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PEACE & JUSTICE

NEWS

JUL - AUG - SEP 2020



In this issue:

Scotland and the Legacies of the Atlantic Slave Trade
– Where are we at in 2020?

Women Opposing Conscription in Britain during the
Second World War

Black Lives Matter in the US: From City to Suburbs

P&J to mark 75th Anniversary of Hiroshima & Nagasaki
with Two New Works by Michael Mears

Edinburgh Peace & Justice Centre

Working in Scotland since 1980 to promote:
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Peacebuilding for Primary Schools – Promoting Nuclear Disarmament –
 Peace Cranes Project - Don't Bank on the Bomb
 Opposing War Memorial
 Desk & meeting space – Peace & Justice News

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Editor's Introduction

In this Issue of *Peace & Justice News* we look at the pressing social justice agenda of the present moment, Black Lives Matter and the legacy of the Atlantic Slave Trade from American and Scottish perspectives. From the suburbs of Detroit Amanda Taylor sets out what it means to be an ally in America in the wake of the killing of George Floyd while Edinburgh History teacher Katie Hunter examines the teaching of the history of the slave trade and colonialism in Scotland's secondary schools curriculum and finds it has fallen short, though teachers are prioritizing addressing this shortfall.

In our editorial P&J Administrator Jane Herbstritt explains why we have signed on to a call for the Scottish government to make it a just, green recovery, and suggests this wider movement integrate transitioning from the arms trade.

P&J intern Lane Deamant, writing from Chicago during this COVID lockdown explores the stories of women who refused not only active military service but conscription into civilian wartime national service too.

And in Centre News you can find out about some great upcoming P&J events planned to mark the 75th anniversary of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Michael Mears, who brought us the fantastic dramatic rendition of the

stories of First World War COs, will be back this August, online, with a P&J Peace Cranes Premiere of a dramatic reading of "The Priest's Story" from John Hersey's Hiroshima and again at the Just Festival online with an excerpt from his new play "The Mistake", telling the story of Nagasaki through the diaries of a doctor.

Lastly, in keeping with our aim to be inclusive and welcoming Lane Deamant offers an intro to transgender pronouns and how to use them.

The Editors.

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Editorial: Choosing a just, green recovery from pandemic

By Jane Herbstritt

In her insightful commentary on the impact of Covid-19 on India, Arundhati Roy writes of the pandemic being like a portal and lockdown as a kind of transit lounge between two countries – the world before, and the world after coronavirus. She says of the portal:

“We can choose to walk through it, dragging the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred, our avarice, our data banks and dead ideas, our dead rivers and smoky skies behind us. Or we can walk through lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world. And ready to fight for it.”

The pandemic has felt like a portal into a strange world – and there is no knowing exactly what shape that world will take when we step out of our lockdown ‘transit lounge’. It has brought massive upheaval and much suffering, beyond the terrible death count.

Hardship has been disproportionately felt by the poor and marginalized in the UK and globally. Black and minority ethnic communities have been hit the hardest. The crisis has laid bare how inequity is lethal.



But the pandemic has also taught us some happier lessons. It has shone a light on acts of solidarity and cooperation, highlighting the vital role of public services, key workers and unpaid carers – to whom we literally owe our lives. It has shown us the value of community, helped us get to know our neighbours again, spend quality family time, slow down and appreciate nature without the traffic pollution.

For many people living in the global south, the dangers of lockdown are very different. In place like the Philippines, Cambodia and India authoritarian regimes have used the lockdown to tighten their grip, often with militarised lockdowns. Roy talks about India, where Prime Minister Modi announced lockdown only four hours before all markets, shops, restaurants, factories were shut and public and private transport banned. Millions of migrant workers were forced to walk hundreds of miles back to their villages – only to be turned back when the state borders closed, to find a place in refugee camps. For poor people in many parts of the global south, crammed together in small

apartments, or in camps, social distancing is impossible. And washing your hands is unrealistic if you don't have access to a clean water supply.

In the global north the pandemic has meant a realisation of the importance of our public services that are barely still functioning after years of austerity. Whereas in the global south, the weakness of the public sector was imposed by rich countries and international institutions like the International Monetary Fund. This has created a permanent crisis: Burkina Faso has just 11 ventilators for 19 million citizens; Mozambique has no intensive care unit capacity; and Sierra Leone has 1 doctor per 50,000 people. In Yemen, war by the Saudi-led coalition, whose weapons have been provided by UK arms dealers, has destroyed infrastructure essential to control this epidemic. Saudi forces have targeted hospitals, clinics and vaccination centres. Blockades have starved the population and made it hard for hospitals to get essential medical supplies. Globally and locally, coronavirus has highlighted the many failures of the current economic system that puts profit before people's health, livelihood and sanity and that is unable to show kindness when people are desperately in need.

So what can we do to change this? The new post-pandemic world is not yet fully-formed. Can we, as Roy says poetically, travel to it 'lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world. And ready to fight for it'? In Scotland we have the luxury of space to talk about what we have learned, to imagine and build alternatives.

