

## Don't give up - MAW members reflect on continuing human tragedy in Gaza

### Heather and Nigel Speight write of their horror and anger over Gaza and UK government actions

We are sure we are all in a state of absolute despair over Gaza. The deafening silence from our Labour government is appalling and those of us who voted Labour in the last election must now feel complicit in their actions (or inaction). Individual MPs like Zarah Sultana and Jeremy Corbyn have rightly called the government out but been ignored. Our Foreign Secretary David Lammy occasionally makes some of the right noises, then gets his wrist slapped by Starmer and retracts. He then hosts the Israeli Foreign Secretary in secret and, presumably, with Starmer's approval protects the visitor from an attempt to arrest him for war crimes. The bias in our media, especially the BBC, seems palpable, with hardly any space given to Palestinian

representatives. Have you noticed how the BBC announcer when mentioning Hamas always puts in the obligatory statement that they carried out the attacks of Oct 2023, but when they mention Netanyahu they never state that the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant in November 2024 re alleged responsibility for war crimes. Similarly the BBC withdraw a very moving and truthful film made by Gazan children after protests from the supporters of Israel in the UK. How they let Louis Theroux make that film on the settlers is a wonder. We found it too painful to watch. We are all responsible for the way our government is complicit in Israel's war crimes. All we can do is go on marches and vigils, wear Palestinian badges, sign petitions, write letters, donate and donate again. Giving up is not an option.



### Tim's on track for 3,431 miles for Gaza

I am busy riding 3,431 miles, the distance from my home in Leeds to Gaza, to raise funds for Medical Aid for Palestinians. I am riding around Yorkshire, covering a few miles each day. By mid-May, I was almost at 1,500 miles, averaging 11.7 miles a day. If I was actually pedalling to Gaza, I'd be in Hungary. If I keep going at this rate, I'll complete the journey some time in autumn - I am aiming for my birthday on 5 October. Fundraising is going well. The target of £1,000 has been exceeded, and is now close to £3,000 with Gift Aid. With the dreadful news from Gaza, MAP's needs are great. Please give what you can. <https://www.justgiving.com/page/tim-devereux-map-2025>

### RADIO SERIES

*Scramble for Rare Earths:* Misha Glenny explores the world of rare earth metals and other critical raw materials. They are vital for the future of technology and the green transition. But some see China's monopoly on production as a major global threat. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m001cdr6>

### 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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## Conflict sees shares soar and opens our eyes to profiteering

Within hours of news breaking that a Pakistan Air Force fighter jet, manufactured by the Chengdu Group in China, had downed an Indian Air Force French-made Rafale jet, Chengdu shares soared by 40% over two days.

"There is no better advertisement than a real combat situation," said a company spokesperson, reflecting how China's reluctance to engage directly in warfare has hindered potential arms sales. Britain, on the other hand, has long pursued a policy of engaging in smaller conflicts to test UK-manufactured hardware and train military personnel - sales reps for future war equipment Expos. Once a high level of impunity is achieved through overwhelming technical superiority, the willingness to take risks increases dramatically. Consider the ongoing example of Israel's unprecedented incursions into multiple surrounding countries. This year, Chair of the NATO Military Committee, Admiral Rob Bauer of the Dutch Navy, commenting on pension funds' reluctance to invest in arms despite the surge in war profiteering, said: "Why are you not convinced by trillions of dollars? Are you stupid? There's so much money to be made over the next 20 years." Yet once the initial surge of popular excitement created by these military

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The Lakenheath Alliance for Peace (LAP) - 53 alliance organisations and growing - set up a peace camp at the main gate of USAF Lakenheath in mid April. MAW's Ali Lochhead is pictured above. LAP aims to stop US nuclear weapons returning to USAF Lakenheath and, ideally, to shut the base. The USAF Base has deployed weapons and been involved in conflicts in Libya, Afghanistan, Serbia, Iraq, East Africa, Gaza and Syria and more. The camp follows the successful peace camp in July 2024 and monthly vigils held since at the base. Hundreds of people visited the Peace Camp from all over the world. Monthly vigils will continue and the next camp is in the planning.

