

# ABOLISH WAR

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£1

## UNinvolved in Peace



Do you despair at how Western powers have used UN Resolutions simply to give vaguely 'legal' backing to their military actions, in essence trying to get round international laws?

We tried the Resolution route with Iraq and illegally invaded anyway. The Resolution concerning Libya (done on the 'responsibility to protect' basis) was broken even as it was agreed. Syria, while

they are backing off military action for the moment, will probably end up with a Resolution that will be interpreted as allowing bombing. In the meantime, both sides are being flooded with arms from outside. Filling a country full of unrest (a lot of which has also been imported from outside) full of arms is hardly the best way to stop people being killed. And then there's Iran.

And how many countries and their innocent citizens have suffered because of sanctions pushed by the West and imposed by the UN? If this is part of 'diplomacy', it's very coercive. Is it really the UN's job to ensure children die from sanctions, as they did in Iraq?

Now, finally, the UN is debating the Arms Trade Treaty, with more than 150 countries taking part, many of them countries that have been harmed by the arms trade. They desperately want some form of control over a dirty business. Yet even before the debate gets going the US is trying to force a weakening of the wording. They don't want ammunition included in the Treaty and they don't want a ban on selling arms to countries with poor human rights records. The UK does. Amazing, considering who *we've* sold arms to!

While powerful states are devoting so much of their budgets to war and weapons, there's little to spare for peace, starving those parts of

the UN that are trying to protect women and children, support human rights, provide aid, education and look after refugees – although millions of Middle Eastern refugees do not get the help they need and we owe. The UN was formed to *prevent* war, not rubber stamp military action. It was meant to put peace at the top of the agenda. But at the moment it seems to be very uninvolved in peace.

But we won't, we cannot, give up. The world desperately needs a reformed UN. It needs an Arms Trade Treaty that has teeth. Even more, it needs a way of enforcing international laws and treaties. The West has used the UN to apply sanctions to other states. Maybe it's time we had a dose of the sanction medicine.

## REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

One day out of every 365 we put aside to remember those who died in our national wars. It is a comfort to relatives to know they are not forgotten. But is remembering all we can do? Should we not dedicate Remembrance Sunday to a special effort in our work to end war? War is so dreadful we cannot even talk about it honestly. Let us face the fact that those who died did not 'lay down their lives'. They were killed - perhaps trapped in a burning plane or bleeding to death with limbs blown off. Imagine it, and then persuade others that violence solves nothing. We must settle disputes by negotiation.

MAW's job is to get this message across to the many who are still indifferent. Two years ago we sent a pamphlet *Towards Ending War* to every secondary school in the British Isles. Last year we put half-page advertisements in some church papers, appealing to leaders to spread this message. This year we are asking you to help us to achieve an even wider circulation. We are sending an email message to hundreds of email contacts, including all MAW members. The message will be on the MAW website by August. Will you please add to its circulation by sending it on via email, post or word of mouth, to as many people as you can.

Robert Hinde, MAW President

GUYEN MENDI

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### Sunday November 11

#### The Imperial War Museum, London

#### MAW AGM

Conference Room – 11:15 am to 1:00 pm  
Members! Take this opportunity to air your ideas and views

#### The Remembrance Day Lecture

#### *Old and New Wars*

with

#### Mary Kaldor

#### Professor of Global Governance

Museum Cinema - 2:00 pm

*Free entry – and bring your friends!*



#### Dr Rosalie Bertell

1929 – 2012

People who campaign on the environment, against war, and nuclear issues including radiation and cancer have lost a tireless well-informed voice. Always approachable when you needed support for your campaign, endlessly researching, speaking and writing, she will be greatly missed.

### Movement for the Abolition of War

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# Editorial

## War Is Evitable\*

We'll NEVER abolish war! How many times have you heard that when you've been campaigning for an end to war? And it isn't enough to say that we *can* abolish war, despite history, because you will be told war is inevitable; we've *always* fought wars; it's in our genes. Those who have read just enough scientific literature will go further and say that archaeology and anthropology *prove* humans have always fought wars. They point to studies showing early man fought wars; that there is a genetic advantage to be gained by fighting wars; that our closest relatives – chimpanzees – are full of warlike aggression. They will drown you in depressing facts.

None of which are true. Or rather, all of which are incorrectly interpreted in order to make the case for the inevitability of war. As I found when I read *Beyond War* by Douglas P Fry, an anthropologist and an authority on aggression and conflict resolution. The first thing we need to understand is that while, in any group of animals including man, conflict happens, *conflict is not war*. With that as our starting point, let's take some of the 'facts' one by one.

For more than 99% of humanity's existence, we lived in simple hunter-gatherer groups<sup>1</sup>, of which quite a few still exist. Simple hunter-gatherer groups are nomadic, egalitarian, have no social hierarchies or defined position of leadership or authority. Do they occasionally kill people? Yes. Arguments, between two men over a woman for example, can escalate into a violent fight resulting in a death. That is not war but it is counted as such by the believers in war. The dead man's brother or friend kills the murderer for revenge or redress. That is not war but is counted as such by the believers in war. In more developed societies where family groupings become important this might evolve into a blood feud. That is still not war but is counted as such by the believers in war. And, when doing their analysis, the believers in war not look only at the simple hunter-gatherer groups, but include among them more recently developed societies, which naturally give them the figures they're looking for.

Anthropologists who study simple hunter-gatherer groups consistently record occasional violent deaths; they also record that the majority of today's groups do not wage war. Some groups, having little contact with 'modern civilisation', have no word for war, having no concept of it. These findings are ignored by the believers in war. Every possible instance of violence is interpreted as evidence of war. For instance, an Aboriginal rock painting of two men throwing boomerangs towards each other could be illustrating a throwing contest. But no – it simply *has* to be an illustration of warfare.

Even worse, in one well known study, *The Study of War* by Quincey Wright, written during WW2, several peaceful and non-warring groups were included. Yet they couldn't be defined as non-warring because the author had simply not got such a category. *All* his categories were war-based, so the non-warring societies had to be placed under 'Defensive War'. Again and again Fry shows that, rather than carefully studying the evidence and looking at all possible scenarios, the believers in war start with war-biased assumptions, then look only for things which can be used to prove the case for war.

In *Demonic Males* Richard Wrangham and Dale Peterson assert that warfare is millions of years old – but cannot give any archaeological evidence to support that assertion. Nor can any other believers in war. In fact, says Fry, the oldest site 'with indications of *possible* warfare or feuding is a cemetery dated at 12,000-14,000 years ago' – only 'possible', because the marks of violent death on many of the remains could be the result of a blood feud or even execution. The next earliest sites showing indications (and no more than that) are less than 10,000 years old. Which hardly supports the case for humanity having fought wars all through its existence.

Our closest relatives, chimpanzees, are violent. Goodall recorded many brief outbreaks of aggression. In reality these are rare when compared to the vast amount of time chimps spend living peacefully. Nor do the believers in war, relying heavily on aggressive relatives, ever mention the Bonobo chimps, genetically just as close to us, which are almost entirely peaceful.

What about genetic evidence? The believers in war would have you accept that there is a genetic advantage for men who fight war, and

## Iceland has been at peace for over 700 years.

they get very excited about one study by Napoleon Chagnon on the South American Yanomamö people. This shows show that men who kill father more children than those who don't. Once a Yanomamö man has killed he goes through a purification ritual after which he is *unokai*. Some *unokais* have killed several times. Chagnon compared these men with non-*unokais* of 'a similar age' and found the *unokai* had more wives and children.