The Edinburgh Peace & Justice Centre has joined a coalition of more than 80 civil society groups calling on the First Minister to move towards a just, green recovery. Our five overarching asks are: proper investment in public services; decent funding to transform our society to meet Scotland's fair share of climate emissions cuts; strengthening democracy and human rights; protecting marginal people by redistributing wealth, and showing solidarity across borders by proactively supporting an international coronavirus emergency response that challenges the scapegoating of migrants and bolsters global public health. Bringing such a diverse coalition together has been no mean feat, and we are now making plans to campaign locally on these issues.

Visionary work is also being done by international social justice organisations like Global Justice Now and Jubilee Debt Campaign who are calling for a global reset, helping countries in the global south now, and in the long term. Amongst other demands they are calling for immediate, unconditional cancellation of countries' debts, and a one-off coronavirus tax on corporations that are making a profit out of this crisis.

Find out more about the Just, Green Recovery from this webinar about the campaign: <https://bit.ly/2YC9ea3>

Read Global Justice Now's briefing on a global reset here:

https://www.globaljustice.org.uk/sites/default/files/files/resources/global_reset_briefing_april_2020.pdf

Arundhati Roy's article: <https://tinyurl.com/saed22p>

TAKE ACTION: Sign the Just Green Recovery petition:
foe.scot/campaign/just-green-recovery-for-scotland/

Centre News

P&J Re-Visioning

We have completed the first stage of the review gathering input on **Vision, Purpose** and **Values** from members, staff and Trustees. We're currently looking at our Mission and will move on to considering how we can better integrate these values in all that we do, so that we truly become the change we want to see. We expect to be ready to report more fully in time for the next issue of P&J News in October.



Conscientious Objectors Day Vigil

Our CO Day Online Scotland Vigil was a great success with contributions from the descendants of several COs, our intern Lane Deamant, Protest in Harmony, and a 6 part harmony by the wonderful Penny Stone. Our event was promoted by National (UK) CO Day group, Peace Pledge Union, Fellowship of Reconciliation and others, and we promoted the National CO Day vigil. Our Facebook Livestream of the Scotland vigil Reached 2,169 people. Livestreaming meant that we reached many times more than we have done with the actual vigil



which is usually attended by 50 and up to 100 people. We will aim to Livestream events in future where logistically possible.

If you missed the event you can still view and Share it at:

<https://youtu.be/TdJL6XuFL28> Find out more about the Opposing War Memorial or donate at: <https://opposingwar.scot/>

COVID working & premises. Our staff will continue to work from home for the foreseeable future. Our address is still *Peace & Justice Centre, Central Edinburgh Methodist Church, 25 Nicolson Square, Edinburgh EH8 9BX.*

Upcoming Peace & Justice Events

Peace Cranes Pre-Exhibition Online Events August 2020

We are pleased to announce that ahead of the 2021 launch of the Peace & Justice initiative Peace Cranes – our contemporary arts exhibition about the cultural legacy of Hiroshima – we are curating a series of online events in August 2020 commemorating the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. All pre-exhibition events are free though donations are warmly welcomed. Spread the word!

Origami Peace Cranes: A workshop led by Shoji Masuzawa

6 August 2020 (times tbc) | For 8 to 80+ year olds.

Join Peace & Justice Centre's member Shoji Masuzawa, for an origami peace crane making workshop. This workshop is dedicated to the two women who have inspired our *Peace Cranes* exhibition through their life-affirming act of folding origami paper cranes – Sadako Sasaki (1943-1955) – the Hiroshima school girl who still signifies our hopes for peace and nuclear disarmament

and [P&J's own member Atsuko Betchaku \(1960-2016\) – a teacher and pacifist.](#) In 2015,

Atsuko embarked on an international collaborative project of folding 140,000 origami peace cranes to represent the 140,000 people who were killed by the atomic bombing of Hiroshima on 6 August 1945 and to highlight the

[United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons](#) as a way to ensure that this will never happen again. Our

Peace Cranes 2021 exhibition will feature an installation by Juliana Capes, a contemporary artist and activist – incorporating all 140,000 origami paper peace cranes folded by Atsuko and hundreds of other volunteers like her from over five countries who have contributed to the Origami Peace Cranes project led by the Peace & Justice Centre over the last five years.



Image courtesy of paperfingercuts.com

A Peace Cranes pre-exhibition initiative of the Peace & Justice Centre as part of [Edinburgh CND](#) and [Scottish CND](#) Hiroshima Day 75th Anniversary Events

The Priest's Tale

A new play written and performed live by Michael Mears

6 August 2020, 8pm BST | For 12+ year olds



Michael Mears as FATHER WILHELM in
THE PRIEST'S TALE Image Courtesy
Michael Mears

Watch the exclusive performance of *The Priest's Tale* streaming live from the empty theatre of London's Sands Films Studio. See the compelling account of a survivor of the first atomic bombing – written and performed live by Michael Mears with live musical accompaniment by violinist Chihiro Ono. As one of the contemporary artists featured in our *Peace Cranes 2021* exhibition, the actor, playwright and peace activist Michael Mears is familiar to all at Peace & Justice from his solo stage play *This Evil Thing* (now available as a 'lockdown' film) portraying the stories of Britain's World War I conscientious objectors.

