

ABOLISH WAR

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£1

Chris Hondros

14 March 1970 – 20 April 2011



Chris who? Lying sleepless and listening to the World Service in the early hours of 21 April, I heard them announce that he had died – and I wept because the world had suddenly become poorer. He was killed in a mortar attack in Misrata, Libya, doing what he did better than most of his peers, taking photos of war. Even if you don't recognise his name, you would have seen his work. I could fill the Images of War page with his work

again and again, and never repeat myself.

He was one of those very gifted people who was somehow always there, camera ready, in the right place at the right moment. Each photo beautifully composed and each one showing the truth about



war – the exhilaration of those fighting, the terror of those suffering, the moments of calm and beauty among the anger, cruelty and carnage. More than anything else, his photos were full of humanity.

He first came to people's notice with a 2003 photo of a young Liberian militia fighter in Monrovia, jumping for joy after firing a rocket propelled grenade. His most famous photo went round the world in 2005 – that of a little Iraqi girl in Tal Afar, screaming and spattered with her parents' blood. She had just seen them shot by US soldiers. And in one of his last photos, taken in Misrata, a moment's stillness as a rebel fighter climbs through a shell hole in a wall.



It is because of people like him that we know what war is really like, distanced as we are from so much of it. And it is risky work. As Kim Sengupta, writing in the Independent said, 'These journalists... were brave, resourceful and doing something worthwhile. But none ever sought martyrdom.' Yes, they do it because the life is

exciting, sometimes even fun, but always, if you get close enough to take photos as good as his, dangerous.

Asked about his experience in Iraq, Hondros said, "I went and covered what was in front of me, and did what I could to help people understand what was happening – even when I didn't really understand it myself." His legacy is that he helped a lot of people to understand the horror of war through the beauty of his work.

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And why should this photo of Mount Errigal in County Donegal inspire you to go on campaigning to end war? Find out on Page 8



What do you want from MAW?

For MAW, the first step towards encouraging members to be more involved could be to ask what you want! For you, the first step to active campaigning **could** be answering some questions.

Following February's **Strategy Day**, we are preparing a questionnaire. We want to know what **you** want from MAW; what actions you would like to be involved in and how MAW can help; what resources we should be providing; what events you want us to arrange; and most of all, how can we attract **more young** members.

All members on email will be sent the questionnaire. It will also be available to download from our website very soon.

If you have no access to computers write to the Editor (see Page 2) and I will send you a copy to fill in.

All MAW members, please note! Unless you are a life member or joined after March this year, your membership subscription is due in November. And if you are not a member, why not join us?

Movement for the Abolition of War

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Editorial

Truth, Lies and Propaganda

As I write the violent suppression of peaceful Bahraini protesters and those who tended their injuries continues, unmentioned by the West (although we have been more vocal about Syria) while the fighting in Libya goes on with the West vociferously supporting the rebels. The UN Resolution that was meant to achieve a no-fly-zone in order to protect civilians now seems to cover taking sides in what is becoming a civil war. UN resolutions are supposed to prevent war, not increase it. NATO is quite deliberately aiming to kill Colonel Gaddafi, or to use their language, 'remove him' hence the number of air strikes in Tripoli focussed on places where he might be. Those strikes included destroying a school for disabled children on April 29th. Their latest phrase of convenience to describe targets within civilian areas is 'command and control centres'. For someone who loves language as I do, the dishonest use of words and phrases to describe military force is upsetting. The term 'collateral damage' used to gloss over civilian casualties is a case in point. Drones now target 'command and control centres' in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and it is always reported that 'militants' were killed. The locals, on the other hand, report the destruction of a family compound with the family inside.

And of course, the house in which Osama bin Laden was assassinated was also a 'command and control centre'. I use the word 'assassinated' deliberately. Some people prefer 'executed', but that correctly applies to capital punishment taking place after a trial, the one thing he should have had, if only to demonstrate that the West supports the concept of justice. But judging by the jubilation that broke out following his death, one has to say we much prefer revenge to justice.



Jubilation outside the White House

The 'forty minute fire-fight' turned into just one man firing at the Navy SEALs. An early report had one of the attacking helicopters being downed by fire from the ground. – it had landed badly because of a technical fault. A photo was produced showing Obama and his team watching the killing as it happened – except that they weren't and the photo was staged. There was a 20 minute blackout on the cameras during the action inside the house in Pakistan.

Bin Laden was firing at his attackers while using a woman as a shield. The woman had been killed. No, he was unarmed and

So many lies were initially told about this event that it was hard to keep track, and the White House had to keep issuing corrections as contrary information leaked out.

unshielded. His wife was shot in the leg as she tried to rush at her attackers. Another woman (on the floor below bin Laden's) was killed in 'crossfire' and three other men were killed, very bloodily judging by the photos. How the children who were present will cope with their memories, I can't imagine. There was even



'Bin Laden' watches TV

disagreement about the livestock in the compound, from 150 hens to some rabbits kept by the children. Bin Laden's identity was 'confirmed by DNA', but that announcement was made before enough time had elapsed for DNA tests to have been completed. About the only thing that hasn't changed is the statement that he was 'buried at sea'.

They found lots of computers in this 'control and command centre', but it had no internet or phone connections, and some reports say no electricity either. Among all the files, CDs, memory sticks and videos said to have been recovered, was a video of 'bin Laden' watching television, designed to show what a sad old man he had become. But – oh dear! First, the man was filmed from behind so one could see very little of the face. He was wearing a woolly hat – something bin Laden has never been seen to do. The give-away was in the hand holding the remote control. Bin Laden was a very tall man (6' 4"), and he had large elegant hands with very long fingers. This hand is not big enough and it is the *right* hand. Bin Laden always wore a watch on his right wrist and there is no sign of a strap. But more importantly, he was left handed and would not be using the remote control with his right hand.

The US is now studying all the material brought back from Abbottabad. They have already claimed that it shows that bin Laden was still in control and organising attacks. But given the concoction of lies they have already produced over this disgraceful incident, we have no good reason to believe what they say. And Obama has said they will act like this again if they see fit.

We will not defeat terrorism by acting like terrorists. People like bin Laden should be publicly tried and punished, not illegally gunned down. And it is shaming that people should be cheering and gleeful over the death of someone, shaming that our Prime Minister should describe it as 'a massive step forward'. If we want to rid the world of war we must constantly sort the truth from the lies and be aware that our governments are capable of dirty propaganda. And each time they use phrases designed to hide the reality of war, we must constantly correct them.