Believers in war loved it and cited the study everywhere. Even Steven Pinker (see page 10) has used it to claim that evolution selects for strategic use of violence. But a re-examination of the figures showed that the men were *not* of a similar age. On average the *unokais* were 10.4 years older than the non-*unokais*. Most people can work out that a man in his thirties is likely to have fathered more children than a man in his twenties. But the believers in war do not indulge in such common sense.

Why do people insist on spreading this pernicious rubbish? Why do they, people one hopes are both intelligent and of a scientific bent, make assumptions and twist facts to promote the inevitability of war? Why do people, who by and large profess a desire for peace, promote war? Why do they want us to accept that war will always be with us? Why have we allowed our culture and our thinking to be dominated by war to the point where we are persuaded to think there is no alternative?

That is something we will look at in a future issue. But for now, read Fry's article *Worlds Without War*<sup>2</sup>, study *Beyond War* – then get out there and use the facts it contains to convince and harden the doubters that for most of our history war did not exist, that there are countries and people even now that do not fight wars. War is *not* 'inevitable'. It isn't in our genes; we have not 'always' fought wars; and despite the nay-sayers, we not only must, we *can* abolish it.

Lesley Docksey

\*'Inevitable: unavoidable (OED) 'Evitable': Rare usage, from Latin *ēvītābilis*, (from *ēvītāre*, from *vītāre* to avoid) avoidable.

1) M G Bicchieri, *Hunters and Gatherers Today*

2) See [www.greatergood.berkeley.edu](http://www.greatergood.berkeley.edu)

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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

They say an army marches on its stomach. Whilst MAW is quite the opposite, the latter half of that statement may still apply. Certainly, the annual committee away-weekend in Shropshire, with good food and good company, was much needed after the past few (at times hectic) months! It gave us the opportunity to discuss issues affecting the organisation in much greater depth than is, perhaps, usually possible at meetings due to time constraints.

It is all too easy to get caught up in the day to day aspects of MAW's work, so a chance to spend time together stepping back and looking at the big picture and long-term view was extremely beneficial. It also set in motion ideas and lines of exploration for the months ahead, which we will be announcing in due course. Needless to say, with an organisational aim as big as our own we have big plans for the forthcoming months and years and look forward to sharing them with you. Equally, don't forget that we're



Mary Kaldor

interested in everything that you as our members are doing in your areas, so please do let us know! We're always keen to help with promoting relevant events and initiatives where we can, and if we can find the space here in Abolish War then we'll publish your event reports too.

Although it may still be on the horizon, our annual Remembrance Day lecture is approaching and the details for this year have been finalised. This has become a very successful event, having hosted all manner of fascinating talks from a wide variety of speakers over the years. This November we have the pleasure of having Professor Mary Kaldor, who is currently Professor of Global Governance and the Director of the Centre for the Study of Global Governance at the LSE.

Her published work covers issues of globalisation, international relations and humanitarian intervention, global civil society and global governance. She will lecture on the difference between wars of the twentieth century, which were wars between states, fought by regular armed forces, where battle was the decisive encounter, and entire economies were mobilised for the war effort, and wars of the twenty first century, involving identity based networks of state and non-state actors, where most violence is directed against civilians, and a predatory economy is established based on loot, pillage, smuggling and other forms of crime. The talk will draw on the third edition of her book *New and Old Wars: Organised Violence in a Global Era*, which will be published in late October. For those who are able to attend I would wholeheartedly recommend doing so – and if you cannot get there yourself then please spread the word to as many people as possible. It promises to be an insightful and informative event.

Will Pritchard

## O God! These People!

O God! Change these people so that  
Nobody will die by another's hand.  
End cruelty so that  
An ant won't die by someone's hand.  
O God, for anything to which you have given a soul  
These things should never die by someone else's hand.  
Reserve everyone's cruelty to their eyes  
So no living thing will die by someone else's hand,  
No traveller will be bitten by someone else's dog,  
And nobody's dog will be killed by someone else's hand.

Mohammad Hanif Hairan

(From *Poetry of the Taliban* – see page 12)

## In Manchester – 2012 Peace History Conference

**Peace History:  
From Local to Global  
the north's role in peace & co-operation**

**Friday 9th November, 2012**

Friends' Meeting House  
Mount St, Manchester, M2 5NS

**Saturday 10th November, 2012**

The People's History Museum  
Left Bank, Spinningfields, Manchester, M3 3ER

Organised by MAW and north of England peace organisations in association with  
The People's History Museum

For a leaflet/booking form and full programme, see [www.abolishwar.org.uk](http://www.abolishwar.org.uk)

### Registration fees

£15 Early Bird – book before  
30th September 2012

£20 Standard

£5 Full time Student, Unemployed  
(inc. retired)

Please make your cheques  
payable to GM&D CND  
and return form and cheque to:

Jacqui Burke

Greater Manchester & District CND  
Bridge 5 Mill, 22a Beswick Street,  
Manchester M4 7HR

# Remembering Henry Richard

Over 100 people gathered at the grave of Henry Richard in Abney Park Cemetery on April 1st to hear Diane Abbott MP, historian Lord Kenneth Morgan and Bruce Kent lead tributes to a great Victorian leader of the peace movement, Minister in the Congregational Church and Member of Parliament who once had an international reputation as *The Apostle of Peace* and who campaigned tirelessly for a league of nations and a permanent system of arbitration to solve disputes between nations.

Diane Abbott was proud that the celebration was taking place in 'the best London Borough' and pointed out that many of the things Henry Richard campaigned on are as relevant today as they were in the 19th century: improved educational opportunities for all, against misleading press reporting and for better ways of resolving international disputes.



*In Abney Park Cemetery*

Lord Morgan described Henry Richard as a man of peace and a citizen of the world, while remaining a proud Welshman and creating the modern idea of Welsh identity. He called Henry Richard 'the valiant prophet of a better world'.

Daffodils were placed on the grave by Rhian Medi Roberts of Plaid Cymru, assisted by 4 year old Hazel, daughter of Abney Trust Chair David Solman. The Revd Peter Dewi Richards introduced two minutes of silence for people to reflect on Henry Richard's life and work.

Afterwards, Bruce Kent observed that it is crucial to remember and celebrate the lives of people of peace because all too often they are forgotten, while those who wage war are remembered. He suggested that a statue of Henry Richard should occupy the fourth plinth in Trafalgar Square in recognition of his important work for peace.

The Trustees of Abney Park were thanked for their hospitality. John Baldock spoke about the work of the Trust and mentioned another Welsh grave on the site – that of Betsi Cadwaladr, a nurse in the Crimea, buried in a pauper's grave.

Finally, Bruce invited the Welsh folk present to sing something suitable to the occasion and they rose magnificently to the challenge, giving a spontaneous rendition of the traditional Welsh song *Calon Lan* (O Brave Heart) sung in full harmony. Henry Richard was well honoured!

**Hilary Evans**

A peace fair to celebrate the bicentenary of the birth of Henry Richard was held in Tregaron, West Wales on April 21st. Henry Richard was born in Tregaron and his statue stands outside the Talbot Hotel, where the event was held courtesy of proprietors Mick and Nia Taylor.