Michael's new piece *The Priest's Tale* is inspired by John Hersey's book *Hiroshima* (1946) and offers an eyewitness account of the first atomic bombing. Meet Father Wilhelm Kleinsorge – a German Jesuit priest living in Hiroshima, who survived the blast but witnessed much of the devastation and later succumbed to radiation sickness. Experience Father Wilhelm's story full of extraordinary detail and rounded out with warmth and compassion.

A Peace Cranes pre-exhibition initiative of the Peace & Justice Centre as part of Sands Films Studio Theatre Events

The Mistake

A film of a new play by Michael Mears and a post-screening Q&A

16, 22 or 23 August 2020 (date and time tbc) For 12+ year olds

Be the first to see a film of a new theatre in the making *The Mistake* by Michael



Poster image for THE MISTAKE by Michael Mears. Performer You-Ri Yamanaka. Photo by Simon Richardson, design by Jerry Williams.

Mears before its live stage version appears as part of our *Peace Cranes 2021* exhibition. Working remotely under lockdown the performers Michael Mears and You-Ri Yamanaka, and director Jatinder Verma have compiled an exclusive film collage of extracts and images from the making of *The Mistake* and will be around for a live post-show Q&A together with the *Peace Cranes* exhibition co-curators Iliyana Nedkova and Heather Kiernan. Using testimonies and eye-witness accounts, *The Mistake* interweaves the stories of survivor, scientist and soldier to create an evoking drama of what happens when scientific discoveries unlock the power of nature. Shigeko Nomura is a young woman living in war-time Hiroshima. Leo Szilard is a Hungarian scientist and 'father of the atomic bomb'. Paul Tibbets is the American pilot chosen to fly the plane that drops the bomb. At 8.15am on a Monday morning in August, their lives become fatally and forever entangled.

A Peace Cranes pre-exhibition initiative of the Peace & Justice Centre as part of Just Festival 2020 Digital

Dates and times will be listed on our website Events page and our Facebook page when confirmed.

Women Opposing Conscription in Britain during the Second World War

By Elena (Lane) Deamant

In April 1941, in the midst of the Second World War, British women were conscripted for the first time into industrial work for the war effort. Lacking sufficient volunteers in the army, Churchill's government enacted a policy called the Registration for Employment Orders, which required women aged 19 - 40 to register for work placements such as nursing, agriculture and food distribution, or factory work (Nicholson, 2007, p.412). Several million women thus found themselves compelled to participate in war-related work, further constricted by the fact that there was no legal way for women to register as conscientious objectors (COs) under the Employment Orders.

This denial was tied to a masculine understanding of conscientious objection as opposition only to military combat, leaving army registrars and tribunals unable and unwilling to understand why women might object to 'civilian' work on the home front. Yet some women persisted in defying government orders - they did not want to be forced into employment supporting war, even indirectly. In total, 272 women were prosecuted for refusing to register or serve their

'non-combatant' duties, with 214 of those women serving time in prison (Ibid.). These women are not recorded as official COs, due to their conscription under the Employment Orders, but their consciences and actions represent the same cause.



National Service recruitment poster. Source: Wikimedia Commons.

Despite enforcing the Employment Orders policy, the UK's accelerating demand for munitions and auxiliary services left the country with a significant labour shortage (Broad, p.48). In December 1941 the government issued the National Service Act, which called up single women aged 20-30 to serve in either the civil defense or volunteer for the armed forces (Ibid.). Under this legislation, women were allowed the

right to conscientious objection, as the work was deemed 'military service,' and 911 women were eventually granted CO status by tribunals

(Nicholson, 2007, p.416). The vast majority of women COs who were called under the National Service Act switched to alternative service as a conditional objection - only 69 women ended up with unconditional exemption (Ibid., p.420). This continued non-violent work for those harmed during the war indicated a wide recognition, especially after the fall of France, that potential solutions like negotiated peace would not work against Nazi fascism (Rempel, 1978, p.1213). Pacifists like Vera Brittain contributed greatly to alleviating the overwhelming humanitarian need. The Peace Pledge Union, chaired at the time by Brittain, led a campaign to end the Allied blockade in German-occupied countries, like Belgium and Greece, as it was causing a devastating famine (Rempel, p.1225). From 1941 on, Vera Brittain was also the lead for a committee to end the practice of carpet bombing (Ibid., p.1226). Being a CO did not mean passivity or inaction in response to totalitarianism.

As for the position of Scottish women during WWII, there are not as many records. Out of the 62,000 British COs, including about 1,000 women, there were 6,000 Scots registered (Edinburgh University, 2019).

There was some clear resistance in Scotland to compulsory participation in war production under the Employment Orders, especially due to the high demands and long hours in factory work that political activist Lindsey German has described as being "hard and exploitative" (2013, p.62). In 1943,

thousands of women workers struck for a week at a Rolls Royce plant near Glasgow over demands for equal pay (Ibid., p.63). The SNP also drew attention to frustrations by Scottish women who were being transferred to work in England when they did not want to move (Mitchell, 2014, p.97). A faction of the SNP opposed the war, arguing strongly against Scottish conscription by the British state, but the party did publicly support the war to avoid political alienation (Wilson, 2017, p.35).

Consider now the position of the more than seven million British women who were conscripted or volunteered into the war effort by the end of 1943 (Smith, 1984, p.934). When the war ended, women were expected to return to their dictated place and give up 'men's jobs' (Harris, BBC, 2011). Women who continued to work were relegated into traditional positions, like midwives and secretaries, or to poorly paid trade positions where their concerns were often ignored by unions (Striking Women, n.d.).