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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

Chair's Report

While complex and bloodstained events have continued to unfold in the Arab world, Pakistan and elsewhere, I have seen some new and interesting light cast at home on the issues of war and peace.

In mid-March I went to hear Norwegian lawyer Fredrik Heffermehl speak about his book, *The Nobel Prize: what Nobel really wanted*. He claims Nobel's intention to award the prize to peace activists has been subverted by political and financial considerations. This would explain some of the anomalous recipients of the prize (comic songwriter Tom Lehrer claimed that satire died when it was awarded to Henry Kissinger); it also reminded me that when a war ends the 'peacemakers' we see are the leaders who sign the treaty, or perhaps a neutral politician who has brokered a deal. The influence of ordinary people talking, working, campaigning for peace, is mostly invisible.



Sue chairing the Warfare or Welfare meeting

On March 26th I joined the peace contingent of the big anti-cuts march in London, and had the pleasure of seeing Bruce Kent and Martin Birdseye, two of MAW's executive committee, unfurling a banner from Westminster Bridge as we marched underneath, urging the cutting of Trident, not jobs and services. Most of us know that it is a dangerous liability, not an asset, but getting rid of it is viewed by governments with superstitious fear.

On April 12th, the International Peace Bureau's Global Day of Action on Military Spending, more than 100 events took place in

35 countries (see p.4). In Friends' House, London, I had the honour of chairing a public meeting in which the case for spending less on the military and more on improving people's lives was expertly put by a variety of speakers (see my report on p.6)

The Peace History Conference on May 13th and 14th (see p.7) reminded all of us in MAW what a diverse band we are. United in the conviction that war should be abolished are convinced pacifists (starting from the principle that violence is wrong), and those like our Vice-President, Martin Bell, who opened the Conference. Martin has reported on many wars and can say with some authority that, as bringers of justice and peace, they simply don't work. Pragmatists and pacifists both have their strengths, and can work together.

The following day, May 15th, was International Conscientious Objectors' Day, and I was in Tavistock Square with songs to help honour those who have suffered for the right to refuse to kill. While British COs, of whom several were present, are now in their 70s, young people in other parts of the world are still facing persecution for resisting conscription. Special mention was made of Maikel Nabil Sanad, an Egyptian CO currently serving three years in prison.

In the Middle East and North Africa, those of us who hoped the 'Arab spring' would lead to the establishment of democracies have seen brute force brought to bear on those demanding change. Gaddafi hangs on in Libya, with NATO unable to tip the balance against him: its ideas on how to protect civilians seem to be limited to aiming missiles at the other side. In Bahrain violence has been visited not only on protesters but also, even more disgracefully, on doctors treating casualties. A few days after this news broke we were treated to pictures of our Prime Minister shaking hands with the Crown Prince of Bahrain, a brazen example of how, despite our leaders' claims to moral high ground, financial advantage is the only thing that counts in practice.

And of course, Osama bin Laden is dead – unless you subscribe to one of the many conspiracy theories. His body was hastily disposed of at sea. We were assured that DNA tests had confirmed his identity, but with no detail of how that was done. Instead, bizarrely, we were shown a film of the USA's leaders watching a film of him being shot. People came out into the streets and cheered the summary execution of an unarmed man. As my son put it in an email, "I thought we were supposed to put criminals on trial?" The achievement of a culture of peace has some way to go yet.

And please note – in November, I intend to step down as chair of MAW after two years. I have a full-time job and feel the role needs more than I can give it at present, though I'd like to remain on the executive. So I invite you to think who your next chairperson should be. We are preparing a questionnaire for our members (see front page) about ways to become more involved in working to abolish war. Serving as Chair could be one such way.

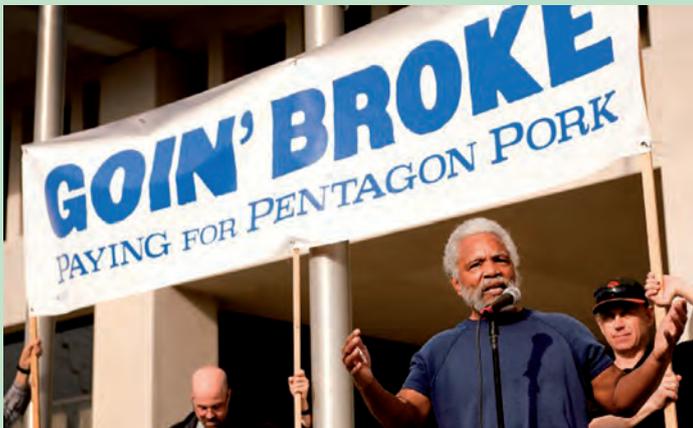
Sue Gilmurray

Defence and Revolving Doors

Many ministers and civil servants move to cushy jobs when they leave Whitehall. Ex-defence secretary Geoff Hoon, having ensured Augusta Westland earned millions, is now working for them. His permanent secretary Sir Kevin Tebbit is now chairman of defence supplier Finmeccanica. Also part of Finmeccanica is ex-defence equipment officer David Gould. Ex-forces moves include Sir Jonathon Band (Lockheed-Martin), Sir Richard Dannatt (Ricardo) and Sir Glenn Torpy (BAE Systems). The cheekiest move is that of Amyas Morse, former MoD commercial director. According to *Private Eye*, Morse approved at least 60 investment decisions (including the new aircraft carriers), helping to create the MoD budget shortfall of £36 billion, highly criticised by the Public Accounts Committee in February. He is now head of the National Audit Office.

A Truly Global Day of Action

More than ever, large numbers of people are concerned about how to support sustainable development efforts. The Millennium Development Goals were agreed in 2000 by world governments as targets for the reduction of poverty. But the targets are not being achieved at a time when the world is spending a vast amount of money on the military.



