

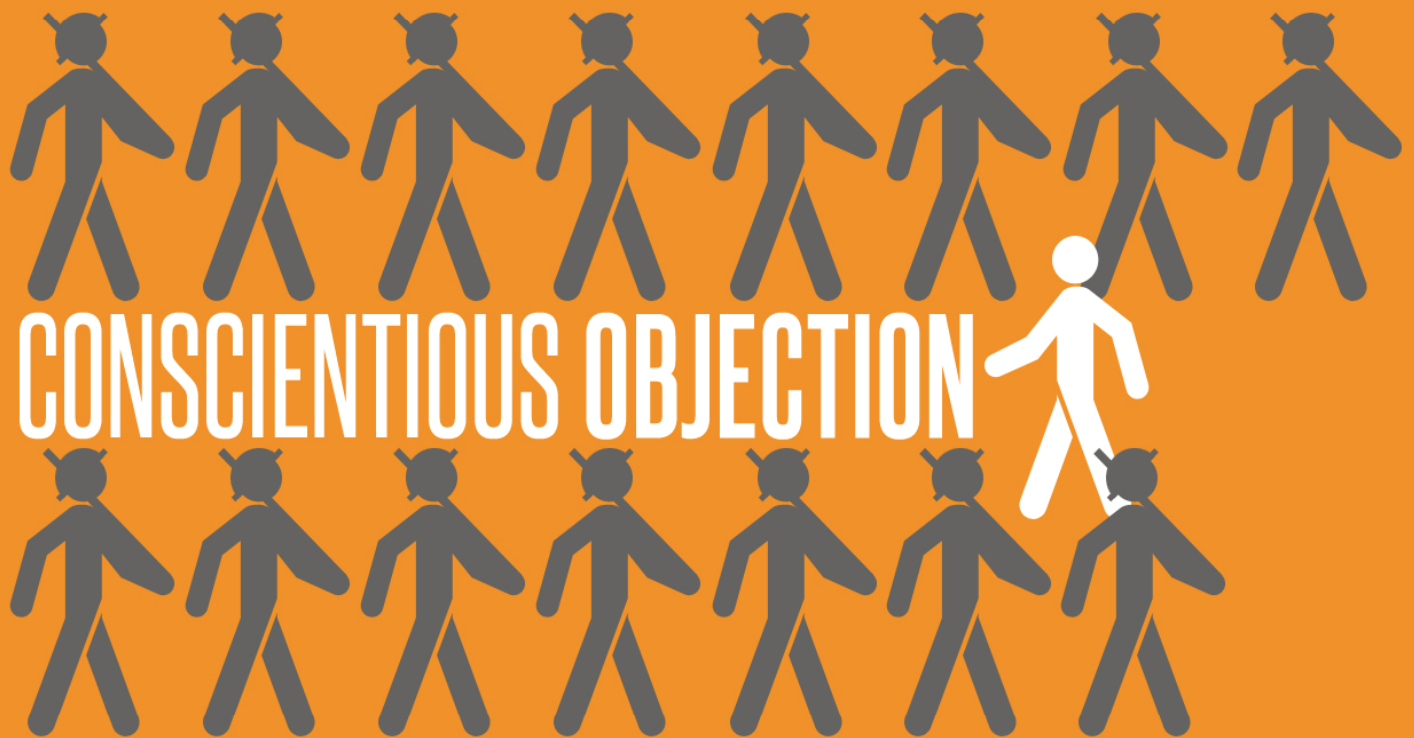


MAKING THE LINKS,
WAGING PEACE



PEACE & JUSTICE NEWS

MAY 2014



IN THIS ISSUE:

A WW2 CO's Recollections

Quakers and Conscientious Objection

A WW1 CO's Letter from Prison

Unsung Heroes: CO's of WW1

Review: Debt: The First 5000 Years

Edinburgh Peace and Justice Centre

Nonviolence ♦ Conflict Resolution ♦ Alternatives to War

Human Rights ♦ Environmental Responsibility

Providing analysis of the causes of war and advocating peace & disarmament.

Networking in Edinburgh & across Scotland.

Organisational affiliation open to groups which share our values.

Nonviolence Training & Education Programme –

Counter Recruitment Campaigning

Leaflet and poster display space – Mailbox facility for Centre Users

Postcards, badges and books for sale

Speakers - Library - Peace and Justice News

Opening hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 10.00am – 4.00pm.

Peace and Justice News is the monthly publication of the Edinburgh Peace and Justice Centre. While individual contributions do not necessarily reflect the views of the Centre, we encourage contributions which support and explore our aims and values relative to contemporary events. Submissions by email to news@peaceandjustice.org.uk by 5pm on the 22nd of the month for inclusion in the next issue. We may need to edit for length.

Editors: Brian Larkin, Douglas Shaw, Emma Logan **Cover Design:** Angus Doyle

Management Committee: Geoffrey Carnall, Arthur Chapman (Chair), Judy Russell (Secretary), Phil Lucas, Michael Elm., Sarah Qui (Treasurer).

Co-ordinator: Brian Larkin

Volunteers: Douglas Shaw, Jill McClenning, Pat Bryden, Patrick Hawkes, Ray Rennie, Cameron Watt, Conor Watt, Emma Logan, Sumita Kunashakaran.

Contributors: Varsha Gyawali, William Duncan, Jeroen van Herk, Hannah Walters, Marco Gori.

Patrons: Kathy Galloway, Rt Rev Richard Holloway, Joyce McMillan.

Edinburgh Peace & Justice Centre is run by volunteers and relies upon the support of its members. Membership is £20 (£12 concession). all members receive P&J News.