The contributions made by British women who worked during WWII were not fully recognized in popular culture until the second wave of feminism rose up in the UK in the 1960s and 70s, when war stories were used to bring about public sympathy to the cause for equal pay and employment. This prompts questions such as: How much of modern feminism is tied to war? What does it mean for conscripted entry into the 1940s war industry, a state-imposed restriction on the autonomy of women, to be heralded as a turning point for women's empowerment? Why was a war-induced absence of men necessary for women to gain access to higher levels of work, like mechanics and engineering, and what does this mean for the future of women in the workforce? COs from WWII remind us to always consider the position of women, the circumstances and systems that have the power to give or take away a woman's choice, and the moral questions that are produced from such interactions.



Rosie the Riveter - feminist icon for women in the workplace. Wikimedia Commons

Black Lives Matter US: From City to Suburbs

By Amanda Taylor

Amanda Taylor is a 26 year old bi-racial woman who grew up in Northern Macomb, Michigan, a rural, majority white community north of Detroit. She says: "Until these protests I was just a person who had an interest in social issues especially the ones centred around Detroit. Now, living a street outside the city, my love and passion continued to grow, spending a majority of my time there before COVID. Detroit is a unique captivating city that bleeds culture and history. My involvement now is focusing on North Macomb and my hometown but I hope to find an organization to split my efforts between both areas. Photos courtesy of Amanda Taylor.



From the beginning of the civil rights movement, Detroit has been a major player. Some of the most notable and historic events in Detroit were the 1967 riots. Virginia Park and many other neighbourhoods in Detroit were subjected to racial discrimination and police brutality on a recurring basis. Fuelled by the growing national civil rights movement, the oppressed Black residents of Virginia Park, reached their breaking point.

The start of the riot resulted from a police raid on an illegal after hours club called "The Blind Pig". While police arrested over 80 patrons inside, onlookers began to gather in the streets. After doing nothing for two hours police struggled to gain control of the

escalating chaos. Over the next three days police, the National Guard, and federal troops entered the city. Many more incidents of police brutality and mistreatment occurred, one of the most notable being the Algiers Hotel incident where a task force team brutally beat and abused a group of civilians, 3 of whom died. Between rioters, police, and the military, a city was destroyed leaving 43 dead, over 5,000 homeless, and \$50million in damages.

Now we are in a new wave of the civil rights movement with protests in every state and in many countries across the world reignited by the unjust murder of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police officers. . Though most have been peaceful and nonviolent, the world saw Minneapolis burn. When I

decided to partake in the Detroit protests, it was clear: the residents of Detroit and the surrounding community wanted change, wanted justice, but they did not want to see the city burn a second time.

The first few days of the protest were tense and uncomfortable. When I decided I wanted to protest I had no idea how much I needed to know and how fast I needed to learn. Many of us had imagined marching in unity but not much else. From the beginning we were warned what being arrested was going to be like, how to deal with tear gas/mace, how to protect our identity, to stick



together, and protect each other. During the day we marched and chanted. Once the sun went down the energy shifted. A curfew was put in place as a way to stop the protesting. After 8pm, police surrounded and gassed protesters. Some protesters experienced excessive force. Within the next three days hundreds were arrested though almost all the protesters were peaceful. We continued to march despite the curfew and arrests. Eventually it became clear that wanting justice was not going to result in the destruction of Detroit. This pressured the police chief to view the curfew as discretionary and police began to stand down. The protesters went from a prepared army to a unified voice.

In the second week of protesting my focus shifted to the suburbs. Michigan suburbs are some of the most segregated areas in the country. Being majority Caucasian, the suburbs show an extreme disconnect from the issues affecting the majority Black city. There is a lack of empathy for racial injustice. This allows rampant societal racism to exist and not much is being done to correct it.

After racist remarks were spray painted on a local landmark, a group of like-minded people and I started organizing a protest in our hometown. The dynamic of protesting in the burbs was extraordinarily different from that in Detroit. In the city the biggest obstacle to the protests is the police but in the suburbs, it's other residents. Counter protesters used several different intimidation tactics, most concerning being the threat of weapons. I was able to adapt strategies I learned in Detroit to utilize in the suburban context.

Some of the key tools that the Detroit protests taught me was the importance of preparation and safety. Detroit had prepared us for the worst. I was able to utilize that and mirror the steps we'd been taught about how to be safe and keep others safe. Another tool I learned from the Detroit protests is to tell the protesters what is expected from them: not to instigate, not to go back and forth with counter protesters, to mind themselves as their actions could affect the credibility of our march, and the safety of others.



A major difference in the suburbs is that community support is essential. Detroit has a much larger population so the entire community doesn't need to be on the same page to have support. However in a small town, most of which have never had any sort of protest, disagreement causes fear. My team spent a lot of our time on community outreach and relations. Without this I believe the false narratives would've gotten the best of our community. Fear would've won. By connecting with businesses, local government and the community, as well as a lot of PR work, we were able to shift a lot of concern to support.