In Nebraska USA

On 12 April, the International Peace Bureau together with the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington organised the first ever Global Day of Action on Military Spending (GDAMS). The date was chosen to coincide with the annual release of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's figures on global military spending. They revealed a record high of over \$1.6 trillion and increase of 1.3% in real terms over 2009 and of 50% since 2001. The aim of GDAMS is to promote global awareness on military spending while the Millennium Development Goals are not being met. These are calculated to be just 20% of military spending. The day was a great success and looks certain to become a major feature in the annual campaign calendar. It went really worldwide with events organised by some 100 organisations in 35 countries. Actions included protests in front of the White House in Washington, the Treasury in London, the Ministry of Defence in Bangkok and the Department of Defence in Canberra. There were actions at the UN in New York and Geneva, a sit-in to stop the new US military base in Okinawa and peace rallies, workshops and conferences and many more grassroots and policy actions around the world. MAW, which is a member of IPB, held the Welfare or Warfare meeting (see p.4). On the occasion of GDAMS, Sergio Duarte, UN High Representative on Disarmament called on governments "to consider the full possibilities of creating security through non-military means: decent health care and a good education for all, providing confidence in one's future. GDAMS should serve as a catalyst for shifting global and national priorities from massive military spending to creating human security and safety for all." From letters to members of Parliaments, to vigils, artistic performances and events at key international locations, this first



GDAMS in India



Outside the Treasury, London

GDAMS will have made a significant contribution to building an international network around the key issue of disarmament for development. It has hopefully encouraged many people around the world to get involved in anti-war campaigning.

Tony Kempster

GDAMS is part of IPB major project, Disarmament for Development, launched in 2005 to encourage governments and other agencies to review their funding priorities and shift resources from the military to development. It also aims to address the various ways in which militarism impedes sustainable development. See the IPB publications *Warfare or welfare?*, *Disarmament for development in the 21st century* and *Whose priorities?* To learn more, visit the IPB website, www.demilitarise.org.



Parisians demonstrate

And in Wales...

To coincide with GDAMS a letter was sent to each Welsh member of the Westminster Parliament demanding an end to the waste of military spending and investment in Wales. Cynefin y Werin – the all-Wales activist Network called on the Westminster and Cardiff governments to disengage their vision for Wales from the fortunes of global arms companies and the British military, and think about genuinely valuable alternatives for our country and the world. In Wales, concern is being expressed that the devolution dividend – in which Wales earned a distinctive identity committed to social justice and the health of the environment, to its historical values of community, collectivism and social democracy – is being lost. While the St Athan Defence College project has failed, taxpayers' money continues to be spent on promoting 'defence' and offence investment in Wales.

At a recent conference campaigners learned of the waste of money spent on promoting St Athan and other projects such as at the 'UAV Centre of Excellence' Aberporth. Over £14 million of Welsh taxpayers' money has been spent to promote the development of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles at Aberporth, and elsewhere for remote surveillance and killing.

Speaking for Cynefin y Werin Jill Gough said "Every pound of public money spent on the military is a pound that could have been spent on genuinely sustainable jobs. No money is being invested in addressing the long-term resolution of the root causes of insecurity and conflict."

Climate Change and Conflict

As Editor I tend to focus on providing information about the damage that war causes, and some of it touches on another of my passions – the environment. I am truly concerned about the major threat of climate change, the conflict it will cause, and the absolute lack of any urgency, not just among our leaders, but also environmental, aid, global justice *and* peace organisations, in taking real concerted action.



A glimpse of the future

In 2008 I went to the first in a series of workshops about climate change and conflict, organised by Dr Mark Levene (Mark gave our 2009 Remembrance Day lecture on this subject).

One of the speakers was David Wasdell (see www.apollo-gaia.org), one of the top climate scientists specialising in feedback systems. These systems, once they reach a 'tipping point' greatly speed the warming process. For instance, climate change is already starting to melt the permafrost. This releases methane, more dangerous than carbon emissions when it comes to global warming. The more the permafrost melts, the more methane it releases, and the faster the warming occurs.

David, working with other scientists on this, produced figures that pointed to a 6°C temperature rise by the end of this century, yet world leaders are talking about limiting the rise to 2° by 2050, refusing to face the fact that we have already lost that argument.

On April 1st (appropriately, perhaps) there was a debate at the University College of London about whether climate change would mean the end of human history. Mark Levene took part, and in his presentation gave David Wasdell's latest figures – now carefully revised and taking more facts into account. We could now reach 7.8°C by 2100. Truly terrifying. And a week later I heard a report on the BBC World Service that scientists monitoring the melting of Arctic ice in the summer had discovered another *unforeseen* feedback system.

That means that we could see major climate change with accompanying wars well before 2050. Governments won't act because they don't want to see riots on the streets tomorrow. The corporations won't act because they want to make money while they can. It is imperative that we somehow persuade all of the NGO's to speak with one voice, *our* voice, in the hope we can produce a powerful enough voice against the 'business as usual' lobby. Because, as Brian Heale explains:

Complacency Is Not An Option

On 1st April a debate was held at UCL Senate House, London to 'explore the degree to which the global environmental catastrophe is amenable to traditional historical analysis'. It was chaired by Labour peer Fred Ponsonby, with two historians setting the scene – Dr. Mark Levene of Southampton University (familiar to some at MAW) and Professor Penelope Corfield, Emeritus Professor of History at Royal Holloway.

While the debate focused much on history as an academic discipline, the implications spread much wider. It was informative that many of the 'audience' introduced their comments with "I'm not an historian but..."

Dr. Levene started by painting his usual grim scenario, stating that a twilight zone has existed since the atomic bombs of 1945, and

now with climate change, we might be on the edge of history. He said that while there have always been prophecies of 'the ending of the world', climate change might prove to be 'the spanner in the works'



Brian Heale outside Senate House

that actually destroys civilisation. Scientists say a 2 degree average increase in atmospheric temperature is dangerous – what will happen if it is 3-4 degrees, with stockpiles of nuclear weapons in existence and diminishing resources of water, oil, food?

He envisaged complete breakdown and the end of 'progress'. He thought there would be a 'ratcheting up' by individual states, becoming more and more violent with the weakest, poorest states first in the firing line. More optimistically, he suggested that danger might also bring hope.

Prof. Corfield deplored the lack of action to address climate change. She recognised the dangers, but that instead of being the *end* of history, climate change might *galvanise* history. Presumably she thought this might be a tool to inspire action to avoid catastrophe – she also thought galvanisation could bring bigger visions for the history discipline – a spur rather than a spanner in the works.

She pointed out that humans *solve* problems as well as cause them, but that the problem-solving tends to be short-term. Here, Lesley Docksey highlighted a missed opportunity in the 1960s, when her father led a BP project to turn oil into protein for use as animal feed rather than be burned away by motor transport. This led into an extended debate about the possibility of technological fixes, such as geo-engineering, to avert the worst consequences of climate change. There were different opinions from the debaters, but plangent comments were made that technological fixes would be an unacceptable legacy to leave future generations.

