use of armed drones, University of London Union, central London. £10/£6.00 concessions. Info: 01865 250781.

21 September WORLDWIDE International Day of Peace.

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



Bogged Down in Afghanistan

Although the men at the top are still not really admitting it, things are going badly for Nato in Afghanistan. The troops know though.

On the left a USAF Staff Sgt. runs down the road, ripping off his protective vest after being covered by ants as he was lying in the field, Helmand province, southern Afghanistan, February 2010

And on the right, ladders are in short supply in Marjah. Are they looking for a way out perhaps?



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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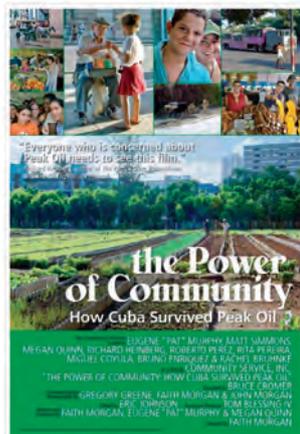
Reviews

The Power of Community – how Cuba survived peak oil

Director Faith Morgan 2006

People fighting over diminishing resources concerns MAW. 'Peak oil', when oil production declines and is not enough to serve our needs, could be a major cause of conflict. Less oil may mean fewer cars and planes, and limit how we fight wars. But there is a greater, less obvious threat. Most of the world's food production depends on oil to drive the machines and petrochemicals to fertilise crops. When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1990, Cuba's economy crashed. Oil imports were cut by more than half, and food by 80%.

This is the story of how the people of Cuba got together and created, in an amazingly short time, ways of surviving without oil. Industrial agriculture disappeared; ox-drawn ploughs replaced tractors; manure replaced petrochemical fertilisers; farms became small units worked by people, not machines. In the towns, balconies and flat roofs became gardens, wasteland areas became allotments and every street had its market as people sold or exchanged what they had grown. They will never go back to being dangerously dependent on oil, but now get their oil from Venezuela. In return Cuban doctors give much needed free medical care to the Venezuelan poor – a good trade. Cuba is regarded with suspicion by the West but this film will change your mind. Cubans working together, supporting each other in their struggle to survive is inspiring and heart-warming. It shows humanity at its best. It demonstrates how we could survive the double threat of peak oil and climate change.



Newspeak in the 21st Century

David Edwards and David Cromwell, Pluto Press, 2009

The authors run the Media Lens website, which challenges the unbalanced view of events provided by mainstream media. In this book they explore in great depth how the news we receive can be biased towards the establishment or corporate agenda. Even those sources regarded as reliable, the Independent, the Guardian, the BBC and Channel 4, give mixed messages. The Guardian, for instance, highly regarded for its stance on environmental matters, relies heavily on adverts by the motor industry for fuel-hungry cars.

Taking well-known issues – climate change, Israel/Palestine, the Iraq invasion, the Lancet Reports on Iraqi dead – they demonstrate how selectively the news is presented to the public; how hard evidence from one side can be dismissed in favour of a statement from a nameless 'government spokesman'; how a 'balanced' report is anything but. Reading the justifications given by news editors for the way they report a particular event, makes me wonder why we buy papers or watch the news at all, except that all campaigners for peace should be well informed. This is not a comfortable book to read, but it will make you look again at how you are manipulated into taking certain views, make you more discriminating in your analysis of events, more aware of what is really happening in the world.

Readers of Abolish War will know that I include information from many alternative sources. Visit our website. Under Briefings & Reports/Useful Links, there is a list of some of the sources that give the other side of the news.

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)

ABOLISH WAR

Newsletter No. 17

Summer 2010

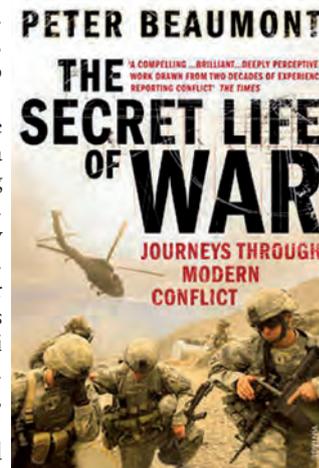
The Secret Life of War – journeys through modern conflict

Peter Beaumont, Vintage Books, 2010

This is a must-read book, beautifully and honestly written. Peter Beaumont, as the Observer's chief foreign correspondent, has covered many conflicts. Drawing on his notes and memories of people and places, he explores what happens to those whose lives become ruled by war. Whether soldiers, journalists, insurgents or civilians, all end up damaged in some way.

In Lebanon, 2006: "I am not passive and neutral in this violence. I have a horrible investment in something happening to justify my being there. ... Without a war I feel my identity diminished." So might the soldier say. But then Beaumont tells of a 6 year old Palestinian boy who witnessed his little brother shot dead by an Israeli soldier. Now he hates the Israelis. Violent conflict has, even at that age, become part of his identity.

The book is full of tiny details and observations. It is not only the machines and the big explosions, but the shoe in the road, the piece of broken china in the dust. Exploring the bombed out ruins of Mullah Omar's compound in Kandahar he writes: "The bathrooms, too, are shattered. Now human shit dots the rubble. It is one of the sights and smells of war, the human turd, ignored by the poets and chroniclers of war. Where there are battles there is always shit. Excrement and bullet cases." How better to describe how life disintegrates when war is waged?



Rethink Afghanistan

Director Robert Greenwald

This is a 6-part American documentary that you can watch free online. Well constructed, full of facts and interviews with people on the ground, it really helps you to 'rethink' Afghanistan and why it is an unwinnable war. It covers various aspects of the war: what the military escalation will achieve; how it could further destabilise Pakistan; the staggering costs of the war; the civilian casualties; the lack of women's liberation. Part 6 contains interviews with three ex-CIA officials explaining why the war cannot

be won (Robert Baer is especially good. Reiterating the CIA statement that Al Qaeda is no longer in Afghanistan he says, "We're fighting a war and the enemy isn't even there!")

www.rethinkafghanistan/videos

Reviews by the editor. All reviews for books and films (no more than 250 words) will be considered for inclusion.