Lastly, an intersectional tool I learned from Detroit is to follow through. During city protesting there was a huge emphasis on ensuring this isn't a singular event. At the time of writing, the Detroit protests have been occurring daily for 23 days. The change that is being asked for won't be accomplished just by marching. Change comes from voting, it comes from persistence, it comes with active involvement.

"Scotland and the Legacies of the Atlantic Slave Trade - Where are we at in 2020?"

Some conclusions from a Scottish History Teacher

By Katie Hunter

It was unexpected that Black Lives Matter #BLM re-energised in Lockdown to the extent that it did. In March many would have predicted a Green rather than a Black progressive push. In April & May there were tentative voices, pointing

to the quiet roads and skies; hesitantly suggesting, isn't now the time to reset, wake up, make a significant change?

Then with the footage of George Floyd's killing on May 25th the focus shifted, built and, from Minneapolis to Bristol, London, Glasgow and Uganda, erupted onto the streets. BLM signs went up in my Edinburgh neighbourhood alongside the Rainbows. The response has been amazing.

So why now and why here?

Why now?

I heard one perspective from, Sharon Aninakwa, a London history teacher friend I had made through the 'Justice to History' project; A project on how to better teach the legacies of the Atlantic Slave Trade. She said on the [Justice to History podcast](https://tinyurl.com/yculmc6p), (<https://tinyurl.com/yculmc6p>) "Right now it feels really heavy. It has triggered a lot of emotions that on a day-to-day basis you suppress. You are going at that pace of like where all those things are coming at you in terms of racism, but we've almost become too adept at dealing with them and we've just been going with them. **This moment of being more still** because of Covid, but then experiencing and seeing the brutality of racism; it conjures up all those daily experiences and it almost feels too much right now.

The pause that we have all experienced has allowed Floyd's killing at the knee of an American policeman to fill a uniquely quiet space. Black Lives Matter has taken on a sense of urgency, and rapid expansion of awareness, that it allowed Floyd's six-year-old daughter to say, 'Daddy changed the world!'. So in part we can point to the sense of pause and space during Lockdown to explain the seismic shift. Short-term social media use likely experienced a boom during enforced down-time. Mid-term, the BLM build-up has much to do with the new ease of mobile phone filming and streaming technology.

Technology has also stripped overt racism of its cloak of denial. Behaviours which, were they not captured on camera would have easily passed as 'blowing things out of proportion' or even, outright false. There is also the fact that the instant connectivity offered by the internet means that everyone is

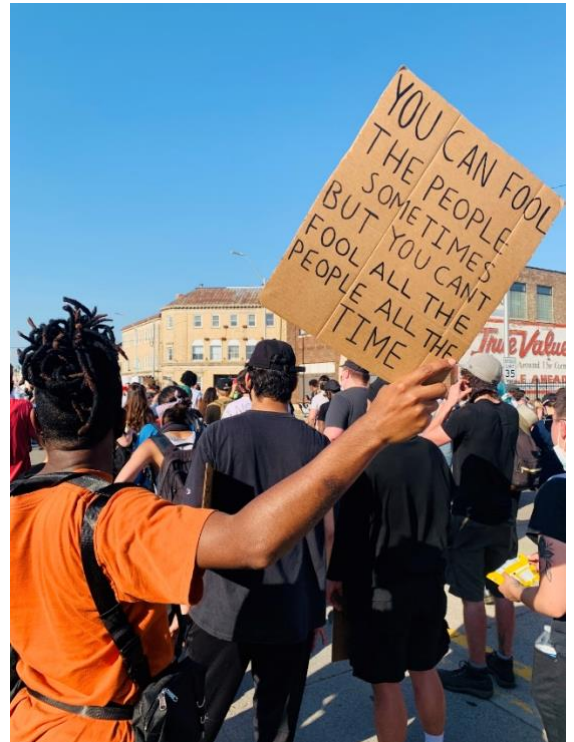


Photo: BLM protest in Detroit. Courtesy of Amanda Taylor.

tuned into the same incident within a short space of time, if not in real time – a raw material, without media censorship.”(Ikenna Azubuike Onwunabonze, on the killing of Sheku Bayoh in 2015 in Kirkcaldy in [“Black Lives Matter: If you are not angry you are not paying attention, rs21.co.uk](#))

In [‘The Trayvon Generation’](#) (The New Yorker, 22 June, 2020) Elizabeth Alexander refers to this new generation’s experience of watching “violations up close and on their cell phones, so many times over. They watched them in near-real time. They watched them crisscrossed and concentrated. They watched them on the school bus. They watched them under the covers at night...Which is to say, the kids watched their peers shot down and their parents’ generation get gunned down and beat down and terrorized as well.”

Sheku Bayoh’s sister (BBC, 19 June 2020) [has spoken about the parallels](#) between the death of her brother in Kirkcaldy, in 2015 and the manner of the death of George Floyd in this BBC interview.

"I could not watch it," says Kadi, now 42. "Too painful. It has brought back so many memories of how we felt in 2015. It seemed like my brother. It just brought it all back. George was quickly put down on the ground. Same like Sheku."

An initial autopsy suggested underlying health conditions and intoxicants could be to blame for Floyd's death, and there was nothing to support a diagnosis of asphyxia. A second autopsy commissioned by Floyd's family flatly contradicted this, concluding he died of asphyxiation due to neck and back compression.