What is the solution? Dr Levene thought there may not be one, while Prof Corfield thought it easier to call for a new paradigm of human history than to implement one, though she was optimistic about the future. Perhaps the most telling remark made by one debater was that most people go about their daily lives with climate change barely a consideration. They assume that as life is now, it will always be.

This is easily observed in every day life. People are concerned about jobs, children, health, cars, holidays; climate change is just one thing among myriad others.

It is easy to call this complacency. But is it? Energising vast numbers of people towards environmental protection *as top priority* is asking to move mountains, while governments and commercial organisations have interests to defend.

No definite conclusion was reached as to the opening question whether the current catastrophe is amenable to traditional historical analysis. Surely it is not. What exists now is unprecedented in human history. Rapid global climate change with 7 billion people, many in extreme poverty, has never been experienced before. Yet huge sums are spent on weaponry, and wars are fought over oil.

A new history is required – starting now. But who will start it? I sometimes think it might start with adventurous politicians such as Evo Morales. Such rarities need backing on a grand scale.

Brian Heale

Warfare or Welfare

April 12th was the Global Day of Action on Military Spending, part of the International Peace Bureau's Disarmament for Development campaign. I had the honour of chairing a public meeting organised by MAW at Friends' House in London, where five speakers focussed on the imbalance between the money spent on weapons and on human welfare and social justice.

John Hilary of War on Want reminded us that the connection between lavish military spending and neglect of development needs had been made sixty years ago, when the publisher Victor Gollancz helped to found his organisation. He gave the causes of the continuing injustice as first: the jostling for control of the major political powers; second, the investment in arms by financial institutions, including Barclays and RBS; and third, the growth of private military companies, thriving on the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, and often appalling the actual military by their lawlessness.



Husna Ahmad speaking at the Warfare or Welfare meeting

Husna Ahmad of Faith Re-Gen stressed that her religion, Islam, was her inspiration, as it demanded action for mercy, justice, peace and relief from oppression. She challenged David Cameron to say what the ethics of arms sales were, when the 5 permanent members of the UN Security Council accounted for 80% of the world's arms sales, and her organisation, which promoted peace, inter-faith harmony and social justice was threatened with cuts. Our values should take priority over our financial interests, especially as we could see that more weapons did not make for more peace and security.

Stuart Parkinson of Scientists for Global Responsibility gave a presentation of significant facts and figures, firmly countering some of the prevalent myths about the necessity of huge military spending, its importance to the economy and employment. He demonstrated the potential for spending on peacekeeping, sustainable security and 'green' industries to generate more jobs and profit, as well as making the world a safer place. He saw signs that military industries themselves were starting to move towards diversifying their activities.

Kate Hudson, chair of CND, pointed out that even as cuts in spending were damaging employment and education, enormous sums could be found in order to bomb Libya. As for Britain's nuclear weapons, Trident was costing £2.2 billion a year now, and would cost £76 billion to replace. She too attacked the myth that huge numbers of jobs depended on the nuclear deterrent, and said that public awareness of these issues was shifting opinion CND's way.

Finally Vijay Mehta, of Uniting for Peace, reminded us that 50 countries were marking this day. There was a need to tackle the hypocrisy that prevailed in the arms trade. Britain could proclaim its commitment to arms sales, sell to repressive regimes, including Libya and others presently engaged in violently suppressing dissent, and then claim humanitarian justification for bombarding such a country. We did not need more weapons to counter increased threats: world powers were invoking terrorist threats to justify

military spending, but such threats would subside if the arms spending were scaled down.

There was a variety of comment and questions from the floor, and we were all stimulated to take a fresh look at these vital issues.

Sue Gilmurray

You can find links to presentations by John Hilary, Dr Ahmad, Stuart Parkinson and Vijay Mehta on the MAW website, under 'News'.

UKplc unlimited

You couldn't make it up. Our Prime Minister tours the Middle East with a slew of arms manufacturers in tow as one dictator after another falls or teeters on the brink around him. And guess what – those dodgy regimes are attacking demonstrators with goodies they bought from Britain, the result of earlier arms deals.

It's time we had a good long look at ourselves. We have excellent guidelines which say we do not sell arms to countries involved in wars, to areas of high tension, to those with bad human rights records or those likely to use the arms to oppress their own people. Except that we do. Egypt, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Algeria, Israel. You name an oppressive regime or a serial human rights abuser and in many cases UK Trade and Investment, the old DTI, will overrule the guidelines to land an arms deal.

And only last November when Colonel Gaddafi was our new best friend more than half the exhibitors at an arms fair in Libya – LibDex – were UK companies.

This phenomenon is always justified on the grounds that it's good for the economy, stupid. But actually this is not even true.

Manufacturing for the export of armaments accounts for only 0.2 per cent of UK jobs and only 1.5 per cent of total exports. And the British taxpayer subsidises this trade to the tune of £500,000,000 a year (figures from Campaign Against Arms Trade).

Many analysts – notably economics guru Sir Samuel Brittan in *Subsidising a Deadly Trade* (July 2001) – have produced the figures

Regional tensions combined with enduring high oil prices result in robust budgets and increasing opportunities.

BAE Systems annual report



Cameron and his arms team in Tahrir Square

proving that the arms trade is a net loss to UK plc. Or, in the words of Financial Times international economy editor Alan Beattie: "You can have as many arms export jobs as you are prepared to waste public money subsidising." (FT 10 Aug 2010)

When the coalition came to power Peter Luff, defence equipment minister said: "There will be a very, very, very heavy ministerial commitment to (arms sales). There is a sense that in the past we were rather embarrassed about exporting defence products. There is no such embarrassment in this government."

I agree – embarrassment is not appropriate. As we watch the brave demonstrators on Arab Street we shouldn't be embarrassed to see them shot down, gassed and crushed with British kit. We should be ashamed, very ashamed.

Sharen Green (Sharen serves on CAAT's steering committee)

Pioneers and prophets – peace history conference 2011

There was nothing ominous about Friday 13th May this year. It marked the start of the 5th successful peace history conference. At all of them we have been the welcome guests of the Imperial War Museum London.