Like Us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/edinpeaceandjusticecentre

Follow us on Twitter: @EdinPandJ

Tel: 0131 229 0993 **Email:** contact@peaceandjustice.org.uk

Address: Edinburgh Peace and Justice Centre, St John's Church, Edinburgh EH2 4BJ

Editor's Introduction

Marking International Conscientious Objectors Day we are organising a Vigil honouring Conscientious Objectors (COs) on 15 May by the National Gallery on the Mound in Edinburgh, where demonstrations against the First World War took place and in this month's Peace & Justice News we focus on Conscientious Objection to wars.

In our *Unsung Heroes* column this month Brian Larkin, beautifully expresses the true definition of what constitutes a 'hero' arguing that the 16,000 British men that refused to kill during the First World War were real heroes for they portrayed "extraordinary bravery, firmness, and fortitude".

Geoffrey Carnall and David Turner both recall personal experiences as World War 2 COs. Geoffrey by the way highlights the important role of Quakers in Britain in supporting the right to Conscientious Objection.

Our Reflection is taken from a powerful and disturbing letter by a CO to his wife sent upon his release from prison. The letter highlights the horrific reality and punishment COs often endured during the First World War.

News from Around the Movements this month includes an account of the experience by 21 year old Simeon Siroky, eldest of five siblings who together made the week long Spring Walk from Edinburgh to Faslane to call for nuclear disarmament.

Plus And don't miss our latest writer Cameron Watt's review of David

Graeber's book, 'Debt: The First 5,000 Years'.

Countering government plans to celebrate an outdated and unhealthy militarist nationalism in Stirling on 28 June our next issue will be on the theme of UnArmed Forces. All Contributions welcome. Email by 10am 20 May to contact@peaceandjustice.org.uk
Emma Logan



Photo Credit: rarewallpapers

Contents

Editorial: Tony Blair	4
Centre News	5
Quakers and Conscientious Objection	6
A WW2 CO's Recollection	8
News from Around the Movement	10
Take Action	13
Unsung Heroes: WW1 COs	15
Book Review: David Graeber: Debt: The First 5000 Years	17
Reflection: Letter from a WW1 CO	18

Editorial: Tony Blair Stirs Up Trouble

Tony Blair has recently been calling for the West to take military action in Syria against President Assad and effect a “regime change”. He was in favour of the toppling of the recently elected Muslim Brotherhood government in Egypt (which UK Governments have supported for many years), and of toppling the current Iranian government also. All this from the mouth of a “Peace Envoy”. But as we all well know, the modern dictum is “War is Peace”, or rather that war brings peace.

But we won't be fooled again. Publics in the US and UK are more resistant now to yet more wars in the Middle East. The total cost to the UK of the failed wars in Iraq and Afghanistan has been put at £27 billion. They were not a strategic defence necessity, and Blair was warned that invading Iraq would give Al Qaeda a recruiting tool.

The reality is that all UK governments have helped Islamic extremism to spread. They have worked to cultivate them for many years, namely the Muslim Brotherhood (and its offshoots), Wahhabi extremist in Saudi Arabia, the Pakistani madrassas and Pakistani leaders with whom ties are close. We see this when our royalty visit the Saudi royal family, to cement arms deals for BAE Systems.



Photo Credit :
raulpachecoblanco.blogspot.com

Surprisingly Blair actually refers to the truth of things when he calls on world leaders to consider the "absurdity" of spending billions of dollars on security against an ideology which is being "advocated" in the schools and institutions of "countries with whom we have intimate security and defence relationships". "Some of those countries of course wish to escape from the grip of this ideology, but often it is hard for them to do so within their own political constraints." This attitude is kind to say the least.

But Blair's talk of an Islamic ideology which has to be challenged is far too simplistic. To describe political leaders, national governments, popular movements and violent militants, in terms of their religion is misleading to say the least. There are conflicts between Sunni and Shia, but also many more factors are at play, especially political ones, the complex role of religion in political life, and issues around Western support for certain regimes and hostility to others.

What he describes as a “struggle between what we may call the open-minded and the closed-minded,” is in reality a misleading smokescreen, which obscures deeper issues.

It seems that Radical Islam is the new label for opponents of western interests. They used to be called simply terrorists.

Douglas Shaw

Centre News

New P&J Working Group on Counter Recruitment

Recent reports from Forces Watch show that post-war mental health problems including PTSD, depression and binge drinking are most common in young soldiers from disadvantaged backgrounds, and the risk of fatality in Afghanistan for British Army recruits aged 16 who completed training has been twice as high as for those enlisting at 18 or above. The Counter Recruitment Working Group had its first meeting in April. We aim to counter promises of job training, education and excitement given to young people by military recruiters with information on what life in the military can really mean and we will be calling on the MOD to end the recruitment of under 18s. Look for news of this new programme in months to come.

Upcoming Centre Events

Pete Seeger Sing - a - thon

**3 May. 3 - 11:30pm. St John's Church Hall.
Princes St. at Lothian Rd. Edinburgh**

A fundraiser for Penny Stone to take her Sing Louder than Guns Workshop to the International Peace Conference in Sarajevo. Supported by the Peace and Justice Centre.



Photo Credit : leithandnorth.co.uk

Conscientious Objectors Day Vigil

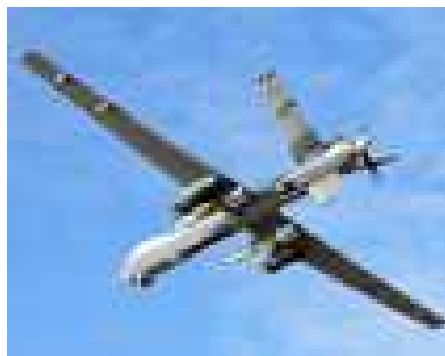
Thursday 15 May. 4:00 - 6:00pm. By the National Gallery

on the Mound. Jointly organised with Fellowship of Reconciliation Scotland.