Many people supported the occasion and enjoyed viewing the stands, listening to speakers and being entertained by local artists including local WI members and a Welsh Male Voice Choir.

Among the speakers was Bruce Kent, who led a rousing chorus of 'Happy Birthday' to Henry Richard. He described him as 'a Christian who believed that God's Kingdom is here as well as in the world to come; a pacifist who was perfectly willing to work for those who did not claim such an absolute title; an idealist who knew that ideals are not enough unless backed by consistent patient hard work; and an internationalist who knew that peace was never an issue just for these islands'. He quoted Archbishop Tutu who, at the Hague



*Cor Meibion Caron Male Voice Choir*

Peace Conference of 1999, said that 'if the world can get rid of apartheid, the world can get rid of war'. Bruce declared that this birthday party was a call for action.



*The MAW stall at Tregaron*

Rhian Medi Roberts spoke of the link between London and Tregaron and referred to the countries that Henry Richard mentioned in a speech in 1886 – Afghanistan, Burma, Syria, China, Persia and South Africa – all of which are currently in the news. Mererid Hopwood talked about *The White Book of Carmarthen*, a handcrafted book signed by supporters of peace, and speakers and members of the public had a chance to sign the book to show their dedication to call for World Peace.



*Gwyn Griffiths promoting his book*

Information stalls and representatives from a range of organisations attended the fair, including CND Wales, the Ceredigion Green Party, Cymdeithas y Cymod (the Welsh FoR), and the Movement of the Abolition of War. And a new book, 'Henry Richard: Apostle of Peace and Welsh Patriot' by Gwyn Griffiths was on sale at the fair.

The Peace Fair was an inspirational event and discussions are under way to consider the possibility of making this an annual event.

**Linda Carlisle**

## Apology from the Editor!

Part of a paragraph on Hilary's piece on Henry Richard in the last issue mysteriously went missing. The full paragraph should have read:

"In addition he was now able to extend his peace campaigning into parliament, most notably in 1873 when his resolution for a permanent system of international arbitration (accompanied by petitions containing 1,038,000 signatures from around the country) was passed by a majority of 10. In 1880, his resolution for 'a mutual and simultaneous reduction in European armaments' was passed, albeit in a slightly watered down version, and six years later his call for parliamentary consent prior to going to war was only narrowly defeated."

Sorry, Hilary!

## A Campaign To Win The Nobel Peace Prize

Since it was first awarded in 1901, the annual prize for 'champions of peace' that Alfred Nobel established in his will has become the world's most distinguished and prestigious honour. Nothing is indeed more worthy of human endeavour than the elimination of war from human relations and the creation of a global society which has banished this barbaric institution. In his book, *The Nobel Peace Prize: What Nobel Really Wanted*, first published in 2008 in Oslo, home of the Nobel peace prize (expanded English edition 2010, and translations in other languages since then), Norwegian lawyer and peace activist Fredrik S. Heffermehl presented a strong argument that the prize is often awarded to recipients whose work is not directly related to the abolition of war or 'the abolition or reduction of standing armies' (to quote from Nobel's will).

His book was the beginning of a campaign to win the Nobel peace prize back for the peace movement. After all, this was the milieu out of which the prize arose and which was familiar to Nobel. His 1892 membership card of the Austrian Peace Society, founded and presided over by his friend Bertha von Suttner, and reproduced in the book, is only one indication of this intimate connection. The Austrian baroness was a leading figure in the international peace movement during the quarter century before World War I. That movement strove for the abolition of war through fundamental changes in the way in which states traditionally related to each other, i.e., by frequent recourse to weapons and war. In an age of growing interdependence war, which now amounted to industrialised mass slaughter, had clearly become dangerous and counterproductive – as was abundantly shown during 1914-1918. The unprecedented diplomatic Hague Peace Conferences of 1899 & 1907 clearly pointed the way: war could be avoided and eliminated through the development of mechanisms for the peaceful resolution of conflict, international law, arbitration, and disarmament. With a third conference scheduled for 1915, it appeared that international society was slowly but promisingly following a new path, ably assisted and encouraged by the organised peace movement. Nobel obviously shared its radical objective.

Today, notwithstanding the existence of the European Union, the United Nations and its International Court of Justice, numerous other international organisations, treaties and conventions, all meant to keep the peace and banish war, the world seems to be further away from that goal than ever – witness the continuing existence, proliferation and use of both small arms and weapons of

mass destruction; the expansion of NATO and the militarisation of foreign policy; the flourishing trade in arms of all kinds; the cancerous growth of the military-industrial complex that President Eisenhower warned against half a century ago. The unheard of investment – in ideas, employment, research & development, and resources – in preparing and waging war, away from home, and

at the expense of the poor (both at home and abroad), is a scandal of the first order. Nonviolence, non-killing, and non-threatening can be regarded as central features of what it means to be civilised, whether of a person or a society. Demilitarisation, initiated in the West (but obviously not confined to it), is an urgent necessity without which the future of humankind is bleak. Honouring and thereby encouraging efforts which aim to contribute to a world from which the institution and the tools of war have been banished is what Nobel envisaged but which successive Norwegian Nobel committees have lost sight of. Although the present committee does not see it that way, Heffermehl has done it, and the world, a great favour by writing his book and pursuing his campaign.

Earlier this year he persuaded the Stockholm County Board, a public authority with responsibility for ensuring that Swedish foundations are properly managed, to send a



Alfred Nobel

letter (dated 30th January 2012) to the board of directors of the Nobel Foundation in Stockholm with a demand to respond to some of his criticisms of the Norwegian Nobel Committee. Responding on 8th March, the Foundation sent a 2-page statement in which it found no fault with the decisions made by the Committee and appended four pages of comment, submitted by the latter, headed 'Heffermehl and the Nobel Peace Prize'. In its letter of 21st March to the Foundation, the County Board decided to dismiss the case from further handling. However, it criticised the Committee's response that in the awarding of the prize it is independent and not to be instructed. In the view of the County Board, ultimate responsibility for compliance with the regulations governing also the peace prize, rests with the Nobel Foundation in Stockholm, not the Norwegian Nobel Committee.

That Heffermehl's criticisms of it are widely shared in what may be regarded as an important constituency, viz. today's peace movement, is indicated by the many individuals and peace groups in the USA which earlier this year endorsed David Swanson's on-line petition ('Investigate betrayal of the Nobel Peace Prize'). The coming years will see the centenary of 'the war to end war'; it will provide abolitionists with many opportunities to argue their case, and that Alfred Nobel was on their side.

Peter van den Dungen

## The Welsh support their own

Most people are unaware that Bradley Manning, the young American on trial for allegedly giving Wikileaks all those secret

diplomatic memos and emails, has a Welsh mother, and that he lived in Wales as a teenager. But this April WISE Up for Bradley Manning had a three-week tour of events to



Lawrence Huxham playing 'Rhyddid i Bradley Manning'

highlight his case. Only 23 when he was arrested, kept in solitary confinement, suffering treatment that some called torture for a year before being allowed to mix with other detainees, and facing a trial that may be anything but fair, he needs all the support he can get. Meetings, speakers, film, discussion, stalls, art and performance, took place in Pembrokeshire, Cardiff and north east Wales at the same time as Tim Price's play 'The Radicalisation of Bradley Manning' was performed by National Theatre Wales in these areas and live-streamed to the world. The finale in Wrexham (home to last year's winners of the Arthur Hewlett Peace award) featured music, poetry and prose in Welsh and English. See [www.wiseupforbradleymanning.com](http://www.wiseupforbradleymanning.com)

**Brian Haw** An update on the Brian Haw statue featured in the last issue. The sculptress, Amanda, has now got a blog going. Follow this link: <http://statueforbrianhaw.wordpress.com>

With our attention diverted by news about Libya, Syria, the Jubilee and the Olympics, with Iran making the occasional appearance as a 'threat', much of the continuing horror of life in Afghanistan is being overlooked.