About 80 people came each day – mostly of a mature generation – some pacifists and some not, but all interested in the abolition of war. Despite much effort we have not yet found the formula which will bring in more young people to hear about the forgotten prophets of peace. We did, though, have three



Valerie Flessati

Myra Poole studying the Bradford Peace Museum's Women Peacemakers exhibition

impressive pupils from Highgate Woods School who faced two conscientious objectors from the Second World War and asked some deep questions about CO motivation.

IWM historian Terry Charman, engaging as usual, cast new light on the 1930s

and on Beverly Nichols in particular. Peter Van Den Dungen described the London Peace Society and some of the imaginative and tireless work of its leading members. Colin Archer, Secretary General of the IPB, gave a thought-provoking reflection on the controversial history of the Olympics, sometimes used as an arena for conflict as much as an opportunity for peace.

Nick Wilding's film, *John Bright and the Angel of Death*, was much appreciated, as was the showing of *Carry Greenham Home*. (This was a shocking reminder of how violent the police were when they made arrests.) The 30th anniversary of the women's peace camp at Greenham was also represented by two of the original banners, now in the care of the Peace Museum, Bradford, whose exhibition on Women Peacemakers was also on display. An exhibition of emblematic covers of *Peace News* marked the paper's 75th birthday.

The stories of Jean Donovan, Aung San Suu Kyi, and Muriel Lester were the subject matter of *Stone Tales*, a play written and produced by Alexandra Carey. Lily Howkins and Kanika Clayton brought them to life in a dialogue that succinctly managed to



Valerie Flessati

*The Stone Tales team (l. to r.)
Alexandra Carey, Lily Howkins
and Kanika Clayton*

convey something of the background and passion that drove each of those women to pour their life and energy into work for human rights and peace. As for the future peace history conferences, how about a similar one or two-day event in another part of the country, in Scotland or Wales? There are innumerable interesting topics to be explored and the organisers welcome the suggestions which come in from participants and readers of *Abolish War*.

Valerie Flessati

The Battle For Picasso's Mind

Professor Lynda Morris from Norwich University College of the Arts was one of the curators of the recent exhibition *Picasso: peace and freedom* at the Tate Gallery, Liverpool. Using slides and examples of

Picasso's politically-committed works, Prof. Morris said she would have preferred the exhibition to be called 'The battle for Picasso's mind'.

A member of the Communist party and therefore not



Valerie Flessati

Hilary Evans and the Peace News display

welcome in the United States, Picasso also valued the freedom associated with western democracies. He was invited to visit the Soviet Union but did not go; he was offered the French Legion d'Honneur but declined it.

The condemnation of the carnage of the Spanish Civil War in *Guernica* and his graceful drawings of doves are known to most, but Prof. Morris showed other paintings and drawings whose symbolism denounced the Korean War, the brutality of Franco's regime in Spain, and France's war in Algeria; and his sympathetic portraits of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, executed for spying in the 1950s. She enumerated peace congresses which he attended, one in Sheffield, his only visit to Britain, and showed posters and programmes which he illustrated in the cause of reconciliation and world peace.

The Tate exhibition divided opinion among critics, with many saying that it exaggerated Picasso's political commitment. Here we were shown how that commitment was indeed substantial though, as befits an artist of great originality, far from simple.

Sue Gilmurray

As normally happens at our Peace History Conference, participants met informally over a glass of wine with some entertainment.

This year we showed the film *Anatomy of a song*, made during the production of MAW's CD *Call back the fire*. It explains the thinking behind Sue Gilmurray's song *A vulnerable man* about Norman Kember and how it was created in the music studio. The film, by Philip Bridge, won a 5 star award and the AKM Music Prize in the 2011 Film and Video Institute's International Amateur Film Competition.

This was followed by two poets: Shamim Azad who, with drummer, performed poems from Bangladesh about refugees and the philosophy of life; and Catherine Brogan from Northern Ireland who performed some challenging poems about 'The Troubles' and other aspects of NI politics. Both were brilliant.

Tony Kempster

What War Does

Wherever we take war, we damage the young, wounding both their bodies and minds. In March the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers came out with a damning report on those under 18 in our own armed forces. The report, *Catch 16-22*, is a must-read for anti-war campaigners. You can find a link to it on our website in the Reports section.



Karim Kadim

Child victims of the war in Iraq playing 'one-legged' football

Blood and Dust – medical evacuation teams in the Afghan War

In February, Al Jazeera screened a documentary on the American Army's helicopter ambulance service in Southern Afghanistan. It is manned by "medevac" teams of paramedics who rescue casualties from conflict zones, often under fire themselves. The film was made by Vaughan Smith, the photo-journalist founder of the Frontline Club.

He worked with Al Jazeera as he had been unable to find a British broadcaster willing to show 'the stronger images'. Smith says he has



Medevac team treating a wounded soldier in flight

'huge respect for the way Al Jazeera... engages the world while so many others appear to retreat from it.' He chose the subject as, after making a number of films in Afghanistan while embedded with the military, he felt he had not been reporting the suffering of war, just its machinery.

The film did show the suffering of the casualties – young American marines, an elderly Afghan man, an Afghan child and others – but the main focus is on the work of the paramedics, 'soldiers who go to war to save lives and are very good at it'. Their specific task, once they have found casualties and carried them to the helicopter, is to stop their bleeding and keep them breathing long enough to get to hospital. The chance of survival is then almost 100%.

The success of the medevac teams is important to the conduct of the war in two respects. One of the team said that unless troops knew that if they were injured they would be rescued from wherever they were, night or day, they would not be willing to run the risks required of them. Nor would their families and public opinion back home continue to tolerate the war.

In the film, Smith comments that medevac thus makes the war 'more sustainable'. And he asks a young paramedic whether, given that medevac is in effect 'a force multiplier' – ensuring that more troops will get back into battle – their helicopters are a legitimate target for the Taliban. Are the Geneva Conventions relevant to their work out of date? The paramedic said no, but what can you do?

In practice, the teams comply with the Geneva Conventions in offering care to all who need it, including the enemy, without distinction. Their helicopters are marked with a large red cross on a white background. But because they *are* shot at, they travel in convoy with "chase helicopters" armed with machine guns for covering fire.

Sergeant Tyrone Jordan, leader of the featured team, loves his job although it cost him his nine-year marriage. The film concludes with his reflections: "I love human life.... whether you're an enemy or not, life is life. You can't give life back."