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## Ending Wars - at 2025's Remembrance Lecture



There can be no more important topic for MAW than *Ending Wars* - as our 2025 Remembrance Lecturer, Lord John Alderdice, surely knows. A medical doctor and a psychoanalytic psychiatrist, John Alderdice, pictured, was Leader of the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland 1987 - 1998 and a key negotiator of the Good Friday Agreement. Since 1996 he has been a life member of the House of Lords and is a member of the Select Committee on International Relations and Defence. He is currently co-editing a book on Ending Wars based on the Conference for the Resolution of Intractable Conflict held in Oxford last September. The twin themes were ending of individual wars as well as aspects of ending war more generally as a way of resolving disagreements. The date for your diary is Sunday, 9 November at 3pm in Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, London, WC1H 9BD.

For an electronic version of this newsletter email Gill Hurle at [gill.hurle@abolishwar.org.uk](mailto:gill.hurle@abolishwar.org.uk). The next edition of *Abolish War* will be published in October.

### Imperial War Museum: Exhibition and Conference – *War and the Mind*

The Imperial War Museum draws upon a huge stock for its temporary exhibitions. ***War and the Mind*** examined psychological dimensions of the stages of armed conflict: before, during and after. As on previous occasions, it managed to encompass both the war-as-necessary-evil and pacifist perspectives. It was gratifying to see quotations from peace activists including Paul Oestreicher and Ron Huzzard. Aspects tackled included enemy images, justifications for war, propaganda, training for battle, loyalty to buddies and post-conflict traumatic disorder. Visitors to the IWM in London should not miss the rather lovely Tibetan Peace Garden in the grounds.

Complementing the exhibition on the last day was *War and the Mind Live*, bringing together 11 leading historians, psychologists, tech experts, policymakers, plus peace and human rights activists from several countries, including war correspondent Fergal Keane, Professor Margaret MacMillan of Oxford University, Professor Pinker of Harvard and Jonathan Cohen of Conciliation Resources (a speaker at the MAW Sept 2024 conference). There was discussion about countries now viewed as ‘the enemy in peace’ with their every move viewed with suspicion; the fluidity of memory; the manipulation of history and how myths about past conflicts have shaped us. Dr Olesya Khromeychuk of Ukraine explained how reconciliation with Russia could only be contemplated via punishment, reparation and justice over many years. Colombian Ana Victoria Mendoza spoke of the need to create women’s safe spaces and for deep listening, together with art and music to promote understanding.

**Colin Archer & David Collins**

## ‘We refuse to fight’ - CO Day marked with powerful song

At 1pm on May 15 every year in London’s Tavistock Square, an annual Conscientious Objectors’ Day event takes place. This year, as often before, it featured the Raised Voices choir. In planning what to sing, they had to choose between two songs: Leon Rosselson’s ***Ballad of Rivka and Mohammed*** and Protest in Harmony’s ***We Refuse***.

Rosselson imagines seeing Rivka, a little girl who had been killed by the Nazis because she was Jewish, and then seeing Mohammed, a boy who had been killed by Israelis because he lived in Gaza. In his imagination, the two children decide to be friends. Rivka says: ‘*Mohammed, my friend, my brother, let us leave this world of war.*’

*Then each took the hand of the other, and then they were seen no more.*

Rosselson goes on to condemn the politicians who enable the killing of children to go on. *We Refuse* is very different. The words, plain and direct, come from a letter by a group of Israeli COs who will not take part in the occupation of Palestine, set to music by Jane Lewis. They say:

*We refuse to serve the occupation;  
We refuse to take part in oppression;  
We refuse conscription ‘til the occupation ends.*

The contrast is stark: the invitation to think of young and innocent children, compared to the refusal to fight. They exemplify for me the two sides of our opposition to war.