### **Afghan Women: Which Side Are We On?**

Here in Afghanistan, the United States is spending \$2 billion dollars a week on war under the guise of improving Afghanistan. In Chicago at the NATO summit, Hillary Clinton, Madeline Albright and several influential female leaders came together and publicly claimed an American and NATO troop presence in Afghanistan was warranted in order to continue to improve the security of women.



*Pat Kennelly helping Afghan children to plant fruit and nut trees.*

The problem is that these influential women are calling for the very thing that makes Afghan women insecure. Further, they are endorsing Afghan leaders who attack women's rights.

Over the last ten years, the U.S. and NATO poured trillions of dollars into the occupation of Afghanistan, opening over 400 military bases around the country. From these bases NATO forces launch hundreds of night raids per month and dozens of drones fill the sky. These NATO operations have caused greater insecurity for women. They create countless widows, destroy homes, and foster a psychological terror that women are not safe and secure, even in their own homes.

It is not only the war that undermines the security and human rights of Afghan women, but the very war-making politicians whom NATO supports. In March, President Karzai endorsed a nonbinding edict by Afghanistan's religious authorities, stating that women are inferior to men, women cannot refuse to have sex with their husbands, and women should wear full hijab. The edict stated, 'men are fundamental and women are secondary,' adding women should avoid 'mingling with strange men in various social activities such as education, in bazaars, in offices and other aspects of life.' Further, it sanctioned physical violence, claiming "teasing, harassing, and beating women" was prohibited 'without a Shariah-compliant reason'. Implementing this type of structural discrimination against women further erodes Afghan women's human rights.

Every day Afghan women beg in the streets and struggle to cope with the mental, emotional, and social pain of living in a war zone. This past winter while billions were spent on NATO military operations hundreds of Afghan women watched their children freeze to death because of a lack of adequate shelter and fuel. In Kabul alone 100 children froze this past winter. Additionally, Afghan women face the second highest maternal mortality rate in the world.

In recent visits to schools, orphanages, and Afghan NGOs, ordinary Afghans did not identify specific ways that NATO or the Karzai government have improved the status of women in Afghanistan. In fact, ordinary Afghans noted that more and more women are suffering from mental illness. Consequently, more and more Afghan women are turning to suicide and self-immolation rather than continuing to live in the current situation.

It is because of all of these factors that in 2011, the Thomas Reuters Foundation identified Afghanistan as the most dangerous place in the world to be a woman.

If Clinton and other world leaders are on the side of improving the security of Afghan women, they should not endorse and support the war and the leaders who are actively engaged in violating women's rights. If Americans are genuinely concerned about this issue, we need to ask why we are using war to promote these goals. Better yet, we should not further insult and harm Afghans by using women as an excuse to continue the war in Afghanistan. We must be honest and acknowledge that we can not safeguard women's human rights by making war and supporting individuals that violate human rights.

### **Patrick Kennelly**

Pat Kennelly is the Associate Director of the Marquette University Center for Peacemaking and is participating in the peacemaking efforts organized by the Afghan Peace Volunteers and Voices for Creative Nonviolence. He writes from Kabul, Afghanistan and can be contacted at kennellyp@gmail.com

This article was first published by Voices for Creative Non-Violence on 05/06/12

### **And Still in Afghanistan...**

In May it was confirmed, by a leaked memo, that the notorious 'burn pits' used to burn the mountains of waste at US bases in Afghanistan are to blame for 'long-term adverse health conditions' to troops breathing the air there, particularly affecting hearts and lungs. The memo, dated 15 April 2011, stated that high concentrations of dust and burned waste present at Bagram Airfield for most of the war are likely to impact veterans' health for the rest of their lives. At least the veterans go home to better health care than the Afghans, who also have to breathe this polluted air.



*Burning waste at Bagram*

And in June the Wall Street Journal had a story about a 'state of the art' base being built by the Americans for the Afghans – a Super FOB (Forward Operating Base); a fibre-optic-equipped military base for a wood-burning army. It is so elaborate that many US officers doubt the Afghans will have either the fuel or the technical know-how to operate it after the Americans leave. And Afghans won't be using the massive stoves in the propane-fuelled kitchen to cook their food. Wood burning stoves are what they need. After 10 years in Afghanistan and considering this base is costing \$89 million, you'd think the US military would have learned *something* about the culture of the country they're occupying.

US ARMY

# THE ICC: BRITAIN DRAGS ITS FEET.

The International Criminal Court (ICC), established by the 1998 Rome Statute and based in The Hague, it has powers to try individuals for the gravest crimes known to mankind, including War Crimes, Genocide, Crimes against Humanity and the **Crime of Aggression**.



Nazi leaders on trial at Nuremberg

In 1945-46 the Nuremberg Tribunal convicted Nazi leaders for these crimes and 'Crimes against Peace' – the planning, preparation, initiation or waging of a war of aggression. According to the judgment: *"To initiate a war of aggression, therefore, is not only an international crime; it is the supreme international crime differing only from other war crimes in that it contains within itself the accumulated evil of the whole."* The term 'Crime of Aggression' is now used to characterise this offence. Responsible individual leaders are personally accountable for any Crime of Aggression. Under the UN Charter armed force against a sovereign state may only be lawfully justified if used in immediate self-defence or with the authorisation of the UN Security Council. Anything else would be an Act of Aggression. However, until now it has not been possible to deal with this crime in English courts. In 2006 the Law Lords in the case of *R v Jones et al* ruled that whilst 'a Crime against Peace' was certainly a crime under customary international law, it was not a crime in English law as no incorporating statute had been passed. Politicians and officials have regularly pointed out that there was no internationally agreed definition of the Crime of Aggression.

## The Crime Defined.

That has now changed. In June 2010 the Review Conference of the Rome Statute of the ICC unanimously agreed just such a definition. The UK was a party to this. The appropriate political response would be for Parliament to incorporate the new definition into our domestic criminal law as soon as possible. This could be done quite easily with an amendment of the ICC Act 2001. Our domestic criminal law courts could then consider the issues arising from the Crime of Aggression just as the 2001 Act permits them to hear cases concerning War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity. Such a response would make it clear that the UK now recognises the supreme importance of this rule of international criminal law and pledges that it shall in future be enforceable under the laws of this country. If a future British Prime Minister were to order military action he or she would know that our own Courts could hold him or her permanently accountable for their actions, under the supreme crime in international law. This would have a positive effect on the international drive towards outlawing aggressive war.

## So Why the Delay?

The main reason for the delay in reaching the Kampala definition was disagreement over the relationship between judicial role of the

ICC and the political role of the Security Council in bringing any case to the ICC. A solution to the problem has been set out in the Kampala Amendment, but will not be finalised until 2017.