The medevac teams save many lives, day by day. But those of us who feel uneasy at war being made 'more sustainable' in this way will also be aware of the sadly diminished quality of some of those saved lives. Does everyone who returns home severely disfigured and with massive disabilities feel they have a life worth living? Does everyone called upon to care for them feel the same?

Surely it would be better to end the fighting, bring the troops home, and have the paramedics exercise their compassion and skill on victims of non-military medical emergencies.

Alison Williams

Don't Give Up!

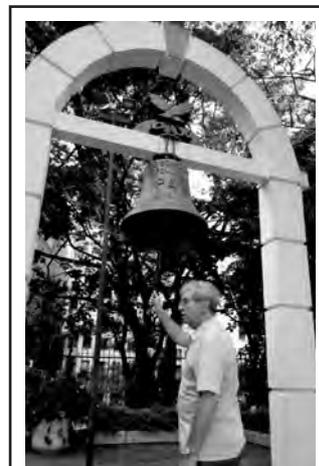
Driving through Donegal years ago, I noticed Mount Errigal not too far away on the map. Nothing told me that it was 2,500 feet high, so I thought I'd have a go on a misty day. Up I went. No great view, but occasional glimpses of sky when the clouds parted. Onwards I went, seemingly forever, but never the top in sight. Finally I got there, still covered in mist. Then came the miracle. The mist lifted and I could see out for miles over the Atlantic, into Scotland and back over Ireland.

When people say you are wasting your time, war is ever with us, I remind myself of Errigal. The lesson is never to give up hope. On issues of war and peace we have come a long way. A hundred years ago the creation of a permanent international court of justice was still a utopian dream. So also, rather later, the International Criminal Court.

There have been many other landmarks. Conscientious objectors, once criminal, now have UN recognition. The UN charter itself, and the Declaration of Human Rights, did not come out of the blue. Nor did the European Union. All resulted from hard work by people who rarely saw their achievements. Today the Campaign Against the Arms Trade is waking up many to the moral weakness of investing in firms whose profits come from selling instruments of war and oppression. We are told that war is inevitable. That is historical nonsense. There are many places where wars have become *de facto* impossible. Germany and France, Norway and Sweden, even Scotland and England, will never fight each other again. We have changed the politics, economics and the culture.

Said that great economist Barbara Ward in 1972: "*all the procedures proposed for disarmament - elimination of private control over arms, subsidisation of police forces, courts of law, mediation, arbitration, and all others methods of settling disputes peacefully - are in fact practised every day within domestic society. To say that we are not capable of this is simply nonsense. Most of the time this is actually what we do. The trouble is that we do not connect this perfectly normal method of human behaviour with any unit larger than the nation state.*"

We continue to have wars and deploy weapons of indescribable barbarism. Why? There is a massive financial and media lobby supporting the old culture of militarism. Global military expenditure has reached over one and a half trillion dollars a year. Then there is the powerful factor of status, which counts so much in the nuclear weapon world. Our politicians all say that their ultimate aim is the abolition of all nuclear weapons. Yet among the major nuclear powers only China is willing to start negotiations on the basis of an existing draft treaty.



And here is someone who doesn't give up!
On a trip to Brazil earlier this year MAW committee member David Partridge made sure he rang the Peace Bell in San Paolo.

The tide of international public opinion is against nuclear weapons. That is why what happens in Britain is so important. We are suffering major economic cuts yet our country is planning, and has already started to build at massive cost, yet another generation of nuclear weapons. We know that war brings only the illusion of security. We all need to say NO. Especially we need the development agencies to expose the links between military expenditure and world poverty in a priority campaign.

We are not at the top of Errigal yet, but I think we have passed the half way point. Let's take a deep breath and get on with the rest of the journey.

Bruce Kent

Images of War



1

All war creates refugees – millions of ruined lives when some think they can get what they want by force. People flee from the fighting because their homes and livelihoods have been destroyed, because their land has been poisoned, because they will be killed if they stay. These people are invisible when arms deals are made. Our governments wring their hands over the plight of refugees in Africa or South East Asia, but forget how many Britain has helped to create.



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1. Cambodian refugees fleeing from the Khmer Rouge. Steve McCurry
2. Iraqi refugees in Syria. UNICEF/ /Shehzad Noorani
3. Bosnian refugees from Srebrenica 1995. Reuters
4. Iraq refugees in Jordan. Ami Vitale / Getty
5. Afghan refugees in Qambar Square camp, Kabul. CNN
6. Rwanda refugees in Uganda
7. Congo refugees. Independent/Getty
8. Refugees from Libya at sea

The UN International Day of Peace, 21 September

How can MAW members best mark this day? Here are some ideas from Kingston Peace Council/CND.

First of all, we treat the day as a celebration. Because the message is simple and particularly accessible to children and young people, we aim our activities at that age group.

Picnic in the park (for a weekend Peace Day): easy to organise, with co-operative parachute games and poetry. Chat to passers-by and encourage them to join in the celebration. Invite local youth groups/scouts/woodcraft folk to participate.

Thursday late night shopping: when Peace Day fell on a Thursday, we celebrated in the evening in the centre of Kingston with balloons, rainbow peace flags, a UN flag and leaflets. Easy to organise and effective.



Hilary Evans

Participants at the 2007 Study Day

Study day on Peace & Citizenship in schools: an ambitious event in 2007 when we were allowed the (free) use of the Russell Suite in Pembroke Lodge, Richmond Park, the childhood home of Bertrand Russell. The day brought together citizenship co-ordinators, teacher trainers, two local mayors, two local MPs, and members of interested organisations such as UNA, MAW and CEWC with the purpose of exploring ways of interesting young people in peace issues.

The above three events fed into what has become for us a successful pattern, now into its fourth year, with two main strands:

- i. **a stall in the town centre particularly designed to attract children**, on the Saturday nearest to 21 September with a 'peace tree', a branch, as twiggy as possible, about 1.5 metres high secured in a Christmas tree stand, together with a supply of **cut-out doves** on thin card or thick paper, preferably in a variety of colours. Children (and adults) enjoy writing a peace message or drawing a picture on a dove and hanging it on the tree. Other



Gill Hurle

The 'peace tree' in action

activities include origami doves, wordsearches and paper linked dolls to be coloured.

