

Summary

The Peace and Justice Centre works to promote nonviolence, alternatives to war, human rights, conflict resolution, and ecological responsibility across Scotland.



In the past year the Centre has played a key role in the Scrap Trident Coalition, marked the centenary of the First World War by creating and producing *Divergent Voices of the First World War* and organised the first International Conscientious Objectors Day Vigil in Edinburgh, now an annual event, helped form Scottish Peace Network and organised events across Scotland that challenged the dominant glorification of war, initiated

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mainstream media, reached more than 350,000 on social media and continue to reach out through the media with photos from the “Bairns Not Bombs” blockade continuing to pop up in newspaper stories in connection to Trident nuclear weapons.

Fly Kites Not Drones

We worked with the Meadows Pavilion Café and organised the Fly Kites Not Drones event on the Meadows in March of 2014. The event was one of dozens of such events around the world initiated by the Afghan Peace Volunteers and raised awareness of the plight of people living with the intimidation and often under attack by drones. The event included Face painting, badge making, kite making, decorating and flying, and storytelling. Feedback was excellent.

Peace and Justice News

We continued to publish Peace and Justice News, a monthly journal that includes feature articles, reviews, and news from around the movements,



Women's opposition to the First World War. This year we began to bring in a small stream of income from talks on a Pay What You Want basis, selling tickets online. Talks by US writer/activists Charles Eisenstein and Drew Dellinger brought in over £600 in income.

Scrap Trident Coalition



Centre
Coordinator
Brian Larkin
facilitated
the Steering
Group of the
Coalition in
a series of

planning meetings over six months, liaised with MSPs for a photo call at Scottish Parliament and with the office of the First Minister for her participation in the Bairns Not Bombs demonstration in Glasgow. Brian was one of a team of three people who carried out the highly successful mainstream and social media work in connection with the demonstration and blockade of Faslane. The events were covered in all UK

a campaign for a Conscientious Objectors' Memorial in Edinburgh and hosted talks by prominent campaigners. Responding to the refugee crisis arising from the war in Syria we organised an exhibition of the artwork of Syrian refugee children, and responding to the increased use of drones we organised a Fly Kites Not Drones event. Fulfilling our aims we organised workshops on Nonviolence Education through cooperative games and we're developing a Conflict Resolution programme for primary schools.

We also held a fundraising ceilidh, had a stall at the Craft Festival to raise awareness and funds, exhibited the Wool Against Weapons quilt to thousands of people, opened the Centre to the public five days a week, maintained a vibrant web and social media presence, and published *Peace and Justice News* monthly.

First World War Centenary

The Centre collaborated with Fellowship of Reconciliation Scotland to organise the first International Conscientious Objectors Day Vigil in Edinburgh. Several COs and descendants of First World War COs recalled their parents and

grandparents experiences. We read the names of 235 Edinburgh COs and heard the stories of several others. In 2015 we repeated the event, with help from Protest in Harmony. Plans are to make this an annual event.

We initiated and continue to lead the campaign for a Conscientious Objectors' Memorial in Edinburgh, but to insure that a broad spectrum of society could be mobilised behind this campaign we formed a committee which includes representatives of the



Church of Scotland Church and Society Council, St Mary's Cathedral Justice and Peace Group, Pax Christi, Edinburgh and Scottish Quakers, Edinburgh Stop the War, Women's International League

for Peace and Freedom Scotland, Iona Community, the Muslim Women's Association of Edinburgh, Southeast Scotland Methodist Circuit, Ekklesia and Scottish Women's History. Our petition to the Edinburgh Council has gained more than 500

Resolution for Primary Schools workshop was attended by ten people. The aim is to pay the facilitators who will work with trainees who will then be certified as facilitators themselves and will have the opportunity to continue to work with us on the programme in the future.

In our Speakers Series this year we organised talks on nuclear disarmament by US campaigners Greg and Trish Mello from the Los Alamos



Study Group and Angie Zelter, founder of Trident Ploughshares, and Drones Network Coordinator Chris Cole. We collaborated with the Palestine Solidarity Campaign to bring Orthodox Archbishop of Jerusalem Atalla Hannah, and former CIA analyst Ray McGovern to speak. Abdul Bostani, a former asylum seeker and now UK citizen from Afghanistan gave an Afghan perspective on the war there. Our Coordinator took part in a Just Festival Conversation on Conscientious Objection and

that works with the children in Lebanon. The Centre carried out all of the organisational work in association with this exhibition and we assisted St Mary's Cathedral in Glasgow in organising for the exhibition to be held there as well.

Conflict Resolution for Primary Schools



As part of our Nonviolence Education programme we have held two workshops on Cooperative Games and we

are developing an innovative Conflict Resolution programme for primary schools based on these games. This programme is being developed by a team of skilled trained educators in the fields of Nonviolence Education, Conflict Resolution, Physical education and Steiner education. We are currently seeking funds for this programme and hope to run a pilot of the programme in a primary school starting in August and launch the full programme in October. The successful Conflict

signatures. The prospect for success is favourable. The form and location of the memorial are under discussion and will be negotiated with City Council. Fundraising efforts are underway.