Eye witness report from Ukraine: Zakhar Popovych from the Ukrainian Left Opposition. Saturday 17th May, Augustine United, 4pm to 6pm.

Ukraine is at the brink of war. It is being pulled apart by imperialist forces, from the East Russian forces and from the West NATO, the EU and the USA. How did it get to this and what has happened to the socialist and progressive voices on both sides of the Ukraine?

Organised by Stop the War with Support from the Peace and Justice Centre.



Drone Wars: Today, Tomorrow, Forever?'

Chris Cole, Drones Campaign Network Coordinator.

Friday 16 May 7:30pm. St John's Church Hall

In November Chris Cole gave an introduction to the issues surrounding Drones. This talk will go deeper, but attendance at the previous talk is not a prerequisite.

Jointly organised with Edinburgh Stop the War & Supported by Edinburgh CND (Note: This is the

correct date, last month we erroneously published the date as 19 May.)

Cooperative Games Workshop. Sunday 25 May. Art's Complex, St Margaret's House. 151 London Rd. 10am - 5pm. Maria Elena Ramos will lead this fun workshop. Come along for a day of fun. The workshop will also be an initial training for anyone wanting to be a Games Workshop Leader in the P&J Nonviolence Education Programme. We will be taking these workshops into schools and sowing seeds for a culture of peace in the coming year. Free event. Donations welcome. Bring a sandwich or food to share. To register contact the P&J Centre: 0131 229 0993 or email: contact@peaceandjustice.org.uk


One World Peace Ceilidh

Friday 30 May. 7:00 - 11pm. Edinburgh Steiner School, 60 Spylaw Rd, EH10 5BR.

A fundraiser for One World Shop and Edinburgh Peace and Justice Centre. With Clapshot Ceilidh Band, Edinburgh Community Choir, Voice Box Theatre, poetry and children's activities.

Vegetarian/vegan food available from 7 -8pm. Raffle and Bar. On Number 10 Bus Route that runs until after midnight. Tickets £7/£5 conc. are available from the Peace and Justice Centre, One World Shop, Word Power Books, New Leaf Co-op and online at <http://peaceceilidh.bpt.me>

Edinburgh Peace and Justice Centre AGM Tuesday 24 June 7:00pm (Cup of Tea) 7:15pm AGM. Speaker 7:30pm - 9:00pm. St John's Church Hall. Speaker tba.



ONE WORLD PEACE CEILIDH

MUSIC FROM THE CLAPSHOT CEILIDH BAND, EDINBURGH CONTEMPORARY CHOIR, POETRY, PERFORMANCE ART + MORE!

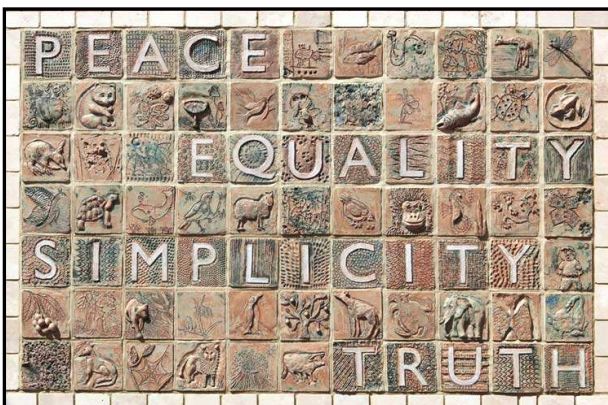
FRIDAY 30TH MAY
£7/£5 7 - 11PM

CEILIDH & FUNDRAISER FOR ONE WORLD SHOP & THE EDINBURGH PEACE & JUSTICE CENTRE

ENTERTAINMENT - VEGETARIAN/VEGAN FOOD - RAFFLE - BAR
EDINBURGH RUDOLF STEINER SCHOOL - 60 SPYLAW ROAD

TICKETS AVAILABLE FROM NEW LEAF CO-OP, WORD POWER, ONE WORLD SHOP, + ONLINE:
ONEWORLDSHOP.CO.UK CHARITY NO. SC0003072 PEACEANDJUSTICE.ORG.UK CHARITY NO. SC226654

Quakers and Conscientious Objectors



In the first two years of the First World War, recruitment to the British armed forces was voluntary, but in 1916 conscription was introduced, requiring all younger men to be called up for military service. An exception was made for those with a conscientious objection to such service.

This provision reflects the influence of the Quaker community in Britain at this time, when Quaker businesses – notably those of the Cadbury, Rowntree and Fry families, who not only made chocolate but were newspaper proprietors as well. One of the

Quaker MPs, Edmund Harvey, actually drafted the conscientious objection clause in the conscription bill.

Quakers had influence in Parliament but this did not extend into the wider society. As Wilfred Trotter commented in his *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War*, nations at war are always convinced of their cause and are not disposed to tolerate dissent.

‘Conchies’ were generally seen either as cowards or as sympathisers with the enemy: Ramsay Macdonald, a future Labour Prime Minister, was depicted in a *Punch* cartoon receiving an iron cross from the Kaiser.

The tribunals set up to assess the genuineness of claims to conscientious objection were not as crass as that, but were not generally sympathetic to non-Quaker applicants, many of whom finished up in prison for refusing to accept the rejection of their claims. The same happened to Quakers like Corder Catchpool, who resigned from the Friends Ambulance Unit in order to assert his right to unconditional exemption.