**It must be emphasised that resort to the ICC need only take place if national courts are unwilling or unable to act. There is nothing to prevent cases being brought before the national courts of states which incorporate it into their national legislation.**

Correspondence with the Foreign Office indicates that ratification and incorporation into national law of the definition of the Crime of Aggression will not be brought before the Westminster Parliament before 2017 when the mechanism for bringing individuals to the ICC has been agreed. Germany, Austria and Switzerland have approved draft legislation to ratify the definition of the Crime of Aggression before 2017, thus making an Act of Aggression a recognised domestic crime in those countries. Some Eastern European countries do not need to do this because they passed domestic legislation prior to the Kampala definition. The matter is also being brought to the attention of Members of the Scottish Parliament because Scotland has its own Act incorporating ICC law. So there can be no justification for the Westminster Parliament dragging its feet. There is no need for domestic legislation to wait on international agreement about criteria for bringing cases before the ICC.

George Farebrother

**And Some Don't Delay.** Victims of torture, having failed to be heard internationally, turned to the Kuala Lumpur War Crimes Tribunal. In two hearings (November 2011 and May 2012) George W. Bush and Anthony L. Blair were found guilty in absentia of *Crimes Against Peace*, and George W. Bush and his associates were found guilty of the *Crime of Torture and War Crimes*. Having no power to enforce this judgement, the Tribunal is submitting this finding of conviction, together with a record of the proceedings, to the Chief Prosecutor of the ICC, as well as the United Nations and the Security Council.

## We Will Never Bomb Your Country

In March an Israeli graphic designer, Ronny Edry, tired of the talk about Israel bombing Iran, created a poster with a photo of himself and one of his young daughters and the message 'Iranians, we love you. We Will Never Bomb Your Country.' He put it on his Facebook page. It struck a cord with fellow Israelis who sent in their own photos and messages of support. Then the Iranians joined in, sending their own messages of love for Israelis. 'This is a message by the people to the people,' said Ronny. 'We don't want war. No matter what the governments are saying, on both sides, we are against it, since we will be the ones fighting it... I think it is important that we raise our voices.' Check out 'Iranians, we love you'.

## Peace Trails Through London

If you know someone who lives in London or is planning to visit London, this little booklet would make a great gift. With two different trails to follow and a selection of very interesting places to visit, plus good maps and instructions, it is a fine way to find out about the peaceful side of London. Order your copy from: Peace Trail, 11 Venetia Road, London N4 1EJ. Price £2 plus 60p P&P. And here are some dates for guided walks around London's peace monuments:

August 6th and 18th: follow the Central London Trail with Bruce Kent and Valerie Flessati.

Sept. 2nd: a guided walk around peace memorials with the Peace Pledge Union.

Sept. 22nd: Children's Mystery Walk with puzzles and clues.

Full details can be found on [www.abolishwar.org.uk](http://www.abolishwar.org.uk)

# Jubilees, Games and Guns

## Dummies and Live Rounds

Near the end of London's Jubilee celebration came a moment of importance no royalist or republican should ignore. After all the entertainment of the previous days, it was the military's turn.

Less than a minute later it was all over: a brief crackle of dummy gunfire and a mixture of shock and showcase excitement. With the



*Saluting the Queen*

used to remind us that the UK's military culture is once again showing off its warlike tendencies like no other country in the world? And, how come we rest in the knowledge that live rounds are fired on our behalf to kill other soldiers, innocent civilians and children?

Of real necessity, still? If so, not with much success from the live rounds' corner.

Abolish War and peace movements from around the world keep reminding us of the clear distinction between entertainment and real war. Showcase militarism using dummy rounds and the world's battle-fields spilling innocent blood is not in the same category as real war and hard-won peace.

David Partridge

## Building a Legacy of Peace – opportunities and challenges

Olympic 100 Days of Peace is an initiative of the Catholic Dioceses of the Justice and Peace commissions of Brentwood, Southwark and Westminster, supported among others by the Jimmy Mizen Foundation, London Citizens, and Pax Christi, to promote a message of peace in the days leading up to and beyond the Olympic Games. The group believes that a real legacy of peace can be created through the Games. Resource materials for schools and churches have been created and number of events planned that celebrate and encourage local and international peace-building.

Justice and Peace worker Barbara Kentish, the initiator of the idea, has been very clear that this project has to have a clear and sharp focus. Those trying to develop a strong, critical peace agenda within the framework of the Games have to face the 'hot potato' when different concepts of 'peace' collide and raise controversial issues. This includes holding the London Organising Committee and the Government to account for the fine words and commitments they make in the name of the Olympics. The UK sponsored a Resolution at the UN last October to 'build a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal'.

One clear 'hot potato' that has emerged is the militarisation of the Games, from extreme measures which are being taken with the militarisation of security measures, the 'guns on roofs' scenarios to the heavy surveillance of the Olympic venues and the direct engagement of large numbers of the Armed Forces as part of the security operations and ceremonial activities. It is the latter in particular that has concerned us because of the strong visual message it will give to the whole world.

question left hanging in the wind: do we really need to add this bravura militarism to the day's entertainment? Why the fuss, some might say: it was just a bit of fun.

Two basic issues: is the parade soldiery being

When we heard that members of the Armed Forces would be a part of the welcome victory ceremonies during the Games, the Westminster J&P commission and Pax Christi decided to approach LOCOG's chair, Sebastian Coe. In October he told the UN: "sport... can and does help mend broken communities, rebuild trust, rediscover self-respect, and foster the values at the core of our common humanity". How, we asked, did this square with the central role allocated to the Armed Forces with all the 'baggage' they would bring with them?

Having opened the communication we will continue and we encourage others to engage too. It is important to raise the debate locally as well as nationally. Very little is being reported of criticism of this kind and while a reversal of decisions is unlikely at this stage this is another opportunity to challenge the culture of militarism and at the same time promote a culture of peace – pushing ahead with the positive and creative opportunities of the 100 Days of Peace project that people tell us are giving another meaning and a depth to the Games.

Pat Gaffney, General Secretary, Pax Christi

For more info on *100 Days of Peace* see [www.paxchristi.org.uk/events](http://www.paxchristi.org.uk/events)

## History and the 'Sacred Olympic Truce'



*Temple of Zeus, Olympia*

Contrary to popular belief about the 'Sacred Olympic Truce' which has been repeated so many times that the myth has overtaken history, the Truce did *not* prevent the Greek city-states from waging war.

Olympia was a sacred site, dedicated to Zeus. Whatever was happening in the rest of Greece, behaviour in Olympia had to be impeccable. The Games were one part of a religious festival held in honour of Zeus. They were not dedicated to peace but to honour Zeus. The Truce meant that the travellers going to Olympia for the festival were safe when travelling through warring states. It meant that the city-state of Elis, the host to the Games, was not to be warred against. It meant that once the athletes and pilgrims arrived, they wouldn't hurt each other, even if they were combatants from warring city-states. In other words, the truce protected those who were going to honour Zeus. Beyond that, wars carried on as usual. The Elians were the custodians of the sacred site of Olympia. They adopted a policy of perpetual neutrality, lasting from 776 BCE to 420 BCE, when that policy was violated by the Elians. The Truce was also violated several times, the Elians themselves fighting against two city-states *within* the sacred grove, during the Games in 364 BCE. In 393 CE, when Emperor Theodosius became Christian, a Roman army was sent to Olympia to destroy the site so no more pagan festivals could take place.

