

Young people resist military influence

MAW Youth are on the road! If you would like us to bring the *Militarisation of Youth Conference* to a location near you get in touch. We can work together to raise awareness on issues such as BAE Systems running an 'Education Roadshow' which has reached more than 365,000 young people in over 2,200 schools.

We want to advocate for an alternative. All you have to do is find a venue and publicise the event in your area. MAW Youth will bring speakers and also circulate the details. Possible speakers for the conference include Veterans For Peace, Journeymen Theatre, researcher and author David Gee and many more.

To find out more email youth@abolishwar.org.uk abolishwarnow.wordpress.com or find us on Facebook and Twitter [@MAWYouth](https://twitter.com/MAWYouth).



■ We have new badges! They have been designed by MAW Youth member Jen

Harrison - don't they look lovely! Two sizes available - and you can order them from the MAW website: <http://www.abolishwar.org.uk/store/c10/Badges.html>

For electronic versions of this newsletter email Gillian Hurlle, gill.hurle@abolishwar.org.uk

The next edition of *Abolish War* will be published on August 1.



Liberian Nobel Peace Laureate Leymah Gbowee, right, with MAW committee member Hilary Evans. Her women's peace initiative, which helped end the Liberian civil war in 2003, will be featured at this year's peace history conference. At a recent lecture she urged her audience to 'take the open-mind challenge' as a pre-requisite for peace.

Peace history conference links up with people power event

Protest, Power & Change is the theme of this year's MAW Peace History Conference. Organised in partnership with Imperial War Museums, it will take place on Saturday, 10 June at IWM London and is timed to coincide with the museum's major new exhibition **People Power: Fighting for Peace**.

Frank Cottrell Boyce, children's novelist and screenwriter, will open the conference. Topics include *Fewer Bombs, More Jobs: The Lucas Aerospace Combine Shop Stewards' Alternative Plan 1976* and *Lysistrata in the Rainforest: the women's nonviolent campaign which ended the civil war in Liberia*.

Other sessions pick up on some anniversaries of 2017: 50 years since Martin Luther King's momentous denunciation of the Vietnam War, 60 years since activists started coalescing into the movement that became CND, 150 years since the births of anti-war artist Käthe Kollwitz and feminist peace campaigner Emily Greene Balch, and 500 years since Erasmus published his *Complaint of Peace*. More events will take place on Friday, 9 June: an afternoon walk along the **London Peace Trail** (starting Tavistock Square, 3.30pm) **cont on page 2**

A reminder of the need to know history

People Power - Fighting for Peace from the First World War to the Present.

Lyn Smith

Thames and Hudson 255 pages. Illustrated. £24.95

By 28 August, the impressive exhibition on the peace movement from the First World War until almost today at the Imperial War Museum in London, will be over. Get there while there is still time. In any event make sure you get hold of this book by Lyn Smith, the museum's academic, interviewer and friend of the peace movement. You will not regret it.

The book starts with the very real suffering of the conscientious objectors who said 'no' in various ways to the Military Service Act of 1916. Some had religious motives, some political. But they all suffered, especially the 'absolutists' as they were known. The book ends with the Inquiry into the Iraq war and a striking photo of Veterans for Peace and then of a rather subdued Tony Blair arriving to give his evidence. Not that he stayed subdued for very long.

The many photographs, cartoons and drawings running through the book are wonderful. Some, like those of Greenham, make clear the brave role of so many women. Sadly I haven't the space to give the coverage that this book deserves. The index alone runs to six pages.

My overall impression is that we all need to know our history. History educates, inspires and encourages. If you can't afford £25, get your rich retired aunt to buy you a copy for your birthday or buy one and share the cost, and the book, with your friends.

Bruce Kent

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and, at 7.30pm, the acclaimed play *This Evil Thing*, performed and written by Michael Mears and telling the story of WW1 Conscientious Objectors, will be performed at the Oasis Hub Waterloo, 1a Kennington Road, SE1 7QP.

The full programme and booking details can be found on the accompanying flyer or at www.abolishwar.org.uk. Bookings can also be made by sending a cheque and sae to 11 Venetia Road, London N4 1EJ. Conference: £20 (£5 full-time students). Walk: free but please book. Play: £6.