Friends Ambulance Unit: Photo credit : Wikipedia

The 1930s saw the emergence of a substantial peace movement in Britain, notably Dick Sheppard's Peace Pledge Union, with its pledge of ‘I renounce war, and will never support or sanction another’. This fostered a much more numerous supply of conscientious objectors when conscription was reintroduced in 1939 than had appeared in the First World War. Although once again a fair number of objectors who refused to accept the decision of a tribunal were imprisoned, it is fair to say that COs were better treated than they had been earlier.

Nevertheless, being a CO in time of war is an uncomfortable experience for the reason identified by Wilfred Trotter. The nation’s cause is righteous, and failure to support it is dishonourable. It was just about acceptable to support Bishop George Bell’s campaign against the bombing of civilians and the demand for unconditional surrender, and in school debates I felt confidence in doing this, although Bell-inspired motions were always heavily defeated. But I kept quiet about my intention to register as a CO, and was relieved when my success in getting a place at university allowed me to defer my tribunal until I graduated in 1948.

I was then given exemption on condition that I joined the Friends Service Unit in India and Pakistan and would almost certainly have been allowed to do much the same during the war. COs served in the Friends Ambulance Unit in many parts of the world, including London during the blitz, when the FAU worked in the capital’s air raid

shelters. This experience is what gave them the opportunity to go to India in 1942 when Bengal was threatened by the Japanese. The British Government recognised that Quakers, conspicuously advocates of Indian independence, would find it easier to get co-operation from Indians than an official initiative would have done.

The most ambitious FAU project was the China Convoy - driving lorries loaded with medical supplies from western China to parts of China more exposed to Japanese occupation. American Quakers were interested in joining in this enterprise but Congress passed a law forbidding American COs to work outside the US. Evidently the authorities there did not want COs to feel they could show daring and enterprise in risky situations.

Conscientious objection has been established as a basic human right in the European Union. There are COs in Israel too, though the overwhelming sense of being under siege from hostile neighbours makes their position extremely difficult.

Geoffrey Carnall

A WW2 CO's Recollection



Photo Credit: worldwar1postcards.com/

Among my earliest memories is an occasion, when I was perhaps six or seven years old, on which my father, prompted by a war story in the news, gave an account to me of an incident when, as an infantryman in France in WW1, he had been checking with a senior officer, the safety of a trench just vacated by the German army and came across a wounded German soldier who begged for his life to be spared. My father was ordered to 'finish him off' by bayonet. On refusal he was threatened with court martial for 'disobedience' in a battle zone. For some reason the threat was not carried out. The image remained vivid in my mind, dormant for a period, but it emerged as an influence on my thinking about what I would do should another war break out and conscription be imposed - by the later 1930s that had become indeed very possible.

In senior school I had a strong interest in the history of the early 20th century and in particular, the economic consequences for Europe of punitive terms imposed on Germany by the Versailles Treaty. I had also through acquaintance with the writings and actions of Gandhi in India, become persuaded by the power of nonviolent action in resisting oppression and injustice.

By the time of the outbreak of war I regarded myself as a pacifist and soon joined the Peace Pledge Union, founded a few years before to promote the stance: 'I renounce all war and refuse to support or sanction another'. When called up for military service in 1942 I registered as a conscientious objector, on the grounds that I could not submit to being trained to kill for any cause. I had no religious tradition to refer to, having rejected the one to which my mother adhered, and it was many years later before I became interested in Quakers. The three person panel I came before to state my objection to killing was divided over the question of my 'genuineness' and I doubt if I presented myself favourably. Conditional exemption, to do some form of alternative service, I found I could not accept.

On being denied exemption, as I had thought likely, I was sent call-up papers quite soon, with information on the likely consequences of non-compliance. From friends of the family who had been through the process of claiming exemption in WW1 and being refused, I knew of the option of 'going on the run' and decided to at least defer the imposition of imprisonment. A number of 'safe houses' were offered by friends in the PPU and I used these, together with stays in youth hostels for a short period. Aware that those found sheltering a 'fugitive' knowingly could themselves be in trouble I returned to Glasgow, found a flat, and worked as an apprentice painter with an army deserter in that trade, fairly sure I would quickly be tracked down by police. However, I remained at large for the remainder of the war. I was fortunate indeed to have supportive parents, relatives and friends, in contrast to some whose stories I had become aware of in the course of voluntary work with the South West Scotland Board for Conscientious Objectors while awaiting my call-up.



As the centenary of the start of WW1 brings again to my mind the experiences of conscientious objectors in resisting military service, often at a terrible cost, I am also aware that in many countries of today's world there is no provision for those who take a stand on refusing military service and even in those with some recognition, the right to exemption is very limited and severe hardship results for those who, in obedience to conscience, can 'do no other'.

Over the past decade I have been involved through Amnesty International and through Quakers in appealing for the release of prisoners of conscience, including war resisters and human rights defenders. Opportunities have arisen at times to campaign for recognition of conscientious objection and a fair system of adjudication in

countries where this is absent, and there is indeed a growing number of states so legislating, or taking steps in that direction. There is however a need to build on these achievements and not to be satisfied until there is universal provision, a cause being promoted by Right to Refuse to Kill, the Peace Pledge Union and Quaker Peace and Social Witness.