No, the Olympic Games were *never* about peace, but that does not mean we shouldn't do our best to use this opportunity to promote peace.

And there is a genuine modern link to the ancient Games. In 420 BCE Elis joined with allies against Sparta; Sparta threatened to invade, and a military force was needed to 'protect' the games from an invasion which never came. But at least they didn't put missiles on the Temple roofs.

Lesley Docksey

(with thanks to Harvey Abrams: *The Olympic Truce: Myth and Reality*)

## Military Games: Security Goes for Gold

When London scraped past Paris to win the 2012 Olympics by four votes on 6th July 2005, triumphalism of the *Rule Britannia* genre was rampant – and for many, cringe-inducing and concerning in the extreme. The UK had joined the US in the invasions and near destruction of swathes of Afghanistan and Iraq. Award of this great international event surely sat badly with a large world view of Britain.

The then Prime Minister, Tony Blair – whose offices provided the historically misleading document about Iraq's 'weapons of mass destruction' sealing the decision to invade – was integral to the Olympic bid. Sir Steve Redgrave, one of the Bid Team in Singapore commented at the time: "...if you have to pin it down on one person it's Tony Blair coming out here..."

The triumphalism was short lived. Fifteen hours after the announcement, explosive devices on London's transport system during the morning rush hour, placed on trains and a bus, killed 52 people and injured 770.

The Olympic opening ceremony is on 27th July, the anniversary of the Centennial Park bombing of the Atlanta Olympics in 1996,



Rapier missiles on Blackheath Common

killing two and injuring 111. Britain's Ministry of Defence surely do not believe in omens, but nevertheless reality now is a world away from the UK's Award commitment that: *The 2012 Olympiad stands under the motto 'Green and Secure'*.

It was not until 30th April that 'Exercise Olympic Guardian' was announced – but the UK had, of course, now joined the US again in threatening another two countries, Syria and Iran. And suddenly London too has become a war zone.

"We are fighting them over there so we don't have to fight them over here" has been the US and UK political mantra, but Olympic London's mobilization is now being compared by politicians to the WW2 Blitz – when the area most devastated by Germany's bombs was East London, the main Olympic venue.

General Sir Nick Parker, commanding the totalitarian terrorization of Londoners and residents around other Olympic venues explained: "It's an air threat (of two kinds) the sort of 9/11 threat... and also the lower, slower type of (missile) which might pop up closer to the Olympic Park, which we would need to intervene."

Thus, in this densely populated area, batteries of surface-to-air Rapier missiles (which launch at up to three times the speed of sound) have been sited on two residential blocks of flats within bombing range of the stadium. The 'formidable' Rapier with warhead 'to guarantee a kill', cited by its developers as a 'hit-ile' rather than a missile, is being deployed at six London sites in all.



Sonic weapon makers LRAD Corporation advertise their wares

Parker's concern is to protect Olympic venues from "...very serious threat." Should planes or missiles crash on residents, their lives and homes are clearly a price worth paying. "Drones will patrol the skies over the Olympic park, barricaded behind an eleven-mile electrified fence and guarded with sonic weapons and fifty five teams of attack dogs." (Guardian, 11/07/12)

Sonic weapons can shatter windows and ear drums up to three kilometers away – of parents, children, people simply pottering around in their homes.

Typhoon jets and helicopters with snipers are based minutes (hit time) away at West London's RAF Northolt (first such deployment since WW2), and in East London RAF Puma helicopters (with side firing machine guns) which are included in a 'sad history' of British military aircraft crashes, according to the military savvy Daily Telegraph (03/07/12).

Warships with Royal Navy Lynx helicopters 'now with increased firepower' based on board, are on the Thames and at the rowing venues at Weymouth Bay and Portland Harbour. General Parker's contingency plans, however, have not accounted for Nature's biblical deluges currently submerging cars in Weymouth's Olympic 'Park and Ride' facility.

Portland, which overlooks the rowing contests, has been walled in Baghdad style to prevent massively inconvenienced residents from seeking some small compensation by watching the events free.

Soldiers patrol the streets, about 17,000 being deployed, more than deployed in Afghanistan; twelve thousand police; twenty thousand varying other security personnel with at least a thousand American police and military personnel, maybe more – figures change.

But in spite of all, perhaps the most alarming material has come from an undercover reporter<sup>1</sup> experienced in such work, employed as a security guard with G4S, the main contractors for Olympic protection. His truly terrifying recounting includes a plan to evacuate the whole of London (eleven million people) and the importation of two hundred thousand body caskets, each being able to hold four or five people.

So if you plan to visit the Olympics (traveling from abroad; up to five hours wait to pass immigration at Heathrow Airport; part of motorway to London currently collapsed, but there is always the underground transport system) enjoy your stay. Weather forecast: cold, wet, windy.

Felicity Arbuthnot

<sup>1</sup> <http://libertarianreview.us/2012/06/28/london-olympics-wide-open-to-terror-attacks-undercover-reporter-and-employees-expose-security/>

(Felicity lives in East London. She and fellow residents are greatly affected by the 'security' measures – streets blocked off for weeks, deliveries of supplies to shops and businesses becoming almost impossible, medical staff sleeping at hospitals because of driving restrictions, all under the threat of the weapons being deployed. I live in Dorset, not far from Weymouth. Friends tell me that residents are furious at the security measures being imposed – may only drive *out* of Weymouth before 10 am, and cannot drive back *in* until after 10 pm, cars searched in both directions. And that's only part of it. Editor)

## Pinker – friend or foe of peacemakers?

It was disconcerting to read the piece written by my friend David Partridge in the spring issue of *Abolish War*. Eminent psychologist Steven Pinker, in his book *The Better Angels of Our Nature*, was apparently advocating a laissez-faire attitude to peace, saying we were wasting our time opposing war, because human aggression had been ‘transmogrified’ and irreducible peace was just around the corner, which was obviously rubbish.

It was disconcerting because I had just used the book token, kindly given to me by MAW to thank me for my time as Chair, to buy Pinker’s book. Was it, after all, not worth reading? David, you based your conclusion on an interview. After 696 pages, nearly 100 graphs and charts and a great many cups of coffee, I can assure you that the book is not only convincing, but also an inspiration to us who want to end war.

Pinker knows it’s hard to believe that human violence has declined over history. Indeed, he began his research because other scholars’ figures on homicide through history surprised him by their downward trend. The more he studied, the more criminologists, psychologists and historians gave him, to his ‘repeated astonishment’, the same message. So he undertook the mammoth task of collating their findings and seeking what lay behind them. Beginning in prehistory, Pinker shows that primitive humans whose remains we find frequently died violent deaths. He describes the appalling slaughter and torture routinely meted out in ancient and medieval times, in domestic violence, judicial punishments and wars. Several of the massacres of the past actually killed a greater percentage of the human race than the World Wars of the twentieth century. And if we dislike this proportional adjustment of the figures, and insist that recent wars are worse because they killed more people, it’s still true that the number of people whose lives were not cut short by war was also far greater. Study after study, graph after graph, despite the blips of major conflicts, show that violence has declined over the centuries, right up to the present.