In the picture: IWM focuses on peace

Take a journey from the First World War to the present day, exploring how peace movements have influenced perceptions of war and conflict in the major exhibition, *People Power*:

Fighting for Peace, the IWM London until August 28. From conscientious objectors to peace camps and modern day marches, *Fighting for Peace* tells the stories of passionate people over the past one hundred years and the struggles they have endured for the anti-war cause.

Over 300 objects including paintings, literature, posters, placards, banners, badges and music reveal the breadth of creativity of anti-war protest movements, reflecting the cultural mood of each era. Tickets: Adult £10, Child £5, Concession £7, Art Fund Member £5, IWM Members Free.

<http://www.iwm.org.uk/visits/iwm-london>

Peace activist Lou Jessop from Reading is one of the people featured on the image used to advertise the exhibition. She describes her surprise at discovering "That's me in the picture".

"A friend spotted my face on the IWM poster. I was astonished! My little face picked out of all the



thousands that are no doubt photographed at every demonstration. Perhaps I just look like a typical demonstrator. "I'm not doing anything interesting, no banner-waving, no mouth open chanting slogans, just my slightly frowning face snapped on one of the many occasions I've marched the streets of London protesting against war. I suppose the quietly determined look must have seemed just right to infill and balance the composition of the collage - just above the man with the megaphone. I don't generally like to be too close to the megaphone [Brian Haw]; my preference on a demonstration is to be near people with drums, such a great uplifting sound! "Humans have always fought. Wonderful creatures that we are, sadly, we are also intolerant, fearful, greedy and aggressive. My children have sometimes said to me as I prepare to go marching, 'What's the point?' My answer has always been to use a quote, origin unknown: 'It is better to light one small candle than curse the darkness'."

We need to tell the millions about the structures created to end war

We live in very dangerous times though it may not seem like it, sitting as I am, in the sun in London. Recently I read a tweet from President Trump: "North Korea is looking for trouble. If China decides to help that would be great. If not we will solve the problem without them." No reference to international law or the United Nations. In the Trump world these are irrelevancies, hence the firing of cruise missiles at Syria without reference to anyone. For the Trumps of this world - and there are many of them in all countries - individual states can do what they like if they are powerful enough. The UN Charter signed in 1945 tells another story. Article 51 does give a state the immediate right of self-defence if it is attacked, but this restricted permission ends as soon as the Security Council takes over. "Ha ha", says the Trump world. "The Security Council veto stops us from taking the UN road." True, both Russia and the United States have used the veto frequently, as indeed have the lesser members of the Big Five. Does that make the veto a final answer? Not at all. The Uniting for Peace resolution of the General Assembly of 1950 can come into operation if the Security Council fails in its primary responsibility for

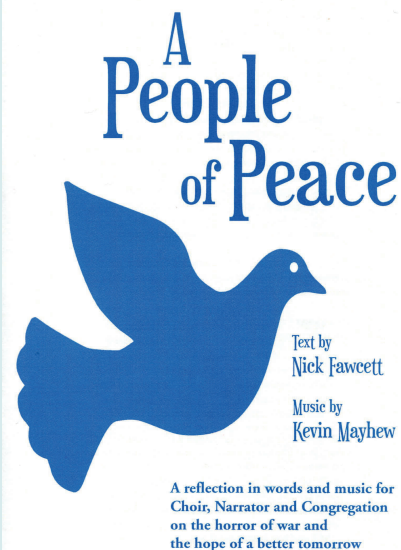


maintaining peace. The Security Council would like to be the last word but it does not have to be. An excellent article in the latest UNA Journal by Lakhdar Bramini, former UN and Arab League envoy to Syria ends with a warning from the present Secretary General: "Thinking that either side will win this Syrian war is a total illusion." www.una.org.uk/magazine/1-2017 Peace negotiations under the UN are essential. What should MAW do next? Ignorance about the EU and the United Nations is massive. Few know anything about the urge for peace that brought the European ideal to political reality. Who has seen a copy of the UN Charter - even though "ending the scourge of war" was the primary reason for the UN's creation? We have to reach out also to the millions who have little or no idea about the structures created in the past to make world peace a real possibility - perhaps by organising a popular series of lectures and publications aimed at the younger generation? Our late President, Robert Hinde, ended his last booklet on war with these words: "When people recognise the futility of war it will cease to be seen as a sensible way to settle disputes. But the abolition of war needs action." That's a challenge to all of us.

