

‘Soft power’ - not military might - is key to climate pledge

The Executive Director of Scientists for Global Responsibility, Dr Stuart Parkinson, and Linsey Cottrell of the Conflict & Environment Observatory gave oral evidence on military carbon emissions via video link in January to the House of Commons Defence Committee. This was a unique opportunity for a serious dialogue with this influential cross party body of 11 MPs from Conservative, Labour, SNP and DUP parties. The Chair, Tobias Ellwood, is an army reserve (Lt Colonel) in the 77th Brigade, a military psychological operations unit responsible for “non-lethal” warfare.

In the 90 minute meeting questions were put to Linsey and Stuart by members of the Committee regarding the written evidence on military carbon emissions submitted by SGR and published in September 2022.

At the heart of the report was that the consequences of the government pledge of “making climate change and biodiversity loss the number one international priority” are for the UK to lead international

Cont on page 2

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



Six nations for Rugby, 40 nations for Arms Trade: MAW member Martin Birdseye is pictured protesting against the Rugby Football Union (RFU) hosting the International Armoured Vehicles Conference at Twickenham Rugby Stadium in January. MAW committee members Hilary Evans and David Collins **Cont on p3**
Photo credit: Richard Clemence @londonmono

MAW submits key suggestions as UN consults on Agenda for Peace

In the declaration marking the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, Member States noted the need to promote peace and prevent conflicts.

The record says: “Ongoing armed conflicts and threats against international peace and security must be urgently resolved by peaceful means. We reiterate the importance of abiding by the Charter, principles of international law, and relevant resolutions of the Security Council. International arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament agreements and their architectures need to be upheld.”

The Secretary General was asked to bring before the General Assembly recommendations on how best to build, keep and sustain peace in response to current and future challenges. His resulting report, *Our Common Agenda*, published in September 2021, noted the need for a New Agenda for Peace with better understanding of the underlying drivers of conflict and a renewed effort to agree more effective collective security responses. A consultation was launched and in

Cont on page 2

Soft power

Cont from page 1
action in reducing GHG emissions consistent with the targets laid out in the Paris Agreement - in particular the 1.5°C target. SGR argues that this target remains in reach only if industrialised nations reduce GHG emissions by more than 10% per year.

Such a rapid transition would have major implications for the UK's approach to international security. For example, the main focus would need to be on "soft power" with priority for diplomacy, overseas aid for the most vulnerable and tackling the root causes of conflict.

The initially sceptical mindset of the Committee was illustrated by an unchallenged remark by Mark Francois MP: "This committee has campaigned for years to increase military spending to 3% of GDP."

However, some of the committee do heed and act on the very competent and impressive evidence of Stuart and Linsey.

Listen for yourself

Video and transcript (oral session, 24 January 2023):

<https://committees.parliament.uk/event/16940/formal-meeting-oral-evidence-session/>

Written evidence (published 8 September 2022):

<https://committees.parliament.uk/work/6684/defence-and-climate-change/publications/written-evidence/>

David Collins

Celebrating the centenary of a remarkable Welsh peace petition

"We appeal to you, Women of the United States of America ... to hand down to the generations who come after us, the proud heritage of a Warless World."

It was 1923. The wounds of the First World War were still wide open and the people world over were desperate to avoid further warmongering. It was against this background that the women of Wales decided to take action. They launched an ambitious appeal to the *Women of America*, asking them to call for the US to join and lead the new League of Nations.

Months of hard work followed - before email and in pre-Facebook days and when horsepower meant horse power - and 390,296 Welsh women signed what became known as The Memorial Petition.

An oak chest was commissioned to contain the signatures, reported by the New York press to be seven miles long, while the Memorial itself was vellum backed with fine Moroccan leather and gold-leaf. By February 1924, a delegation of three women, Mary Ellis and Elined Prys led by Welsh League of Nations Union Chair, Annie Hughes-Griffiths (and accompanied by Gladys Thomas) had made the voyage across the Atlantic.

This remarkable story, however, seems to have become a 'hidden history', until in 2014, when an old leather binding was found in the Temple of Peace and Health Library in Cardiff as part of the *Cymru'n Cofio/Wales for Peace* project led by the WCIA, the Welsh Centre for International Affairs. The original petition was then tracked down to the Smithsonian in Washington DC and the story has been slowly pieced together.

Plans are progressing through a partnership led by Academi Heddwch (the Peace Academy in Wales) to mark the centenary in 2023-24 with the hope that the Memorial, chest and petition signatures can be reunited in Wales, so that the original Peace Appeal can inspire a new generation of Welsh internationalists, promoting peace locally, nationally and internationally.

As we prepare for the celebrations, the work of the pioneering women has already inspired the creation of a present-day women's peace campaign - *Heddwch Nain/Mam-gu (Our Grandmothers' Peace)*.

Let's hope it inspires many more and keeps inspiring, until we have achieved a world without war.

