

Join us for key peace debate in September

On **Wednesday 21 September**, the UN International Day of Peace, MAW will host a live event - please join us.

Our vice-president Martin Bell, known to millions as a distinguished former war correspondent, will exchange ideas with Ben Griffin, the founder of Veterans for Peace UK and a former SAS soldier.

The event will take place in front of a live audience in central London with remote access also an option.

The two men will talk about their experiences, share insights and discuss how to stimulate a public debate on peace before taking questions live and via streaming for those participating remotely.

Full details coming soon - but make a note of the date for now and tell your friends also! Don't pass up the chance to be part of this significant and exciting joint MAW/VfP encounter.

For an electronic version of this newsletter please email Gill Hurlle at gill.hurle@abolishwar.org.uk
The next edition of *Abolish War* will be published in September.



Banner in the works: People gather daily, close to the Russian Embassy in London, to express their anguish, anger, frustration and despair. MAW Exec member Hilary Evans is often among their number with the MAW banner. She is pictured above left with our Membership Secretary Gill Hurlle on the right.

The Ukraine war - let's heed the growing calls for a ceasefire

Colin Archer, MAW vice-president, highlights the growing international calls for a halt to the fighting in Ukraine - and the dangers of the different stance being taken by the US and UK

I am sure I am far from the only activist in the peace and human rights movement who feels conflicted about the current situation. We want aggression to be rolled back, and we also want a rapid end to the suffering. It looks like the war might go on for years. The West is also conflicted: many leaders (notably Macron and Schulz, as well the Pope, the UN Secretary-General, representatives of China, India, Brazil, South Africa plus others) have made calls for a ceasefire. Yet the US and UK are insisting on 'weakening Russia' (1).

This is dangerous. First it ignores the fateful lessons of the Versailles settlement and its role in the rise of Nazism and, second, it could push Putin into a corner, reaching for the nuclear button... An important new appeal has been published in the Asia Pacific Journal (2). It does not speculate about possible peace settlement

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terms. The focus instead is on a halt to the fighting. What is distinctive about this call is that it urges the countries of Asia and Africa to take action. Meanwhile there are voices calling for a new Non-Aligned Movement (3).

A similar ceasefire call was issued by the IPB and the ITUC (4) ahead of the VE Day anniversary.

These appeals deserve wider circulation - please forward them! If momentum grows, they may get taken up by mass media and influential political voices, to press the British and US governments to revise their goals. As the Japanese appeal says: "Nothing is more precious than human life. Let there be no more killing or being killed in Ukraine. That is our plea."

1) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-61214176>

2) <https://apjif.org/2022/10/McCormack-Selden.html>

3) <https://new.portside.org/2022-05-14/new-non-aligned-movement-urgent-imperative-global-south>

4) <http://www.ipb.org/yesterdays-news/appeal-for-ceasefire-and-negotiations-8-9-may-2022/>

Young people have their say: A peace and goodwill message has been delivered every year for the last century by the young people of Wales. The Urdd - the largest organisation for young people in Wales - co-ordinates the annual peace and goodwill message, which is available in 100 languages this year.

The annual goodwill message, a familiar ritual to many Welsh schoolchildren, is focused this year on the environment and calls on those in power to take action to protect the planet, saying: "It's time to wake up."

<https://www.urdd.cymru/en/peace-and-goodwill/>

Moving CO ceremony brings past and present into focus

The annual ceremony to mark Conscientious Objectors' Day took place in Tavistock Square London on May 15, when people gathered around the stone which honours those who have maintained the right to refuse to kill.

Despite sporadic rain, nearly 100 people came to the Square. The event was live-streamed by the 14 sponsoring

nonviolent resistance in Ukraine, are going on, though not widely reported. Actor Kika Markham, whose father was a CO in World War Two, read a moving extract from her mother's memoir of the time and also *Go down fighting*, verses written to honour poet and pacifist Adrian Mitchell. Sahar Vardi, an Israeli CO, then spoke of her experience.

Having served several prison sentences in Israel, she is now doing Peace Studies at Bradford University. She urged us all to be COs, maintaining protest against war and militarism, even if we were not personally threatened with conscription.

The names of 85 COs, past and present, representing countries all over the world, were read out as white carnations were placed on the stone. Then a minute's silence was observed.

The Raised Voices choir sang two songs by MAW's Sue Gilmurray, pictured. The songs were *The ones who said No*,

which has been sung every year since 2000, and *A climate for peace*. The climate crisis makes peaceful collaboration between nations more vital than ever.

Events also took place at several other locations, including Brighton, Leicester, Manchester and Wokingham.

Sue Gilmurray
<https://abolishwar.net/what-we-do/resource-library/sing-for-peace/>



organisations. A recording is available via co-day.org - Peace Pledge Union's Youtube channel.

Actor and playwright Michael Mears introduced the speakers. First Semih Sapmaz from War Resisters' International, told us of WRI and was able to bring us words from current war resisters in both Russia and Ukraine. Anti-war protest in Russia, and

GDAMS highlights cost of missed chances to make a difference

MAW has long supported the Global Campaign on Military Spending, agreeing with Cicero that “the sinews of war are infinite money”.