- ii. **Contact with local schools.** Every Spring a letter goes to all schools in Kingston and Richmond Boroughs to suggest that they mark the Day of Peace in some way. We offer posters, materials and ideas for activities and also offer to lead assemblies if this would be helpful. An increasing number of schools are celebrating in some way and each year three of us have, between us, conducted assemblies in about six schools, more primary than secondary.

Hilary Evans, MAW Committee Secretary

To find out more, email Hilary on eevans298@btinternet.com

And here are some other ideas:

Candlelit vigil around the village pond: an annual evening Peace Day event lasting an hour in Barnes, SW London. Scouts, their parents and others attend and a poem or other suitable piece is read out.

Youth leaders and the local council in **Rochdale** have established an 'official' town celebration with a **Peace Day parade** through the streets (see www.peaceparade.org.uk)

This year on 21 September the **Hereford Peace Council** are holding a showing of the film *Just War*, by Joe Jenkins (Peace Tax 7 campaigner), followed by a discussion – Is there such a thing as a just war? 7:30 pm in the Railway Club, Hereford.

And of course Bruce Kent and MAW run the annual **Peace Day mystery walk** for children along the London Peace Trail, an event which could and *should* be replicated in many towns and cities.

Another good film to show is *Peace One Day*. As Hereford Peace Council point out, the film is the story of one man's struggle to get the UN to ratify an annual day of ceasefire throughout the world. **Ceasefire** is the operative word. Amazingly, this was actually achieved once in Afghanistan, to allow the immunisation of thousands of children in the conflict areas. They point out that the idea of a ceasefire in all conflict is not being fully sought as originally hoped. Should we not be asking our government to implement it for British troops? What do you think? Can we all start to lobby for a real day of peace? Contact the editor with your thoughts and ideas, and explore www.peaceday.org for more.

On May 15th, at the International Conscientious Objectors' Day event in Birmingham, 21 people came together to listen to the Clarion Singers sing five peace songs including the Universal Soldier and a number of readings and poems. In the lovely setting of the Peace Garden near the city centre the names of COs from every part of the world were read out as we placed a single flower at the gates for each CO. An especially moving contribution was that of a lady who placed a bunch of white tulips at the gates to commemorate her father, a CO from WW2.

Janet King



Marking the International CO's Day in Birmingham

Events Diary - from Network for Peace

15-17 July SWANWICK. 33rd Annual Justice & Peace Conference. Info: NJPN, 39 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1BX. 020 7901 4864. www.justice-and-peace.org.uk

28 July-1 August Nr SHREWSBURY. Peace News Summer Camp at the Crabapple community near Shrewsbury. Info: <http://peacenewscamp.info/>

6 August WORLDWIDE. Hiroshima Day.

9 August WORLDWIDE. Nagasaki Day.

13-16 September LONDON. Defence & Security Equipment International (DSEi) Arms Fair. Info: www.caat.org.uk

21 September WORLDWIDE. International Day of Peace.

BROMLEY. Bromley Peace Council Peace One Day at Community House, South St, Bromley. Info annccarrett@yahoo.com

HEREFORD. 7.30 pm, Railway Club, Hereford. The film "Just War", by Joe Jenkins (Peace Tax 7 campaigner), followed by a discussion – Is there such a thing as a just war?

LONDON. Uniting for Peace. Speaker: Rt Hon. Hilary Benn MP. Venue tba. Info: vijay@vmpeace.org 07776 231 018.

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

24 October WORLDWIDE. United Nations Day.

29 October LONDON. Campaign Against Arms Trade National Gathering. Info: www.caat.org.uk

A Failure of Intelligence

In May the Chilcot Inquiry published a letter they had received from Major-General Michael Laurie; this was after Alistair Campbell had given evidence about that infamous dossier in which Tony Blair expressed his belief that intelligence showed that Iraq was continuing to produce WMD (remember the 45 minutes claim?). Campbell was adamant that the dossier did not 'in any sense misrepresent the situation', and was not written to make the case for war. The Major-General, closely involved in the process of putting the dossier together, disagrees. They were *instructed* to make the case for war. Lack of intelligence was turned into certainty.

Also in May while reporting to the Commons Defence Committee, British Army chiefs said there had been a 'failure of intelligence' when British troops replaced US troops in Helmand province in 2006. Remember John Reid, Defence Secretary at that time, optimistically and as it turned out, very stupidly, saying that he hoped 'not a shot would be fired in anger'?

The two-year mission was more than angry. There was huge and very violent resistance from the insurgents, already wound up by US military tactics (for an in-depth look at the fighting in Helmand during 2006, read *One Million Bullets* by James Fergusson, reviewed in issue 16 of *Abolish War*). Far from not a shot being fired in anger, to date 7 million rounds have been fired, more than 325 British soldiers have been killed or died of wounds, and approaching another 1700 have been wounded in action.

The Panther's Claw operation in 2009 was designed to 'secure' the Lashkar Gah area prior to the Afghan Presidential elections. But voter

turnout was so low that 10 soldiers died for the sake of only 150 votes cast out of a potential 80,000 in what turned out to be an election riddled with fraud. And still the fighting goes on. How intelligent is that?

The long running 'Troubles' in Northern Ireland were finally solved through dialogue. But politicians don't want to be seen talking to terrorists. Nor do they want to be seen as backing down. But in the end the soldiers *had* to be replaced with dialogue. The same should be happening in Afghanistan, as Fergusson makes clear in his book *Taliban*.

The real failure of political intelligence is thinking that military action solves problems. All too often it is the first, not the last, choice of leaders who want to strut the world stage when they have had no experience of war or the damage it causes to the earth, to all those involved through death and injury, to the refugees it creates and to the reputations of those who instigate, propagate and wage war.

Chief of Staff General Sir David Richards gave the soldiers' view: "War is a bummer. Politics and the enemy have a vote", implying of course that the military doesn't. But it does. And military chiefs have a duty not just to the country but to those they command. They should start saying 'No' to the politicians instead of going to war on intelligence that is unchecked, dodgy or even totally lacking.

Lesley Docksey

James Fergusson's book, *Taliban*, is reviewed on p.12
For an insight into how American intelligence fails, see *The Takhar attack: Targeted killings and the parallel worlds of US intelligence and Afghanistan*, a report by Kate Clark of the Afghanistan Analysts Network

Concord Media

If you're looking for a film or two on peace to show at your meetings, or to base a debate on, you couldn't do better than to explore Concorde Media. It is the leading distributor of programmes for social work, race relations and arts worlds, and you can find many films on war and peace in the International section.