David Turner

News from Around the Movement

Spring Peace walk

In the first week of April a group of 40 to 50 peace activists, organised by Scottish CND, walked from Edinburgh to Faslane, in support of ridding Scotland of nuclear weapons. Two volunteers from the Peace and Justice Centre, Pat Bryden and Douglas Shaw each walked half of the way. Among those who walked the whole 80 miles were five Siroky siblings, ranging in age from 13 to 21. The eldest, Simeon, writes:



The last time I was at Faslane naval base was back in 2007 on the 1st of October for the big blockade to commemorate the end of Faslane 365. I was 15 at the time and still remember the raw emotions I went through being part of that movement - the anger at the governments still promoting nuclear weapons - the joy at seeing all the people gathered peacefully but with unyielding intent. It was reassuring and inspiring to witness the commitment displayed by

everyone there and something I wanted to experience again. When word got round to me about the Spring Walk for Peace from Edinburgh to Faslane I immediately wanted to get involved, so did 4 of my 5 siblings the youngest not yet able to participate. The walk was in total about 80 miles. Although walking is something we all do and enjoy, 80 miles in 6 days is something we have never attempted before and the knowledge that the second and third days would be a total of 36 miles was very intimidating but made us all the more determined.

With our walking and sleeping gear packed the day before and, you could say, ridiculous stash of spare socks carefully crammed into every spare space in our bags we went to our beds. We awoke on the 1st in high spirits despite the classic Scottish wet drizzle outside and set off on the about an hour car journey from the Yarrow Valley to Edinburgh. On arrival we took our rucksacks to the van that would be transporting

everyone's luggage to the different halls we would be using for night accommodation and went to join the rest of the group. The atmosphere was great, with singing and colourful flags waving for all to see. After some speeches and cheers from the crowd we set off. We had one stop at the Water of Leith Conservation Trust for coffee but mainly it was a proper chance to meet some of the walkers, although too many names to learn all at once, the smiling and kind faces being far easier to remember. Arriving at the Scout Hall in Currie we faced the first group task: getting all the sleeping bags and rucksacks out the van. It would become the morning and evening routine, though probably the easiest of all the challenges that we would face on the walk, with everyone in a human chain the bags were out in no time. There is something strangely comforting about sleeping in a hall with so many people, although I think the main topic every morning was whether the snorers should be allocated a separate (snorer's room) and if the porridge was as good as the previous morning's.

Sleeping together, eating together, walking together, sharing stories, and making our way to Faslane. Every new day I would end up speaking to someone else and no, it wasn't always about the weather.

Although I knew that with every step we got closer to Faslane it was one of the last things on my mind the whole way. Walking with people and getting to know them for a week made me think about many things, one of which was that deep conversation makes miles melt away before your feet and also that something as simple as walking defiantly sends a message out to the people we met on our way.



I was still stopping and waving at the sound of car horns a week after getting home. Although many people couldn't make the walk due to work commitments and other responsibilities the number of people showing positive support through waving and tooting the horn gave I'm sure, a spring to people's steps. Also the fact that it was a walk, not a jog or a run showed maybe symbolically the unrelenting effort that many people have put into the campaign for nuclear disarmament for so long and haven't given up. There is a big chance this September for Scotland to take a big step towards getting rid of these weapons; but is moving them somewhere else really the answer? Not until every country has given up its nuclear arsenal will the world be rid of its greatest threat. And every step, no matter how small makes it the more achievable.

Simeon Siroky

PUTTING THE ARMS DEALERS ON TRIAL

A group of women is seeking to privately prosecute the arms dealers who sold illegal torture weapons at DSEi arms fair last year. The DSEi arms fair has consistently been found to have broken UK law by exhibiting illegal weapons, yet exhibitors and organisers have never been subject to prosecution. Caroline Lucas MP identified that two companies – Tianjin MyWay International and Magforce International – had illegally exhibited torture weapons at DSEi. A group of (almost all women) who were arrested for seeking to disrupt the setting up of DSEi ('Defence Security Equipment International') the world's largest arms fair demanded disclosure of information as to if and why the state did not investigate illegal torture weapons at DSEi. In the face of these continual requests, the cases against them were dropped a week before trial. They have now commenced proceedings to privately prosecute the arms dealers Tianjin Myway and Magforce International. They are clear that they do not want a "better run" arms fair – rather, they see this litigation as part of a wider strategy to discredit, and then shut down DSEI for good.

You can learn more about their case and sign up for updates at:
<http://armsdealersontrial.wordpress.com/>



Photo Credit : Daily Mail

Ukraine Analysis from Mil Rai

Would nuclear weapons have spared Ukraine from Russian intervention? Was the Maidan Revolt a 'fascist putsch' organised by Washington (John Pilger)? What should anti-war activists make of the referendum in Crimea? And what is the path away from war?

the editorial in the current print edition) by PN co-editor Milan Rai, available at <http://peacenews.info/node/7651>. Also, don't miss Ian Sinclair's latest piece on how Britain is helping to feed the flames of war in Syria:

<http://peacenews.info/blog/7652/how-uk-helping-feed-flames-war-syria>. Peace News is available at the P&J.

Global Day of Action on Military Spending

Around 30 activists from Spain, USA, Germany and the UK protested at the military base of the Port of Las Palmas in Gran Canaria. They symbolically cut off the piece of coastal land in the Military Base del Arenal by



Photo Credit : freeminder316.blogspot

swimming out with a large “dotted line” while balloons held up a giant pair of scissors as the rest of the group distributed information to the public.

Angie Zelter, of Trident Ploughshares, said: *”NATO is an international aggressive nuclear armed military alliance. I am here demonstrating against a base used by NATO for its aggressive self serving military interventions in Africa. We are here to peacefully draw people’s attention to the waste of resources that merely prop up the arms industries and take global resources away from the people who need them. Taking part in this action on this day makes people aware of how ‘normalised’ the military has become in our societies and how ordinary people must become aware of this and cut the military out of our societies to enable them to concentrate on the real security issues of our era – climate chaos and poverty.”*

Round up of Fly Kites Not Drones Actions Worldwide

The Peace and Justice Centre’s Fly Kites Not Drones event on the Meadows in March was part of a worldwide day of action. There was a demo outside RAF Waddington and people were out flying kites in Kabul, Hastings, Littlehampton, Taunton, Cardiff, Bristol, Chicago and many more towns and cities around the world..