Bruce Kent

■ International Conscientious Objectors' Day - Monday, 15 May - will be marked by a ceremony next to the CO commemorative stone in Tavistock Square, London WC1, from 12 noon. This year American COs will be highlighted. Speakers will be actor Sir Mark Rylance and Vietnam war 'resister' Nick Jeffrey. Sue Gilmurray will lead the singing. Look out for events in other parts of the country - see www.networkforpeace.org.uk/calendar/print/members

New music out now



MAW member Kevin Mayhew, composer and publisher, has co-created with writer Nick Fawcett a new work for choir, narrator and congregation called *A People of Peace*. This 40-minute reflection with words and music received its first performance at the Quaker Meeting House in Bury St Edmunds.

Though inspired by the life of Harry Patch, the First World War veteran, the authors' outlook is future-oriented and energising. Much of the text - and the flavour of Kevin's original music - is hymn-like and the work is chiefly intended for a religious context, although some of the ten songs would be suitable for wider use.

The audience vigorously endorsed the universal message:

*An urgent voice is calling,
A voice from close at hand;
It's crying out in anger,
Campaigning for a land
Where all will be respected,
And war will find no place;
A world of peace and friendship,
A new start for our race.*

A CD is available, with the score of *A People of Peace*, from www.kevinmayhew.com.

Support New York talks to ditch nuclear weapons

Historic negotiations will resume on 15 June in New York on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.

Talks taking place since 2013 and attended by most of the world's nations, last year recommended negotiations on a legally-binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons. This could set the stage for multilateral disarmament. The governments of most nuclear-armed states, and of almost all of those in military alliances with the US, refused to join talks. Elayne Whyte, Costa Rican ambassador and president of the conference, is upbeat, hoping the June session will succeed in adopting a treaty. The effect will be to stigmatise

nuclear weapons as morally unacceptable and incompatible with international humanitarian law, strengthening the hand of those campaigning for their removal.

MAW believes these negotiations are probably the best chance in a generation to get rid of these weapons of mass destruction. Find out more at www.icanw.org and shout it from the rooftops!

■ **Trident and the General Election: Looking at party leaders, Jeremy Corbyn (Labour), Angus Robertson (SNP), Tim Farron (Lib Dem) and Caroline Lucas (Green) voted AGAINST Trident renewal. Theresa May (Conservative) voted in FAVOUR.**



Bid to restore Alice's reputation

MAW supported an event led by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in March outside the Royal Courts of Justice, calling for a review of the case of British suffragist and anti-war campaigner Alice Wheeldon by the Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC). On 10 March 1917, Alice Wheeldon, her daughter,

Winnie, and son-in-law, Alf Mason, were convicted of conspiracy to murder the then Prime Minister, David Lloyd George. Evidence given against them appears to have been fabricated on behalf of "a government eager to disgrace the anti-war movement". Alice supported the No-Conscription Fellowship and helped conscientious objectors avoid conscription in World War One. In December 1916, Alex Gordon, a spy from MI5, arrived at the Wheeldon home, claiming to be a CO on the run. He would go on to manufacture evidence leading to the imprisonment of the family.

100 years on and Chloë and Deirdre Mason, great-granddaughters of Alice, travelled from Australia to call for a review by the CCRC and referral to the Court of Appeal, to restore the reputation of one of the era's most radical and sincere anti-war campaigners.

■ Ella Johnson and Khem Rogaly, members of MAW Youth, have been co-opted to the main MAW committee. We are getting younger every day!

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

We aim to create a world where war is no longer seen as a way to solve a problem; where it has ceased to be an option; where conflict resolution means resolution. Working through education and dialogue, nationally and locally, we have the tools, skills and laws that we need, but we also need you - ordinary people can help us realise our goal, the abolition of war.

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

Send the completed form (and cheque if applicable) to: Movement for the Abolition of War, 308 Walton Road, KT8 2HY

Membership application / renewal

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 I enclose: Membership £
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