How does Pinker account for this? He finds several factors: the development of law and order; stable government, especially if democratic; the humanitarian influence of the Enlightenment; the growth of commerce and travel; the spread of literacy; the emancipation of women and appreciation of human rights – all the elements of what we think of as civilisation. And Pinker adds that mere material progress probably helped: as more of us lived longer, with better housing, better food and better health, the casual brutality of our ancestors became increasingly distasteful.

Why, then, are we unwilling to accept this picture? Again, there’s a mixture of reasons. Perhaps it’s because we never appreciated how bloody people’s lives used to be. Perhaps it’s because violence makes headlines in the media, but peace is rarely considered newsworthy. Perhaps it’s simply that recent events are more vivid to us than those from many years ago. And perhaps it’s because, like David, we don’t wish to become complacent while there is still an awful lot of violence out there which needs to be tackled.

This book, though, should encourage, rather than enfeeble us. It spells out that the civilising process didn’t just happen, but was brought about by countless people who would not accept things as they were, but strove to make them better. We must still work to reduce violence, of which war is the most glaring example, and there are now statistics that show such work has results.

It also helps to be aware of factors which can make our work more effective. If, to quote Pinker, ‘we have been doing something right, it would be good to know what, exactly, it is.’ Here is where Cynthia Cockburn’s book (see p. 12) comes in. It is rich not in quantitative data but in qualitative, drawing on individuals’ experience to show how complex and difficult conflicts can be

tackled by those who care enough to try. Often the results are not clear-cut at the time, but they may well show up in the graphs of future researchers.

The one aspect of Pinker’s study which I feel is not given enough weight is the threat of modern, especially nuclear, weapons. As people have become individually more humane, their weapons of war have become more indiscriminately destructive. Fewer of us fight, but most of us are troubled by the dire possibilities if those weapons are unleashed. In this respect things are worse than in previous generations, and the defusing of future wars is more crucial than ever.

On his final page Pinker acknowledges that as long as there remains even one victim of the murder, torture, rape and bereavement that violent conflict brings, that is one too many. And we all know that there are many more than one. So the activist’s boots will be needed again after all, but he can be hopeful as he puts them on.

I’m happy to lend my copy of *The Better Angels* to any colleague who would like to borrow it. But be prepared to make your own coffee.

Sue Gilmurray

### Levellers Day 19 May 2012

Since 1975 there has been a gathering outside Burford Churchyard in gorgeous leafy Oxfordshire every May, to commemorate a stand against dictatorship by Leveller soldiers, and its brutal suppression by Cromwell, who ordered three ringleaders to be shot by firing-squad in the churchyard on May 17th 1649. The Levellers were a political movement with beliefs in democracy, religious tolerance, and social justice. They had fought on Cromwell’s side against the king, but drew a line at being ordered to go to ‘subjugate Ireland’. Every year the speeches in Warwick Hall by the church gates have a different, related theme, and this year’s was ‘Protesting and Surviving’. Speakers from 38 Degrees, UK Uncut, and the Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers Union (RMT) set the scene for some lively debate on the current economic deficit, austerity measures, job losses etc, during which the contribution greeted with the loudest cheer was from a woman who said, “Why are we not talking about getting rid of war? Surely war is the most ridiculous waste of our money?”



The MAW stall in action

Abingdon Peace Group ran our usual MAW stall on the forecourt, and handed out lots of leaflets as well as selling a few badges and CDs. We feel our presence there reminds people that MAW exists, and that there are sane people who believe that war is not inevitable. Many children from the Woodcraft Folk come to the stall to get their free “Imagine Peace” badges (donated by Yoko Ono to Abingdon Arts Festival years ago) and it’s gratifying to hear the discussion this generates with their parents.

Perhaps you too have a local festival with a similar opportunity to get our message across to local people, young or old? I can supply a ‘kit’ of leaflets, badges, booklets, CDs and DVDs if you do. Contact me at 1 Thesiger Road, Abingdon, OX14 2DY or at [sallyreynolds@btinternet.com](mailto:sallyreynolds@btinternet.com).

Sally Reynolds

# Dates for Your Diary

**6 August WORLDWIDE.** Hiroshima Day

**9 August 9 WORLDWIDE.** Nagasaki Day

**September** – Campaign Against the Arms Trade: month of action against your local arms company. See [www.caat.org.uk](http://www.caat.org.uk)

**10 September LONDON.** Annual Erskine Childers Lecture.

See [www.unitingforpeace.com/events](http://www.unitingforpeace.com/events)

**21 September WORLDWIDE.** International Day of Peace.

**HEREFORD.** Millichap Peace Fund and Hereford Peace Council. *Africa: does the West know best?* with John Nelson of the Forest Peoples Project. 7:30 pm, Friends meeting House, King Street, Hereford.

**1-8 October.** Ground the Drones Week of Action.

See [www.dronecampaignnetwork.org.uk](http://www.dronecampaignnetwork.org.uk)

**2 October WORLDWIDE.** International Day of Non-Violence.

**6-13 October WORLDWIDE.** Keep Space for Peace week

**24 October WORLDWIDE.** United Nations Day

**9-10 November MANCHESTER.** 2012 Peace History

Conference See page 3

**11 November LONDON.** MAW Remembrance Sunday Lecture

See Front Page

## *Keeper of the Nuclear Conscience: the Life and Work of Joseph Rotblat*

Andrew Brown, Oxford University Press 2011

Much of this book reads like a nightmare. Joseph Rotblat's early life in Poland seems almost idyllic, of another world. The First World War soon destroyed this, and the consequences for his family were extreme hardship and threat to life. But Rotblat's unusual mathematic ability was already evident, and the author traces the path towards nuclear physics from when Jo obtained work as an apprentice electrician in 1923 – the result of dire need for basic income. Later, working with Chadwick at Liverpool, Rotblat took time out to visit his wife in Poland. He found she was recovering from appendicitis surgery, and he was unable to take her to Liverpool straight away. The need for the small income (again) he was receiving at Liverpool prompted him to return there without his wife, in case his work was taken over by someone else and the money dried up. He left Warsaw on 31st August 1939. Germany invaded Poland the very next day. Rotblat never saw his wife again. That is essential to understanding much of Rotblat's subsequent life history.

But the author overdoes detail on nuclear physics. Does the reader really need to know about the different importance of fast and slow neutrons? And later on in the book there is too much detail on meetings and conferences, rather than on the significance of what was going on.

Yet the time, energy and unrelenting commitment by Rotblat to Pugwash comes across strongly, clearly showing that Pugwash contributed to the ending of the cold war. Rotblat's Nobel Peace Prize was undoubtedly deserved.

Rotblat does seem to have been fortunate, for once, when after leaving the Manhattan Project, he obtained high position at Bart's Medical College. There was opposition to his appointment, but influential others supported Rotblat, and to his great credit he became the main pioneer in this country of applying nuclear physics to treat cancer. A kind of redemption perhaps.

Overall, and from my own limited experience of him, Rotblat seemed to be a gentle man with much charm. But he didn't

seem a man of the people. He liked to be with scientists and with Pugwash – from which non-scientists are excluded. Despite being its first president, he never really got involved with MAW (apart from giving the annual Remembrance Sunday lecture in 2002 – for which he received a standing ovation). Indeed, the author himself never mentions MAW. Perhaps



Joseph Rotblat

one scientist writing about another is not always a good idea. Narrow paradigms are unconsciously set, depriving the reader of a more rounded account of this great man.