"Again, the same as Sheku," says Kadi. "The authorities here wanted to blame it all on the drugs he'd taken. We don't condone his taking drugs, but he was not himself. And we believe that if Sheku was white, he would have been treated differently and still be alive today."

"When a black man dies at the hands of police, they always try to blame it on him, blame anything but those responsible. We're tired of this now. It is enough."

Why here?

The route to current racism in the USA is distinct from the route in the UK, despite the overlaps of a shared History. In the US the colour bar created by slavery has been kept alive, from plantation slavery through a failed reconstruction after the Civil War to Jim Crow and Red Lining.

In the UK the colour bar of slavery was overtaken by the 'glory' of Empire. After its abolition the existence of slavery was largely ignored or forgotten, along with the public memory of the historical origins of colour prejudice.

These different routes can be confused by the lively influence of American culture.

Some commentators have jumped from Scotland/Britain/Europe's role in the Transatlantic Slave Trade to contemporary incidents of racism without effectively explaining how the two are connected. It's harder to do in the Scottish case than the American experience, from which an unfractured linear narrative can be assembled.

Ex-Guardian journalist & US Correspondent, Gary Younge, ("What Black America Means to Europe", New York Review of Books, 6 June 2020) explains [Britons' and Europeans'](#) strong interest in America's Civil Rights struggle: "The 'tradition of political identification with Black America also leaves significant space for the European continent's inferiority complex, as it seeks to shroud its relative military and economic weakness in relation to America with a moral confidence that conveniently ignores both its colonial past and its own racist present."

Younge also makes the link to technology and Social Media as the cause of the pace of protest, but backgrounds it with Europeans' relation to the world's dominant nation "From the vantage point of a continent that both resents and covets American power, and is in no position to do anything about it, African-Americans represent to many Europeans a redemptive force: the living proof that the US is not all it claims to be and that it could be so much greater than it is."

What Now?

The statue focused movement has purposefully served as a corrective to this public ignorance of our European colonial history. It's merit has been in allowing the global to be made local.

The teaching of this History has been whitewashed. Occasionally this has been [purposefully orchestrated](#), but largely it has been an issue of [lack of representation](#) (Podcast, Akala and David Olusoga, southbankcentre.co.uk). History remains one of the whitest disciplines, from undergraduates to professors and history teachers.

From the perspective of a Scottish History teacher, the heightened awareness of local black History can only be positive. That said, a backlash is inevitable. Backlash can be seen in 'below the line' comments directed at shifting

historical narratives as racists feel stung by a loss of power. Worryingly we have also seen bodily [violence against people](#) as in George Square during the 'protect the statues' 'vigil', that has not been widely reported (Glasgow Times, 18 June 2020).

We know that Social Media can act as an echo chamber. Still, it has been shocking, whilst coming out of my own 'social bubble' to research this piece, to see the sheer numbers of '*likes*' the far-right anti-Black Lives Matter campaign has gained for their distortions. One video promoting the 'protection' of Dundas' statue in St Andrew's Square, Edinburgh, gained tens of thousands of views in one day.

Social Media has prompted discussion, but the other side of this coin may be a crystallising transatlantic network of white supremacy.

What is more important is the response by the establishment to the campaign. On the one hand some muted muttering about keeping law and order. On the other hand, premiership football matches are being played with the black lives matter slogan in large letters on players' shirts. This is not a time to remain silent.

What is taught?

There have also been calls for the lack of Black British History knowledge to be rectified by better coverage in classrooms. That is a priority for many History teachers.. As Scottish education does not operate with a set curriculum there can be no 'orders from the top' to insert certain topics into the curriculum. Better teaching must come from the ground-up through training and high-quality teacher development opportunities. Not a quick fix, but in some ways preferable to sensitive issues being made compulsory and then taught cack-handedly.

Though Scotland does not have a curriculum, the Scottish exam board offers a popular course on the Atlantic Slave Trade which can be taken at National 5 (usually 16) or Higher (usually 17).. In schools where the Atlantic Slave Trade is not taught at exam level, the topic is often taught at BGE level (12-14). There is an increasingly popular focus (among teachers) on Scotland's role, as the academic research, has trickled down.

Academics and community groups are keen that Atlantic Slavery is taught sensitively with a duty of care on teachers to educate themselves before opening up a PowerPoint and launching in. Teachers should look at their whole scheme of work -individual to every school in Scotland- to check that Black History is not only experienced by the pupils as 'victim' history. The only

worked up suggestion so far has been to counterbalance the Atlantic Slave Trade with a precursor course that teaches the development of African Kingdoms before the Slave Trade at BGE (12-14). At Nationals level, (often taken at 15), teachers need to choose between the slave trade course and the 'Changing Britain,' industrial revolution course.. They cannot teach both. This is somewhat ironic given the industrial revolution course makes no mention that most of the raw materials were first grown and processed by enslaved Africans. Even the Atlantic Slave Trade course is not ideal as it makes a conservative editing choice, finishing with British Government 'heroic' abolition of the trade, with no mention of the continuation of British slavery in the colonies.

It is rare for teachers to follow the 17th century Atlantic Slave Trade course with 19th century British colonialism. The mapping of how racism became structurally ingrained in British society is not charted enough with Scottish/British teenagers.

