

**NEW DATE: Movement for the
Abolition of War – AGM 2020**

Saturday 28 November, 11am, Zoom.

A link to the meeting will be sent by email to members a week beforehand. Chair's report, finance report, election of committee members / officers, plus an open discussion forum.

Nominations must be received by 1 November. Details of those standing in the elections will be on the MAW website from 7 November

abolishwar.org.uk

If you would like to nominate someone to stand for the committee (must be a MAW member) or, if you cannot attend but have suggestions or concerns you would like raised, email Hilary Evans at hilarymevans@btinternet.com

Peacebuilding in the post-Covid world

We are delighted that the Shadow Minister for Peace and Disarmament, Fabian Hamilton MP, will deliver this year's MAW Remembrance Lecture at 2pm on Saturday, 7 November. It will be an online event, followed by Q&A. Both Jeremy Corbyn and current Labour Party Leader, Keir Starmer have put International Peacebuilding at the forefront of Labour's Foreign Policy once elected to Government again.

Fabian will outline how he sees a future Labour Government achieve this goal, based partly on the philosophy of the late Robin Cook and expanding those ideas in the context of the post-pandemic world.

To join the Zoom/Facebook livestream, register at abolishwar.org.uk/rem2020.html.



Share us on social media

I am a Facebook user - not because I post cute pictures of my cat (I don't have one) or my family, but because I am one of the administrators of the MAW Facebook page.

It's one of the ways in which MAW can spread its message and comment on issues of the day.

Facebook's usefulness increases when the message is spread around.

So please 'Like' facebook.com/abolishwar, allow 'Notifications about activity on Pages that you follow' and 'Share' the posts.

Gill Hurle

MAW piles on the pressure over nuclear weapons and climate link

Many thanks to those MAW members who responded to requests to help us put pressure on MPs over the Climate & Ecological Emergency Bill which has started its journey through Parliament.

This is good news, except there is no mention in it of military-related greenhouse gas emissions. MAW is on the case.

Of the three MP replies on this matter forwarded to us by members, two were identical Liberal Democrat responses with the third being from a Conservative who believes the new Bill unnecessary. None mentioned the specific concern we raised. Elsewhere, MAW Executive member David Collins is pursuing our application for accreditation to COP26 in November 2021. If successful, we will have a greater chance of airing our demand that such emissions be acknowledged and counted.

Other letters concerning Setsuko Thurlow's powerful appeal and support for the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons 2017 (TPNW) brought responses which were depressingly predictable. Of the replies forwarded, one Labour MP seemed to indicate a veiled support for the TPNW. Two Conservatives failed to reply at all and the remainder - 2 Cons, 1 Lab, 1 LibDem - trotted out

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variants of tired and blinkered party lines. However, they may have to re-think sooner than they realise. There is cautious optimism that the final required TPNW ratifications are imminent. When that happens, Entry Into Force will follow 90 days later, possibly as early as January 2021. **Sadly, if we don't sign up to the Treaty we won't be bound by it.** However, as a supposed supporter of the UN and international law, we may start to feel isolated if the UK completely turns its back on it. It is to be hoped that we'll find it increasingly difficult to access finance for the weapons once they have been delegitimised by the majority of nations. The biggest banking corporations have a global reach and can't disregard international law. Some are refraining from investing in controversial weapons as a way to establish themselves as responsible investors, some even highlighted the Treaty in their decisions. By happy coincidence, as part of the UN75 celebrations, the UN Secretary General is due to visit Westminster Central Hall next January. And the first resolution in January 1946? To ensure 'the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction'!

Hilary Evans

Now follow Bruce's action plan to follow ratification

1. Put a poster in your window saying "Nuclear weapons will soon be illegal in half the world".
2. Get your local church, mosque, synagogue etc to plan a public thanksgiving event as soon as the Treaty comes into force.
3. Tell your secondary local schools and ask if they would like a speaker.
4. Get letters into your local press making the connection with a cash-

strapped NHS and pointing out that British nukes, costing over £200 billion over their lifetime, are not even independent - we have to borrow the missiles from the USA!

5. Get your local Council to join Edinburgh, Norwich and others to declare themselves nuclear-free.
6. Ask Trade Unions if they want their members working on projects which will soon be declared illegal by half the world.
7. If you have a local United Nations Association, make contact and suggest a joint celebration when the Treaty comes into force.

Support grows for serving soldier who protested deaths of Yemeni children

Lance Corporal Ahmed al-Babati, a serving soldier in the Royal Signals, held a personal protest in August, in full military uniform and equipment, against the involvement of the UK in the war waged by Saudi Arabia against Yemen. He blew a whistle every 10 minutes, representing the frequency of child deaths in the conflict. Ahmed, who was born in Yemen, also displayed a placard which stated: "I refuse to continue my military service until the deal with Saudi comes to an end". He remained in position until he was arrested and manhandled into a vehicle by military police. Babati recorded a message on Instagram for his newly created "Stand for Justice" group, in which he said: "I joined the army in 2017 and took an oath to protect and serve this

country, not to be part of a corrupt government that continues to arm and support terrorism". For a young soldier to defy military orders in order to protest against war crimes in which the UK is



implicated is a rare act of bravery. Veterans for Peace, including MAW Committee member David Collins supported his stand by mounting identical protests on two weekends outside Downing Street - picture above.

VfP is keeping in regular touch with Ahmed, whose case has not yet been dealt with by his regiment.