Photo Credit : vcnvuk

There is a full roundup of Fly Kites Actions, including a new video from Afghan Peace Volunteers on the Voices for Creative Nonviolence website:

<http://vcnvuk.wordpress.com/2014/03/23/fly-kites-not-drones-for-nao-roz-2014/>

Take Action

Call on the MOD to End Recruitment of 16 & 17 Year Olds.

Recent reports show that post-war mental health problems including PTSD, depression and binge drinking are most common in young soldiers from disadvantaged backgrounds, and the risk of fatality in Afghanistan for British Army recruits aged 16 who completed training has been twice as high as for those enlisting at 18 or above. The UK is one of only a handful of countries that recruit under 18s into the military. The P&J is campaigning on this issue, calling for an end to this practice. **Sign the petition at:** <https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/stop-recruitment-of-16-year-olds-into-the-uk-armed-forces>

You can also download the petition and invite others to sign. Return completed petitions to the P&J.

Opposing Drones

The Drone Campaign Network is holding a day gathering for those interested in campaigning on the growing use of drones. The event will take place at Friends Meeting House, Euston on Saturday 14 June. The day will include speakers, workshops and planning for the Week of Action on Drones later this year. Speakers include: Jennifer Gibson, Reprieve, Alice Ross, The Bureau of Investigative Journalism, Chris Cole, Drone Wars UK, Chris Jones, Statewatch

Drones Post Card Campaign

Fly Kites Not Drones, Child Victims of War, and Voices for Creative Nonviolence launched a postcard campaign to British MPs calling for: complete transparency regarding the UK's drones programme including disclosure of any fact finding inquiries into alleged incidents involving civilians; transparency regarding the extent of UK intelligence sharing and support for US drone strikes outside of non-international armed conflict; a moratorium until international consensus on their use within international law has been determined.

Post cards have a picture of a child flying kites on one side and a message to your MP on the other calling for transparency and a moratorium. Available from the Peace and Justice Centre or email: info@childvictimsofwar.org.uk.

Plus there is a new **Campaigns Briefing from Child Victims of War:**

<http://childvictimsofwar.org.uk/cvow/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Drone-Campaign-Brief1.pdf>



Peace News Summer Camp

It's now almost three months to Peace News Summer Camp 2014 (31 July - 4 Aug). Confirmed speakers include Paul Rogers (Bradford Peace Studies), Bruce Kent, Michael Albert (ZNet), Kofi Klu (PANAFRIINDABA), Emma Sangster (Forces Watch),

Alison Ronan (author of 'A Small Vital Flame'. Anti-war women in NW England 1914-1918') and Neil Faulker (No Glory).

Urge the Edinburgh Science Festival to Cancel Arms Company Sponsorship

Postcards calling on the Edinburgh Science Festival to cancel sponsorship by arms company Selex (a subsidiary of arms giant Finmeccanica) are available at the P&J.

Support Marshall Islands Lawsuits Against Nuclear Nations

The Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) has filed unprecedented lawsuits against all nine nuclear-armed nations for their failure to negotiate in good faith for nuclear disarmament, as required under the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The suits were filed against all nine nations at the International Court of Justice, with an additional complaint against the United States filed in U.S. Federal District Court. **Please go to www.nuclearzero.org where you can learn more about the lawsuits and show your support by signing the petition supporting the RMI's bold action.**

Unsung Heroes - Conscientious Objectors of WW1

We normally think of heroes as people who have risked their lives, often died, in battle. The heroes of the Odyssey and the Iliad who fought the epic battle of Troy are the prototypes. The Oxford English Dictionary gives the definition as “men of extraordinary strength, courage and ability who were favoured by the gods.” The dominant contemporary political culture holds that the real heroes are those who, in patriotic terms “gave their lives” for our freedom. But the OED gives an alternative meaning as “a man (sic) who exhibits extraordinary braveness, firmness, or fortitude of soul in any course of action”. Despite overwhelming public support for the war, and in the face of humiliation, imprisonment and even torture 16,000 British men refused to kill during the First World War, exhibiting “extraordinary bravery, firmness, and fortitude”.

In November 1914 Fenner Brockway published a letter which led to the formation of the No-Conscription Fellowship whose members, mostly Socialists and Quakers, were “prepared to sacrifice as much in the cause of the world’s peace as our fellows are sacrificing in the cause of the nation’s war”. At first the NCF was all male, but later women carried on most of the work as CO’s were imprisoned. The government passed the National Registration Act in July 1915, requiring everyone ages 15 to 65 to register. Fred Sellar, Secretary of the Independent Labour Party, was imprisoned for several weeks for distributing a leaflet which made the case that registration was the first step to conscription.