Only a tiny minority of History Undergraduates will encounter the colonial history of the Caribbean. [Writing about Scottish links to structural inequality](#) in the Caribbean, ("Making Redress for Slavery goes further than individuals, Scotsman", 18 June 2020) Diana Paton of Edinburgh University says "There was no attempt to foster a more diversified economy that could have provided greater opportunities for economic development. This plantation orientation worked hand-in-hand with intense racial discrimination. Windrush-generation migration to Britain after World War Two was a product of this sustained underdevelopment and racism."

Teachers might better consider how to present the Twentieth Century legacies of slavery and colonialism to their pupils, without shifting the lens to the American Civil Rights history. Though that's certainly better than nothing, not least because it is a great course, well-trodden - and the music is terrific!

In the article aforementioned, [Gary Younge interrogates](#) why that feeling of being fascinated and moved by US History has also allowed us to keep our own colonial history at arm's length. "One of the central distinctions between the racial histories of Europe and the United States is that, until relatively recently, the European repression and resistance took place primarily abroad. Our civil rights movement was in Jamaica, Ghana, India, and so on. In the post-colonial era, this offshoring of responsibility has left significant room for denial, distortion, ignorance, and sophistry when it comes to understanding that history." " 'It is quite true that the English are hypocritical about their Empire,' wrote George Orwell in *England Your England*. 'In the working class this hypocrisy takes the form of not knowing that the Empire exists.' **In 1951, a**

decade after that essay was published, the UK government's social survey revealed that nearly three-fifths of respondents could not name a single British colony."

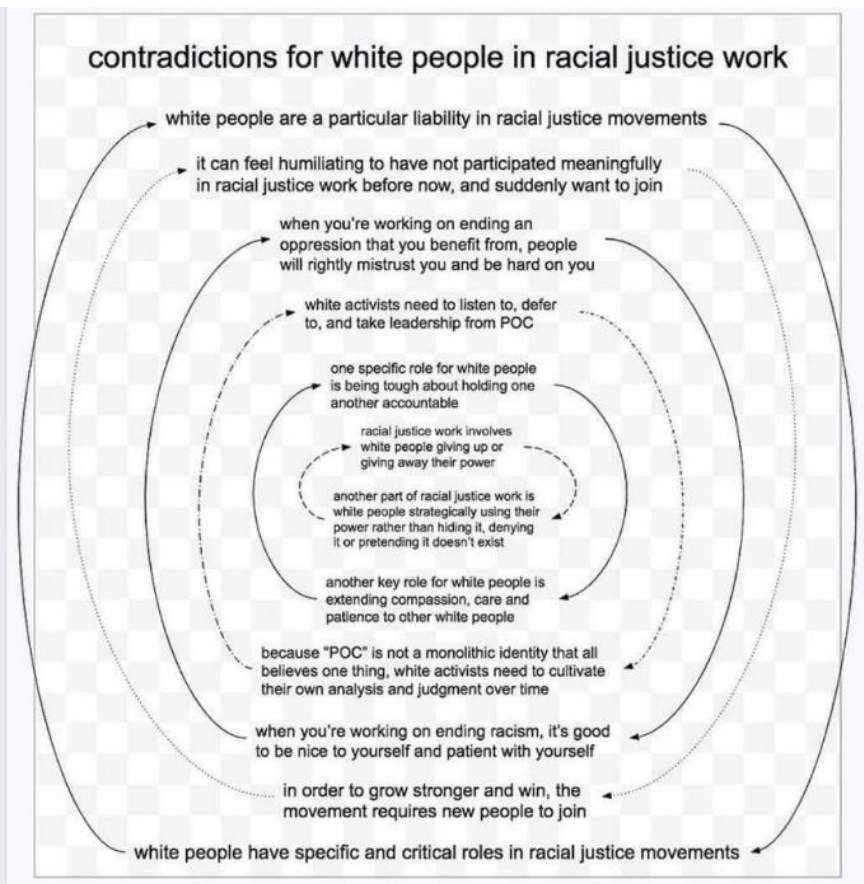
Today the English population **still have a positive view of Britain's imperial past**, whereas the poll returns are borderline for Scotland. 'More than twice as many of those polled (43%) thought that the British Empire was 'a good thing' than those who thought it was 'a bad thing' (19%)

(whorunsbritain.blogs.lincoln.ac.uk/ 2 Feb 2016), with the exception of Scotland, **where more people thought it was a bad thing** (34%) than thought it was good (30%), and a source of regret (36%) rather than pride (34%).'

School education does indeed have an important role. Currently most Scottish pupils will not encounter any mention of Empire. This is in part due to the fact pupils can drop History aged 14.

What can Scotland do?

Academic, Diana Paton, **calls on Nicola Sturgeon's national discussion** to *"address not just how Scotland's past is represented in our streetscapes and museums, but also the long-term implications of that past, for the Caribbean and for racial inequality in Scotland."*



This should include financial reparations. As Caribbean nations respond: **'Sorry is not enough'**. (Barbados Today, 20 June 2020)

What can I do?

There are many good posts about how to be good allies to the Black Lives Matter movement

I like **this image** as it reminds those feeling uncomfortable and uncertain that *multiple truths* need to be held on to at the same time. Being reflective about

our own actions and reactions is necessary. A cautious approach should not be debilitating.