We also joined forces with likeminded organisations including Quakers, the Iona Community and others to form the Scottish Peace Network. Its purpose is to coordinate the activities of peace groups across Scotland and collaborate where appropriate. The SPN held vigils at UK Armed Forces Day in Stirling and at national commemorations in Glasgow marking the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War.

Divergent Voices of the First World War

Peace and Justice Centre Coordinator Brian Larkin created and produced *Divergent Voices of the First*

World War with assistance from Jane Tallents and in collaboration with a cast that included renowned



actor, director and playwright Gerda Stevenson (Braveheart), the Gaelic poet Aonghas Macneacail, actor Crawford Logan (BBC's Paul Temple), the musician Michel Byrne and cultural activist Jamie Baxter-Reid. The piece was

performed at the Scottish Storytelling Centre and was awarded a grant for performance in the Scottish International Storytelling Festival at the National Library of Scotland. It tells the stories of conscientious objectors and people who opposed the war in their own words. These performances were ticketed and brought significant income above expenses. The Centre is currently seeking funding to take the performance to other venues in Scotland.

Light Against Darkness

The Centre obtained grants from the Church of Scotland and City of Edinburgh Churches Together that, combined with a substantial private donation, covered all the costs of transporting the paintings from Beirut. In partnership with the Children's War Museum we organised the Light Against Darkness exhibition of the artwork of Syrian refugee children at Edinburgh University Chaplaincy Centre, City of Edinburgh Methodist Church and St Johns Church.

The exhibition comprised some 150 original children's drawings and paintings which were



professionally exhibited by our volunteer Curator Leila Hedayat and a team of volunteer art students. The exhibition was launched at City Methodist Church with a concert by Syrian classical guitarist Ayman Jarjour. Funds were collected at the venues and we sent £1615 back to Najda Now the charity

Funding

We are currently applying for funding for a few programmes. But core costs are covered through fundraising activities, donations, and membership. Members contribute a minimum of £20 per year (£12 concession). We need to increase membership to be sustainable. If you are not a member please consider joining. We ask current members speak to friends who might consider joining.

Management Committee
Chair: Arthur Chapman; Secretary: Judy Russell
Treasurer: Sarah Qiu
Varsha Gyawali
Michael Elm
Coordinator: Brian Larkin



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organise the Peoples Climate March when more than 2,000 people took action against climate change.

Don't Bank on the Bomb

The Centre collaborated with Medact to initiate a Don't Bank on the Bomb Campaign in Scotland. Edinburgh University People and Planet, Scottish CND and Global Justice Now are all involved.

Staff and Volunteers

Over the course of the past year more volunteers worked to carry forward the work of the Centre along with the Coordinator. Volunteers have worked in a variety of capacities: opening the Centre five days a week; producing *Peace and Justice News*, writing, proofreading, formatting,



doing the mailout, staffing the Festival stall and much more. Nineteen volunteers helped with the

Light Against Darkness exhibition. Many were students from Edinburgh College of Art who assisted our volunteer Curator Leila Hedayat, helping set up and take down, with the launch event, as invigilators and creating display boards.

Many volunteers received training in skills including website and print publishing and social media. This year the Centre took on one intern, Jonathon Greig, a student from Aberdeen University who helped with the publication of Peace and Justice News and with the organisation of the exhibition of the Wool Against Weapons scarf and with the fundraising stall during the month of August.

Press Coverage

Conscientious Objectors Day Vigil

Independent Catholic News, 18 May 2014.
<http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=24751>

“Thousands to commemorate First World War centenary at Edinburgh event”. STV, 15 May 2014.
<http://news.stv.tv/east-central/275371-edinburgh-castle-to-hold-centenary-event-for-first-world-war-outbreak/>

Light Against Darkness

“Syrian exhibition uses colour to erase the dark shades of war”. STV Edinburgh. 23 Oct 2014.
<http://edinburgh.stv.tv/articles/296710-light-against-darkness-exhibition-opens-in-edinburgh/>

“Syrian children drawings are brought to Edinburgh”. Edinburgh Evening News. 23 Oct 2014. <http://www.edinburghnews.scotsman.com/life-style/syrian-children-drawings-are-brought-to-edinburgh-1-3581510>

Conscientious Objectors Memorial Petition. (2015)

Conscientious objectors: “Memorial call for men who refused to take up arms.” The National. 24 March 2015.
<http://www.thenational.scot/news/conscientious-objectors-memorial-call-for-men-who-refused-to-take-up-arms.1398>

“Call for memorial to conscientious objectors.” Edinburgh Evening News. 25 march 2015.
<http://www.edinburghnews.scotsman.com/news/call-for-memorial-to-conscientious-objectors-1-3728118>

Centre Users and Affiliates

About 15 groups are Centre Users and have a mailbox at the Centre for a small fee. This year we introduced Affiliation to the Centre whereby groups pay a bit more and we advertise their events and collaborate with them. Edinburgh CAAT, Scottish WILPF, Edinburgh CND and Trident Ploughshares are affiliates.