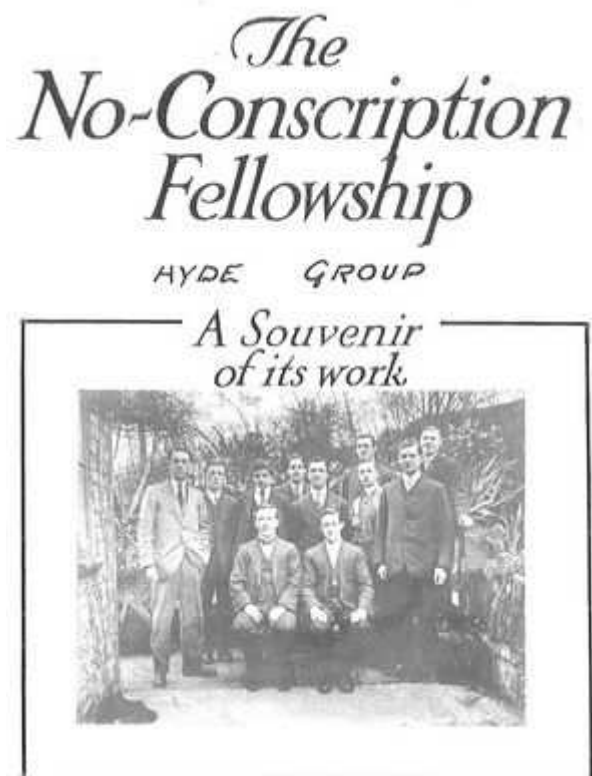


Photo credit : WCML

In February 1916, the Military Service Bill, whereby all men aged 18-45 were “deemed to have enlisted”, was enacted. The NCF published a “Repeal the Act” leaflet. Eight of the ten signatories were imprisoned or fined under the Defense of the Realm Act. Thanks to opposition from Quaker and ILP MPs the bill included a Conscience Clause.

Anyone seeking exemption had to appear before a Tribunal. Tribunals were supposed to be impartial but were heavily biased. The Military Council urged Tribunals to get men for the Army. There was a military representative at every hearing and Tribunal members were typically highly patriotic and had little sympathy or understanding for CO's. Applicants could be granted absolute exemption, conditional exemption which required they do alternative service vital to the war effort such as farm labour, or be exempted from combat and required to join the Non Combatant Corps (NCC). Of those sent to the Non combatant Corps many refused to obey orders. Many were tortured, frog marched, beaten or submitted to ‘Field punishment No. 1’ in which the man was tied to a stake in the hot sun for many hours. 6,000 were court martialed. After serving a first term of hard labour CO's were sent back to the military. 655 were



Field Punishment No. 1

Photo Credit : ptbowwi.blogspot.com

655 were court martialed twice, 521 three times, 3191 four times, 50 five times and 3 six times. 843 spent over two years in prison.

Quaker CO's set up the Friends Ambulance Unit to take care of wounded. They ran dozens of hospitals and hundreds of ambulances. Some were led to question if in doing so they were not helping the war effort. Amongst them was Corder Catchpool who volunteered before conscription was introduced but refused to submit to orders and was imprisoned. Absolutist COs who refused to recognise the authority of the government to tell them what to do usually were imprisoned. Of 16,000 CO's 6,000 went to prison as absolutists or because they refused to fight even after being exempted. About 50 CO's were taken to France, charged with desertion and sentenced to death,

only to have their sentences commuted to ten years imprisonment by Field Marshall Sir Douglas Haig at the last minute.

Most absolutists were sentenced to 112 days to 2 years hard labour. Prison conditions were very harsh, freezing cold, with inadequate food and thin blankets. COs in several prisons published secret newspapers written on toilet paper such as the *Winchester Whisperer*, the *Canterbury Clinker* and the *Walton Leader* which included articles on the Russian Revolution and the battle of Passchendaele which described men being

sent 'over the top' as 'canon fodder'. Regular papers were not allowed to carry such reports. Fenner Brockway and others refused to obey the rule of silence. Brockway did eight months solitary with three months on bread and water. In Newcastle Prison 11 CO's went on hunger strike and were force fed. The same tube was used on all eleven men without being cleaned. In Hull Prison when a too short tube poured milk into his lungs W.E. Burns choked to death. 73 CO's would die in prison or as a result of imprisonment.

There can be no doubt that these men, who exhibited extraordinary braveness and fortitude of soul, suffered and even died, were heroes who deserve our recognition.

This article draws on *Refusing to Kill: conscientious objection and human rights in the first world war*. A publication of the Peace Pledge Union. A Reference copy is available in the Peace and Justice Centre Library.

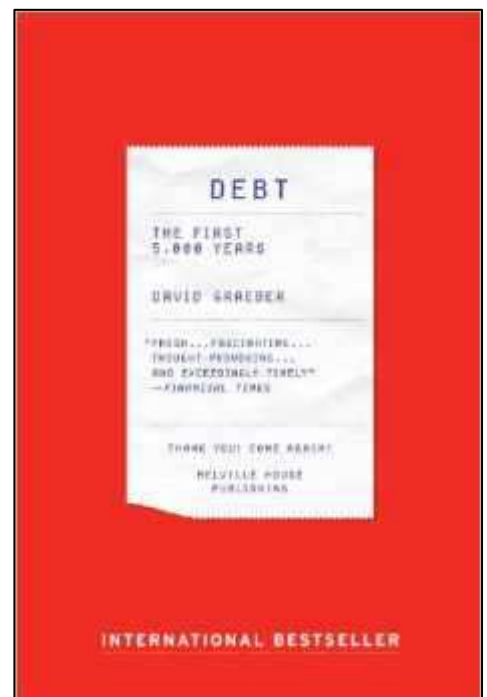
There will be a **Conscientious Objectors Day Vigil 15 May. By the National Gallery on the Mound (Princes St). 4 -6pm. All welcome.**

Book Review – Debt: The first 5000 years

Melville House Publishing ISBN: 978-1933633

David Graeber's best-selling book *Debt: The First 5,000 Years* provides some interesting insights on the history of economic relations. Economics textbooks typically tell the same story – first there was barter, next money arose because of the inefficiencies of barter, and then there was credit. Drawing on anthropological research, in *Debt* Graeber argues that the exact opposite is true – first there was credit, then there was money, and then there was barter.