Brian Heale

## **30th International Conscientious Objectors Day, 20th May 2012.**

A gathering of around twenty people attended a celebration of the 30th International Conscientious Objectors Day organised by CND and Hazel Neal of CAAT at Birmingham's Peace Garden in Bath Row, City Centre. Jenny Maxwell of West Midlands CND read a poem watched by members representing UNA Birmingham, Peace Pledge Union, CAAT and Say No To Trident.

Following peace songs by the Clarion Singers, Bill Heatherington of PPU read the names of COs from seventy countries whilst flowers were laid at the garden gate, which had been adorned by a rainbow PEACE flag. Bill then spoke about the horrors of the many recent wars which have afflicted the world, and of the harsh treatment of those brave enough to refuse to kill. He reminded us of the stupidity of a situation where two men can be in prison, one for murdering and the other for refusing to kill a fellow human. More poems were read before the Clarion Singers ended the ceremony with more songs to the guitar.

Janet King

## **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 Glorious Art of Peace:  
From the Iliad to Iraq*

John Gittings,  
Oxford University Press, 2011

John Gittings has chosen a very broad subject – the development of ‘peace consciousness’ from ancient Greece to the present day. He starts by looking at how Homer, rather than supporting the Trojan War, stresses the futility and violence of it. As a contrast he analyses Chinese texts, where songs and poetry show how deeply the common people wanted peace – but who among the leaders ever listens to them? Shakespeare’s plays are studied including, of course, Henry V, and the conclusion there seemed to be that Shakespeare didn’t support war – but neither did he actively support peace. Erasmus however, did. Looking at *his* work Gittings makes an easily missed and important point: Erasmus’ writings on peace will not be available in academic bookshops when Machiavelli’s *The Art of War* always will – the kind of unthinking censorship that takes peace off the agenda and makes it invisible.

Gittings charts, in great detail, the growth of peace activism in the 19th century, the forming of societies and efforts made to abolish war. For good clear historical exposition you can’t do better than this book, but there is a glaring and curious omission. Recounting the efforts for peace from the 1899 Hague Conference to the foundation of the League of Nations there is no mention at all of the work that went into the Kellogg-Briand Pact.

The history of the Cold War and the disgraceful sabotaging of any peace initiatives by the great powers was truly disheartening, while the growth of peace studies and new organisations is positive. But by the end, having been very ably taken through the history of peace initiatives during the last 200 years I was, sadly, left with the impression that the ‘glorious art’ had failed us. We should, quite rightly, celebrate past efforts and the people behind them, but surely it is time we addressed the reasons for their failure and explored different ways of creating peace.

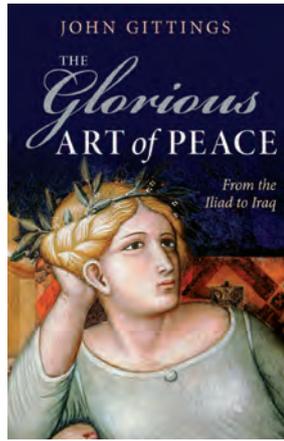
Lesley Docksey

*Antimilitarism: Political and Gender  
Dynamics of Peace Movements*

Cynthia Cockburn,  
Palgrave Macmillan, 2012

No matter how passionately we loath war, there is a place for turning our critical faculties on the peace movement and asking questions about what we do and how we might be more effective. Cynthia Cockburn provides a bracing look at a variety of peace and anti-war groups, interviewing 130 people in 12 countries. Her aim: to find out whether, despite their differences, they might really bring about a more peaceful world. Here are real people struggling with

intractable situations: in Okinawa against US military occupation; in Korea against the powers which partition their country; in Uganda against the proliferation of small arms; in Strasbourg to oppose NATO; in Leicester to support the people of Gaza. But their diversity is bewildering: here are Marxists and anarchists; pacifists and those who support violent protest; feminists and those indifferent to feminism;



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those opposed to all wars and those who care about only one. How can they work together?

Cynthia, a feminist and a socialist, does not pass judgement on the various activist groups, but finds encouragement in the common ground they share, and in the ways they find to work together. She perceives a continuum of violence, from the domestic through to the military, aggravated by the machismo element in our cultures, and encouraged by the military-industrial complex. The peace groups tackle the issue from different angles, but share the aim of violence reduction.

This is the book’s conclusion and its challenge: we need to oppose the pervasive idea that violence is inevitable by pointing out that in most cases it is a deliberately chosen course of action. Our diverse peace groups can unite in claiming that there is almost always a choice, and urging everyone – in the home, in society and in politics – to choose the less violent option.

This is not an easy read, but one which can broaden our understanding, and encourage both thought and action.

Sue Gilmurray

*Poetry of the Taliban*

Editors: Alex Strick van  
Linschoten & Felix Kuehn,  
Hurst & Company, 2012

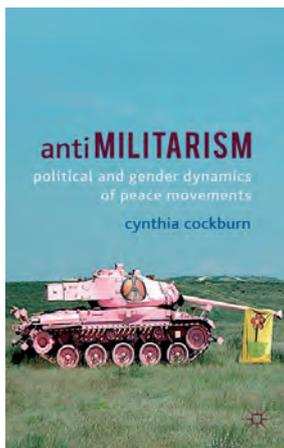
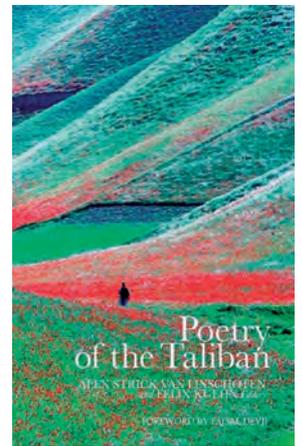
The publication of this book was greeted by ill-informed rants from British generals on the Today programme and elsewhere, saying that the Taliban were ‘thugs’ who killed women, ignoring the fact that the Afghan war lords (and Karzai’s government) are just as misogynistic. I never found out if these military gentlemen had actually read any of the poems, but they were all roundly condemned as ‘propaganda’.

We may label the Taliban as espousing fundamentalist Islam, but reading this poetry I found much love and mysticism in it – reminiscent of Sufi poetry where Allah is called their ‘Beloved’. Of course there are poems calling for the killing of the invaders, the destruction of the White House and a wish for martyrdom. But many more are expressing the extraordinarily deep love these Afghans (and they are Afghan before they are Taliban) have for their homeland, their villages, families and religion. They show an abiding sense of the history of their country, mentioning battles and famous warriors from centuries past. They cry out against the fact that they keep being invaded and while they are proud that each time they have rid their homeland of occupiers, they still wonder ‘Why?’ Why do they have to keep fighting like this when all they want is to live their simple Afghan lives? In Shirinzoy’s *Prayer* he begs Allah to ‘humble these wolf-like humans’, but then asks ‘Make the world colourful with love’. The world is crazy, it seems, and in one verse he writes:

*But now humans bite humans;  
They are not content with their dignity.  
Out of ingratitude they bite the sky.*

If you are not familiar with Middle Eastern or Asian poetry, the structure and rhythms will feel strange, but the images that are conjured up are powerful and heart-stopping. There is no better way to meet the ‘enemy’ and find he is as human as you.

Lesley Docksey



**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)