Image source:

[instagram.com/p/CBhJwWlmdw/](https://www.instagram.com/p/CBhJwWlmdw/)

An Introduction to Transgender + Non-Binary Identity and How to Use Pronouns

By Lane Deamant

Lane Deamant is a student at University of Edinburgh and is writing from their home in Chicago, as yet unable to return to Scotland due to restrictions on travel during the COVID pandemic. Lane wrote this piece up for us in response to a request from our Trustees to explain the use of non-binary pronouns.

Terms to know: Being **transgender** (“trans”) means a person has a gender identity that is different than the gender they were assigned at birth based on sex (i.e. male/female). Gender identity is an innate knowledge of who a person is - sometimes a person’s gender identity is the *same* as the one they were assigned at birth (when this is the case, a person can be called “cisgender”), and sometimes a person’s gender identity is *different* (trans). Only an individual knows what their gender is, cis or trans, and people may outwardly **express** their gender through clothing, behavior, hairstyles, and other characteristics in ways that reflect their gender identity.

A person who is **non-binary** means they identify outside of the categories of “man” or “woman.” They may identify with aspects of being both a man and a woman, or they may not identify with either gender. Non-binary identity is not a fad or a new phenomena - non-binary people have been around as long as gender has. Even if you don’t necessarily understand what it means to be non-binary, you can still support non-binary people by accepting them as they are, and by respecting the pronouns they tell you. Many non-binary people use the pronoun “they and them” to refer to themselves (e.g. “Alex is waving their hand.”). Some non-binary people use other pronouns, like “ze,” which that particular person may tell you about, and it’s okay to ask politely if you haven’t heard a pronoun before. Using “they” pronouns for a singular person is not as hard as you might think. Most people do it without thinking when they do not know the gender of the person they are talking about (e.g. “Did they drop off the mail yet?”).

It is important to note that there is no particular way to be trans. Every person experiences their gender identity differently. If you are very unfamiliar with transgender identity, you might try doing more research from trans advocacy groups or read/watch stories written by trans people.

Pronouns

When in a group setting, introductions are a great way to learn what pronouns people prefer to be called by. If you are the group leader, you might explain that sharing pronouns helps to avoid making assumptions about people's gender identities, and that using the correct pronouns is important to making the space respectful and open. You should start with your own pronouns, by saying, for example, "My name is ____, and my pronouns are she and her." If you are in conversation with just one person, then you can say, "How about you?" and allow them to introduce themselves with their pronouns, or if in a group you can pass along to the next person.



Image: pixabay

If someone is confused by the prompt or does not want to share pronouns, let them know they can just share their name. If the situation allows for it, maybe you can speak to the person in private at a later point to invite them to share a bit more about what they're thinking. You may have the opportunity to pass along knowledge about the respectful

use of pronouns to an unaware person, or you may find that not all trans people want to come out to every group, every time and you can ask what that person needs in order to feel safe.

Even if you are not trans or you think the majority of the group is cisgender, it is still important to encourage everyone to share their name and personal pronouns. When everyone shares pronouns, it takes away the pressure on trans people to identify themselves as different or an outlier. Sharing pronouns also allows for everyone to be equally accountable in making sure that pronouns are respected. It is an easy way that you can make trans people feel more comfortable and accepted.

Education and growth

It may be uncomfortable to think about your own pronouns, or to rethink your instincts when referring to someone by pronouns you aren't familiar with. Perhaps you have never had to question your gender identity before. Perhaps you've only ever used the pronouns "she" and "he" to describe someone before. Remembering new pronouns can take time, and unlearning the assumptions we are all programmed to make about people takes time too.

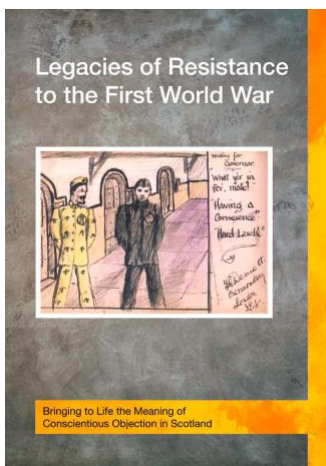
However, it is well worth the time and effort to practice using new pronouns, and to use the correct pronouns for someone even when you're thinking about them in your head.

If you make a mistake, just correct yourself quickly and move on. This is what most trans people would prefer when being misgendered (meaning they were not referred to with the correct pronouns). For example, "That's up to her - sorry, I mean to them." Try not to make a big deal about it, and don't make excuses for why you have used the wrong pronoun. If you hear someone else making a mistake, privately ask the person in question whether they would prefer you to correct others next time it happens. It is often tiring for trans people to have to remind people of their pronouns all the time, so standing up for them can be helpful, but only with their permission.

Further Resources

- PFLAG: Transgender Reading List for Adults
- MyPronouns.org
- National Center for Transgender Equality

Resources from the Peace & Justice Centre



Legacies of Resistance to the First World War celebrates the lives of about 30 First World War Conscientious Objectors from Dundee, Glasgow and Edinburgh. *The booklet is available to download as a pdf from our website or contact us to request print copies.*

Reflection

"Freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed."

Rev Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

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