It wasn't easy to arrange events this year, given the continuing effects of the Covid pandemic and the Ukraine war. However, several groups did organise public actions and there was also an impressive international Twitterstorm when annual SIPRI (military expenditure) figures were announced.

For the first time, the annual total of global government spending on the military topped \$2 trillion.

The UK's contribution was around £50bn (about the same as Russia), including the first stage of the major increases announced last year. Our GDAMS message in relation to the Ukraine conflict was to point out that NATO outspends Russia by about 18:1 (calculations vary). How will increasing our own defence spending still further help bring peace?

One important initiative taken during this GDAMS season was the launch of a report entitled **Common Security 2022** which builds on the work of the 1982 Olof Palme Commission and shows the way forward to a new security framework, especially for Europe. (www.commonsecurity.org)

Meanwhile the G7 will fail to deliver on its 2009 promise on Climate Finance for a third year. Massive investments in green energy are needed to meet our climate goals. And how about the serious risk of famine in the Global South?

The British government has just announced that overseas humanitarian funding was cut by more than half last year.

Then there's inequality, pandemic costs, the cost of living crisis - and all while energy companies rake in billions in profits. As GCOMS says: “it's time for new priorities!”

<https://demilitarize.org.uk/uk-report-on-gdams-2022/>

Colin Archer

‘Voices will be heard’ - TPNW meeting pledge

The First Meeting of the States Parties to the **Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons**, (TPNW) to be held 21-23 June in Vienna, will be a vital coming together of countries that have already banned nuclear weapons.

Under the jurisdiction of the UN, they will establish a blueprint for a nuclear weapons-free world. ICAN is the co-ordinating body for civil society participation at the UN meeting, organising a series of events for NGOs participating in the conference and an opportunity for parliamentarians and city representatives from around the world to meet and feed their experiences and views into the negotiations.

ICAN's Executive Director, Beatrice Fihn, says: “*Vienna will be a moment where the world responds and creates the global nuclear disarmament plan. Nuclear weapons impact everyone. This meeting will be a place for all voices to be heard.*”

States that have not yet joined the Treaty are invited to attend as observers. MAW members have already urged UK Foreign Secretary Liz Truss to attend, so far to no avail, but **it is still important to ask your own MP** to take an interest in a matter which most countries of the world deem to be of existential importance.

We are delighted that Fabian Hamilton, Shadow Minister for Peace and Disarmament, will be attending. All the other parties should be sending representatives also.

Hilary Evans



Knit one, purl one for peace: At just £4 you can turn all your children and grandchildren's dolls into Peace Activists! Knitted to order by MAW's Sue Gilmurray. <https://abolishwar.net/shop/rainbow-peace-jumper/>

Subversive voices speak

MAW member Sue Gilmurray recently recorded an interview with an academic from UEA, Oskar Cox Jensen, about her song, *The war machine rolls round* as part of a major project on protest songs and their history, called *Our subversive voice*. This includes many and varied songs, some from centuries ago and some more recent.

The War Machine Rolls Round was written 20 years ago to protest against the international arms trade, but is sadly still relevant today. Sue wrote new verses for a CND protest at Lakenheath on May 21.

In April the edited interview was posted on the website www.oursubversivevoice.com where you can also find the list of songs - and hear them - also. <https://oursubversivevoice.com/interview/sue-gilmurray/> takes you to Sue's segment.



MAW creatives filled the exhibition space at Cornerstone Arts Centre, Didcot, with artworks during April. Their event, **War, Peace & Care for the Earth** was a glorious mix of songs from Frankie Armstrong, Rona Topaz and Sue Gilmurray, and poetry chosen by Sally Mears and written by her, Geraldine Bridges, and others. Ali Lochhead, pictured, was

How artists made their mark in plea for peace

unable to attend, but her glowing artworks represented her, while John Gittings, author, journalist and Far East specialist, provided food for thought with an excellent talk about war, with a focus on Ukraine. He started with John Donne's *No man is an island* and ended with the observation: "The key issue is that everything Russia is doing in Ukraine is an act of aggression under the UN Charter. To bring the war to an end, we need greater support for the UN and action by the UN."

Sally Reynolds

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

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Life £100 Individual £15 Unwaged £5

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

I enclose: Membership £

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

Join CND protest

CND has condemned the possible return of US nuclear weapons to RAF Lakenheath in Suffolk. It is urging people to write to their MP to protest this dangerous and destabilising development.

A protest at the base was held following reports that the US Department of Defense has added the UK to a list of NATO nuclear weapons storage locations being upgraded under a multi-million dollar programme. It is believed that US nuclear weapons could be sent to RAF Lakenheath, which is run by the US. CND has vowed to oppose this move.

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 2022; '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/support-us/join-us/>. If you would like to receive email notification of the newsletter availability, instead of a hard copy, please email gill.hurle@abolishwar.org.uk

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