MAW nominates vice-president and Wales has a Peace Institute!



Mererid Hopwood: “I cannot find a single argument against the abolition of war. Waldo Williams, pacifist and poet, finishes a sonnet with ‘Gobaith fo’n meistr, rhoed Amser inni’n was’ (‘May Hope be our master, Time our servant’).”

Mererid Hopwood has been nominated as a vice-president for MAW. Mererid explains her vision for the world and celebrates the recent founding of the Academi Heddwch Cymru - a new peace institute for Wales.

“From my primary school days as a member of the Welsh-language youth movement, ‘Urdd Gobaith Cymru’, I looked forward to 18 May each year when the Message of Peace and Goodwill was read out in assembly, first in Welsh and then in many other languages. Such a message has been sent from the youth of Wales to the youth of the world every year since 1922.

This wonder of connecting in peace with all people stayed with me and it has been my privilege in adult life to work on campaigns with Cymdeithas y Cymod, the International Fellowship of Reconciliation in Wales and, more recently, with colleagues from the universities of Wales and others to establish the Academi Heddwch Cymru - a peace institute that aims to extend Wales’ strong tradition of peace-making and peace-promotion. War is not inevitable. Abolishing it is indeed desirable and possible. Until that goal is reached, we must continue with hope and determination.”

BOOK REVIEW: All the Countries We’ve Ever Invaded

Stuart Laycock, History Press, 2012. 256pp, £12.99

With its brisk tone and many comic asides, this modest volume suggests it is not entirely serious. While 193 countries are profiled (the book is a kind of historical gazetteer) the author gives a total of 171 which were invaded. And, in many cases it was more a question of piracy or skirmishes with rival empires, liberation from fascists or even UN peace-keeping operations.

And yet...it is shocking to be reminded (were we ever properly told?) of the long history and extraordinary global scope of British adventurism and imperial interference.

Militarism, colonialism and slavery are closely entwined; no surprise then that ours was the largest empire ever, and that when you add up how many wars each country has engaged in over the centuries, the UK tops the list.

Hence it is no secret that our sense of this country’s place in the contemporary world remains grounded in our erstwhile global dominance. Our communities too reflect this legacy. As the old anti-racist slogan has it: “We are here because you were there”.

If you want to unpick the structures of war-making that exist in today’s country, you could do worse than take this entertaining crash course in history and geography.

Colin Archer

New Directory of Museums for Peace Worldwide

The United Nations published the first **Handbook of Peace Museums** in 1995. This project was inherited by Dr. Kazuyo Yamane of the International Network of Museums for Peace (INMP) in the 21st century. The full text of the latest edition, co-edited by Kazuyo Yamane and Ikuro Anzai, is available on the website of the INMP 2020 Conference Organizing Committee. 350pp with illustrations, featuring 302 museums in 49 countries. <https://sites.google.com/view/inmp-2020/museums-for-peace-worldwide>

This is a superb and inspiring piece of work, generously made available free of charge online. The world is full of war museums - but it looks like the peace museums are catching up!

To receive an electronic version of the newsletter email Gill Hurle at gill.hurle@abolishwar.org.uk *Abolish War* will next be published on February 1, 2021.



Despite Lockdown we got out and about when we could. Here's MAW executive committee member Sally Reynolds supporting a good cause in Oxfordshire.

Calling creatives - let's make a plan for peace

This is a call to all creative people in MAW and beyond.

Are you an artist, musician, writer, actor - living and working in the creative world? Raising awareness about the futility and horrors of war and the essential need for militarisation to stop is really difficult. The Arts is one way of crossing barriers and conveying experiences, ideas and possibilities which can be hard to express in words. The Arts can trigger a response, not only to the subject but also 'what can I do about this'?

MAW campaigns and raises awareness in many different ways. It has engaged with the arts in exhibitions such as *The Human Cost of War* and through music. Would you be interested in discussing ideas for ways we could work together to raise awareness for the Abolition of War? Together we can come up with a plan or two - and put them into action. Please get in touch with Alison Lochhead via alisonlochhead358@gmail.com / 07976 272765. Alison is an artist and an executive member of MAW.

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, 1 Old Mill Place, Haslemere, GU27 1NE

Membership application / renewal

Name

Address

..... Postcode

Tel no.

Email

Type of membership (please tick):

Life £100 Individual £15 Unwaged £5

Household (2 or more at same address) £20 Group or organisation £25

I enclose: Membership £

Donation £

Total £

Please make cheque payable to Movement for the Abolition of War
OR Please send me a standing order form

From War to Peace **SPECIAL OFFER!**

MAW has more copies of our booklet *From War to Peace* to distribute FREE.

Now is your chance to spread the word - to friends, neighbours, young people, politicians, the unconverted, the already converted and everyone inbetween!

In this time of Covid Pandemic and Climate Emergency our message has never been more crucial! Order copies via maworders@gmail.com or by calling 07876 747186.

Membership subscriptions: If you received this newsletter by post the label on the envelope shows your membership status: the date to which you are paid up, eg 2020; 'Life', if you are a life member; 'SO' if you pay by standing order or 'Comp' if you receive a complimentary copy.

To join or renew your membership complete the form in this newsletter or download the forms from our website at <http://www.abolishwar.org.uk/join.html>. If you would like to receive email the newsletter by email, rather than a hard copy, please email gill.hurle@abolishwar.org.uk

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