Mererid Hopwood

UN Agenda for Peace

Cont from page 1

January, MAW responded to the invitation to civil society organisations to contribute ideas, submitting six suggestions based on our campaigning priorities:

1. Increase public awareness of and support for the UN
2. Resolve conflicts peacefully
3. Use Common Security to replace the "law of force" with the "force of law"
4. Recognise that peace is vital for environmental sustainability

5. Protect the global commons through re-purposing the UN Trusteeship Council
6. Implement nuclear disarmament obligations.

The full submission can be seen on our website - www.abolishwar.net

MAW is grateful to UNFOLD ZERO for alerting us to this call and for help with our submission. The UN General Assembly is now planning a Summit of the Future in September 2024 and the New Agenda for Peace will feed into this.

Hilary Evans



Taking the peace message on the road - how does it work?

MAW chair Tim Devereux, a cyclist and peace activist, has taken part in a number of events which combine cycling and peace campaigning. Join him for an online talk about his exploits and an assessment of their effectiveness as actions for peace.

The talk - *Bikes for Peace* - will take place on Tuesday, March 28 at 7pm. Join us via this link - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87081086464>

Tim is pictured far left, finishing the most recent ride at Bradford Town Hall, West Yorkshire in September 2022.

Join us as MAW takes its place in the peace bloc at XR's Westminster rally

Bring your climate demands to Westminster on Friday, 21 April

MAW will be participating, as part of the XR Peace bloc, in the huge gathering at Westminster planned for Friday 21 April. Do come!

Extinction Rebellion (XR) invites all people, all groups, all organisations to create a critical mass impossible to ignore. The target is for 100,000 people from all walks of life to gather peacefully at the nation's seat of power and encircle the Houses of Parliament.

The plan is to maintain a presence at Westminster for four days with the main focus on the 21st.

Having recently announced its decision to quit actions causing public disruption, XR's priority is now on encouraging attendance rather than arrest, relationships rather than roadblocks.

The theme for the XR Peace section will be **Peace, Climate and Life** and it is planned to hold activities and teach-ins during the four days which will focus on peace-related themes such as military spending as part of

the Global Days of Action on Military Spending (www.demilitarize.org/).

Three ways to get involved

1. Sign up to let us know you'll be there: <https://xrpeace.org/>
2. MAW will be updating its *War is Bad for the Planet Too* flyer for the occasion. Let us know if you need some to distribute in your local area.
3. If you live within Greater London, consider whether you might be able to offer a bed to a MAW member coming from afar. Or if you are one of those distant members and need overnight accommodation, let us know and we'll try to match up hosts and visitors.

Email hilarymevans@btinternet.com

(NB: There is talk of organising a gathering in Edinburgh on the same day - which would be more convenient for our Scottish members! Check the website.

"Humanity has a choice: co-operate or perish. It is either a Climate Solidarity Pact or a Climate Suicide Pact" - UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres addressing COP27.

Hilary Evans

Cont from page 1 Twickenham protest

also joined the protest and supported with other activities.

David wrote two letters to the CEO of the RFU pointing out the potentially disastrous consequences of enabling arms sales and asking for a meeting.

One letter said: "In February 2022 I pointed out to you that international arms companies, including UralVagonZavod of Russia, were involved in arms trading at your stadium. The 2022 conference was the final international arms event before the devastating attack by Russia on Ukraine."

Hilary, along with other MAW members, set up a stall in Twickenham High Street to tell locals about yet another arms event. She reports almost universal dismay from passers-by at the involvement of their town in such activities.

Musicians play for peace - and in memory of Bruce

Musicians for Peace and Disarmament will hold their first live orchestral concert since the pandemic on Thursday, 25 May, at 7.30pm, at St James' Church, 197 Piccadilly, London W1J 9LL.

The concert will be dedicated to the memory of MAW founder Bruce Kent and the proceeds will be shared between the three organisations with which he was particularly associated - CND, Pax Christi and MAW itself.

Bruce was a frequent speaker at the MPD (previously MANA) concerts, including at the last live concert at the church 2019 - **pictured right**.

Programme:

Prokofiev Symphony No.1 in D ("Classical")
Mozart Flute Concerto in D (soloist MPD Patron, Wissam Boustany)
Haydn Symphony No.103 in E flat ("The Drumroll")

Conductor: MPD Patron, Jane Glover DBE **pictured above right with the orchestra.**

All the musicians who take part in MPD concerts are professionals and give their services free to raise funds for the peace movement.

Please see the website <http://www.mpdconcerts.org> for further details and to book tickets.



Pope urges path of peace in Africa visit

Pope Francis made a remarkable peace-making visit to the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan in February. For part of the tour he was with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

They spoke to huge audiences and met with victims of violence. The Pope had met in Rome in 2019 with the South Sudanese leaders.

"Unfortunately, the reconciliation process has not advanced," he said. South Sudan became independent in 2011 but has been plagued by civil war and violence, a result of the old logic of power and rivalry, which produces war, refugees and internally displaced persons.

Pope Francis said he and his ecumenical partners urged political leaders to push forward with pledges given, say "No" to corruption and arms trafficking, and "Yes" to encounter and dialogue.

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

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