Concord Media, 22 Hines Rd, Ipswich, IP3 9BG, 01473 726012. email: sales@concordmedia.org.uk www.concordmedia.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

Nobel Nobbled – The Nobel Peace Prize – what Nobel really wanted

At the invitation of MAW, Fredrik Heffermehl, Norwegian lawyer, author and International Peace Bureau activist, visited London in March. His book *'The Nobel Peace Prize – what Nobel really wanted'* was published late last year by Praeger.

The theme is simple. The Nobel Peace Prize committee has, over many years, ignored the actual terms of Nobel's will and redefined 'peace' to suit their own political views. As a result the prize has gone to a few quite unworthy candidates and to a number of people active in good causes but not those to which Nobel wished to leave his money. His 'Champions of Peace' were those who worked to abolish standing armies, to reduce the level of armaments and promoted peace congresses.

During Fredrik's London visit he met Jeremy Corbyn MP (parliamentarians can nominate), and the editor of History Today who asked for an article about Nobel's will. He also spoke at a Housmans book launch and met and briefed a respected British journalist. The book is well worth reading. The Nobel Committee need to be challenged and MAW activists can and should do this.

I have, as a result of this visit, a few copies at a reduced price of £10. If you want one please send a cheque for £12 (to include postage) made out to me at 11 Venetia Road London N4 1EJ.

Bruce Kent

Our Way to Fight: Peace-work under siege in Israel-Palestine

Michael Riordon, Pluto Press, 2011

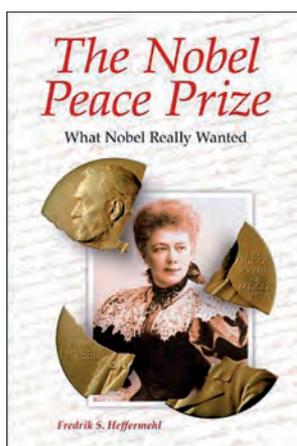
TWO Israeli women burst into tears at a checkpoint. An Arab doctor has just jumped out of an ambulance to yell his thanks to them. His patient, a labouring mother, had been held up for hours and the women had refused to leave until the vehicle was allowed through.

It is beautifully written little vignettes like this which overcome your 'Palestine fatigue' so that you want to read yet another book about activists on the ground.

It was Daphne Banai's first time with Checkpoint (Machsom) Watch. She said: "We were surrounded by Palestinians and every one of them I saw as a terrorist who was going to blow himself up or stab me. Most people in Israel are driven by this kind of fear, we're brainwashed with it." So the first-time activist is not just contending with the hostility of her own society, she's also scared of those she has come to stand with in solidarity. Riordon has a sharp eye for detail and an easy journalistic style. I love the

Palestinian farmer who corrects the writer when he calls an olive tree old because, at three or four centuries of age, it is only a young tree. There is no shying away from the occupation and some of the nonsense put forward to justify it, but to end on a more optimistic note, New Profile, the NGO which helps young refusers, is now getting 60 enquiries a month as compared to only four when they set up seven years ago. It's a long haul but this book will help many a campaigner to keep going and is likely to recruit some more.

Sharen Green



ABOLISH WAR

Newsletter No. 20

Summer 2011

Taliban: the true story of the world's most feared guerrilla fighters

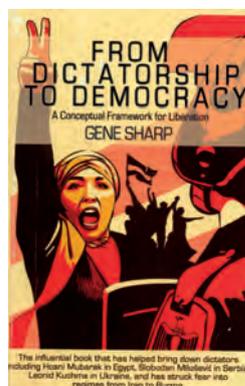
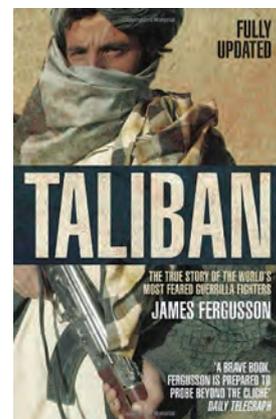
James Fergusson, Corgi, 2010

A much needed book from someone who is not prepared to simply repeat the unthinking rhetoric about the Taliban. He has met and interviewed many past and current members of the Taliban and he counters the West's assumptions with facts. For instance, he makes the point that while we condemned them for their misogynistic views on women, we would not recognise that Afghan society as a whole has *always* been that way.

He sets out the real history behind the formation of the Taliban, looks at some of their surprising successes while they were in government and their aims for the future. He looks at the endemic corruption that the Taliban had started to deal with. He revisits Abdullah, the Taliban leader he met when writing his previous book, now in effect the district's chief administrator. As such Abdullah took the woman's side against a judge who was refusing the divorce she sought from an abusive husband. Knowing that a divorced woman would likely face a life of destitution, '...The deciding factor for him was that he knew there was a suitor waiting in the wings...' Does this sound like the religious bigots we have been led to expect?

One thing Fergusson is adamant about – Afghanistan belongs to the Afghans, among them the Taliban. While the West remains there they will fight us, but they have no interest in doing any more than freeing their country from invaders. It is more than time that we sat down and talked with them. And then got out.

Lesley Docksey



From Dictatorship to Democracy A Conceptual Framework for Liberation

Gene Sharp, Housmans Bookshop
Originally published (for Burmese dissidents) in 1993, *From Dictatorship to Democracy* has since translated into at least 28 other languages, and has now been reprinted in English by Housmans Peace Bookshop. Sharp's analysis – and this short book in particular – has reportedly played a significant inspirational role in a whole series of nonviolent uprisings, from Serbia to Egypt. Nonetheless, his leaden prose, the

extremely general nature of much of the analysis and the lack of fleshed-out historical examples make this heavy reading. However, his core messages are extremely simple: nonviolent action can be used to overthrow dictatorships; hard work, discipline and sacrifice are needed to achieve this; having a strategy is essential. In the preface, Michael Randle – himself one of the UK's most experienced practitioners of nonviolent action – notes that "the insights in this study are pertinent to campaigns against unjust and irresponsible policies in our own societies", not just dictatorships. Quite so. How many activists do you know who work within a strategic framework, let alone a grand strategic vision? If for no other reason than this, they – and probably you too – should force themselves to read this book. Order from Housmans, 0207 837 4473.

Gabriel Carlyle

**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)