We must allow ourselves to care and feel for the victims of conflict. But we should not become sentimental. As Rosselson says in his final verse:

*The people with power sat on their hands and supplied the weapons that kill.*

We need to understand the roots of that conflict and work on ways to resolve it.

We should be angry that so many suffer and die when there are means to work for peace and reconciliation. But we must not allow that anger to ignite into hatred and the demonisation of one side in a conflict.

Raised Voices sang *We Refuse* but both songs have their place. Look them up online. Songs can be powerful without being violent and inspire us to work for peace.

**Sue Gilmurray**

### BOOK REVIEWS

***38 Londres Street***, by lawyer and writer Philippe Sands  
This building in Chile is home to the legacies of two men whose personal stories span continents, nationalities and decades of atrocity: Augusto Pinochet, President of Chile, and Walther Rauff, a Nazi SS officer responsible for the use of gas vans. Sands creates a legal thriller and portraits of two mass murderers.

<https://guardianbookshop.com/38-londres-street-9781474620741/>

***American Militarism on Steroids: The Military-Industrial Complex, Unbounded, Uncontained, and Undemocratic*** by William Astore  
An uncompromising view of the US military system by a retired lieutenant colonel (USAF).  
<https://portside.org/2025-04-05/ending-militarism-america>

## Nuclear threat at Lakenheath is focus of growing campaign



This year Lakenheath camp was bigger and had daily themed programmes such as Climate Day, Greenham Women Day, Protest and Political Songs Day, War Crimes and Genocide Day and more. There was also an International Peace Conference, with CND UK and many organisations and individuals involved, trying to put the world to rights!

Press coverage was mainly local. The only time the national press - the BBC and Telegraph - covered the story was when there were arrests; three arrests when 12 topless women blockaded the main gate and, on the last day, when a mass blockade with more than 250 people took place. This closed the base for three hours and seven people were arrested. Since LAP first went to the USAF base in March 2024, we

have been trying to get a letter accepted by the Base Commanders explaining why we want to close it down and the fifth attempt was made on the first day at the Peace Camp, but still to no avail.

The fence at the main gate of the base was covered in banners and messages. These were visible from the very busy road and there was a constant presence at the side of the road with “Honk for Peace” signs. Increasing numbers of people gave thumbs up and beeped, including those coming out of the base and some people in military uniform. Local support for stopping the endless peace-shattering planes and a growing awareness about what is going on in the base is increasing and more and more local people are speaking out against it.

**Ali Lochhead**



### Hitting the right notes - How choirs made their mark at Lakenheath in April 2025

Karma Farm eco-campsite in Isleham, a 20-minute drive from noisy USAF Lakenheath, provided the perfect base for peace activists to gather, sleep, eat and form community.

I was lucky enough to join a workshop there with campaigning group Seize the Day. A packed marquee resonated as we learned new songs. Then off to the base itself to put them into practice! We were allocated a grassy area just outside the main gate and spent a gloriously sunny afternoon with several other campaign choirs from around the country (I was there with Oxford Seagreen Singers) - singing our hearts out for peace, unity, social justice and, yes, disarmament. The fighter planes circling overhead only made us more determined.

The next morning we went to Brandon - a market town at the north end of the base - and sang to people on their way to market. To our delight and amazement we were approached by several locals saying, “Thank you for being here” and “I had no idea that there were nuclear weapons at Lakenheath.” Hats off to the organisers of the whole camp, many of them veterans of Greenham Common. Sad we have to do it all again!

**Sally Reynolds**

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excursions dissipates, there is often an equally strong reaction of regret and disgust.

In Britain, it is noticeable that fear and worry over intractable wars in Ukraine, Gaza and other countries have stimulated multiple peace-oriented conferences, all of which have sold out rapidly.

MAW’s timely new publication “*Alternatives to War*” published by the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation is now a “must buy” this summer.

**David Collins**