Graeber argues that all societies are typically composed of a mixture of three forms of economic organisation – communism, hierarchy, and exchange, and discusses how one form of organisation can transform into another. Despite the often-cited conventional wisdom that frames everything within the logic of exchange, Graeber argues that, in any society, social ties require a basic degree of communism to exist – even in the capitalist West. Indeed, David Cameron's recent assertion during the floods in England earlier this year that 'money is no object' is certainly reminiscent of this idea (despite his ideological commitment to austerity).



Graeber goes into detail about the intricacies of ‘human’ (although not necessarily humane) economies, in which economic affairs were primarily to do with organising and arranging human beings rather than things, and describes a historical transition from the human economy to the commercial economy, commenting on the degree of violence involved when human beings are ‘ripped from their contexts’ and turned into commodities. This further informs some of his radical ideas, coming to yet more startling conclusions – ideas of property and ‘self-ownership’ which found contemporary political systems have their origins in the logic of slavery, and that wage labour is only slightly different from slavery by virtue of it being temporary. Graeber also provides some insights into the origins of patriarchy, describing human economies in which women were treated as ‘pawns’ by men.

One might anticipate that reading about 5,000 years of the history of economic relations would make for a rather boring and laborious ordeal. However, despite the seemingly dull subject matter, Graeber’s friendly and accessible writing style, accompanied by his exciting radicalism and deep subversion of bourgeois economic theory, helps to make *Debt* an astonishingly entertaining read - regardless of whether the reader has an extensive background on the subject matter or not. Regardless of one’s own position on Graeber’s conclusions, to give credit where credit is due, *Debt* is a remarkable book, and considering the subject matter, it’s quite a page-turner.

Cameron Watt

Reflection : Letter from a World War One Conscientious Objector



Photo Credit : ukhumanrightsblog

JB Saunders was arrested as a deserter in 1916 for failing to answer call up papers. He was taken to Portobello, and sentenced by Court-martial to one year’s detention. He served 3 months at Barlinnie and was sent back to France, Court-martialled again, sent to Alexandria, Court martialled again and sentenced to 6 months hard labour. He wrote to his wife:

“I will not submit to conscription...I am offered Non-Combatant work. This I refuse absolutely...I am not afraid of anything the military can do. I have been in chains and handcuffs, crucified to a tree full in this

broiling sun nearly every morning and evening, for five months bread and water and solitary confinement. ...I leave you to guess what five months alone in a cell...is like.

Seven times I went down with dysentery, and seven times I managed to get on my feet and face the music. I fainted and had to be driven away in a barrow.

This tropical sun and chaining up nearly drove me mad. I stuck it....I was doing seven days Field Punishment No. 1 chained up in the sun etc., when suddenly I had the chains taken off and I was released.

They have discovered at last that they cannot break me. They failed at Barlinnie and I am determined to make them fail here. I am determined to sacrifice all rather than give in. Many times I thought I should hang in the sun



Photo Credit : <http://news.bbcimg.co.uk/>

and die. I pleaded with the sentry to shoot me. I cannot tell you the misery of it. I'll die fifty times rather than endorse the wicked thing.

They can have my body, my mind I will destroy rather than allow the military cult to take it. I was flooded for weeks in my cell with water, two buckets of creosol were thrown in, and I was gassed. I was naked for several days and nights in chains.

However I believe the doctor stopped these horrible proceedings.

I was 9st. 12lbs. when I went into Hospital... so you may guess I was a skeleton....Don't misunderstand me. I am determined to do nothing out here."

To chain up a man in the tropical sun is illegal.

20 September, 1917

Originally published in *The Tribunal*. Excerpted from *Refusing to Kill*. Peace Pledge Union.

Conscientious Objectors Day Vigil

Thursday 15 May. 4:00pm - 6:00pm. By the National Gallery on the Mound.

Supporting the right to refuse to kill and remembering the COs of all past wars but especially in this Centenary year of the outbreak of the First World War those from that terrible conflict. The vigil is at the Mound because it was a gathering point for opposition to the First World War. Bring your reflections, songs, poems or photos. Organised by the Peace & Justice Centre and Fellowship of Reconciliation Scotland.



**One World Peace Ceilidh
30 May. 7:30 - 11pm.
Edinburgh Steiner School,
60 Spylaw Rd, EH10 5BR.**

With Clapshot Ceilidh Band, Edinburgh Community Choir, Voice Box Theatre, poetry and children's activities.

Vegetarian/vegan food available from 7 - 8pm. Raffle and Bar.

Tickets £7/£5 conc. from the Peace & Justice Centre, One World Shop, Word Power Books, New Leaf Co-op and at <http://peaceceilidh.bpt.me>

Become a Member Today! Please consider supporting the work of the Peace & Justice Centre

Name _____

Tel _____

Address _____

PostCode _____

Minimum membership fee: £20 per annum (£12 concession)

If you wish to pay more please tick appropriately:

Annually Monthly £3 £5 £10 £20 £50 Other: £

I wish to receive my newsletter by: Post Email

It helps the Centre if you can make payments by Standing Order.

I wish to pay by: cheque: I enclose a cheque in the sum of £ Standing Order:

Bank Standing Order To The Manager (enter name & address of your bank branch: _____)

Please pay to: **Edinburgh Peace & Justice Centre**, St Johns Church, Princes St, Edinburgh EH24BJ

A/c No. 00207018 - Sort Code: 80-11-30 at **Bank of Scotland**, 1 Castle Terrace, Edinburgh EH1 2DP

The sum of £ (in words) _____ payable monthly / annually (*delete one*)

starting on / / (*date of first payment*)

Name of Account: _____ Account Number _____

Sort Code: / /

Reference to be quoted (your name in capitals) _____

Signed _____ **Dated** _____