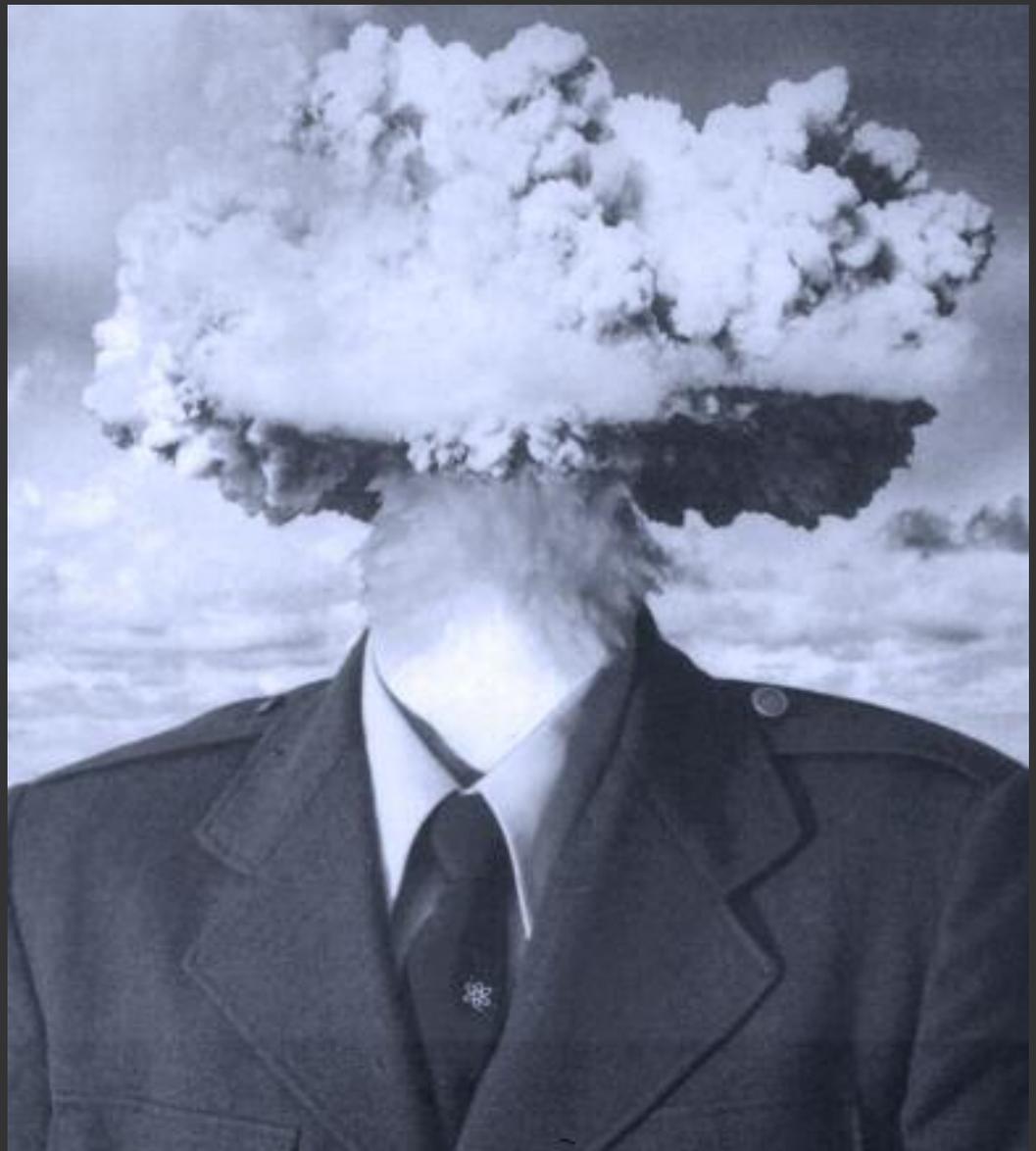


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WORKING FOR PEACE WITHOUT VIOLENCE



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Through the War Resisters' International it links with similar groups throughout the world. It is one of the original sponsors of Campaign Against Arms Trade, a member of Liberty and a co operating organisation of Landmine Action

For information about the Peace Pledge Union contact: Annie, PPU 1 Peace Passage London N7 0BT. or see www.ppu.org.uk

The next PPU Council meeting will be held on Saturday, 10th June 2006, 1pm.

'War is a crime against humanity. I renounce war, and am therefore determined not to support any kind of war. I am also determined to work for the removal of all causes of war.'

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You would think he had better things to do than gripe on Channel 4 News. Much of UK's military bogged down in Iraq and Afghanistan, a shortage of recruits, and the widespread unpopularity of what people in his charge were doing: it's surprising that the Chief of the Defence Staff, General Sir Mike Jackson ('the Prince of Darkness' to his troops), found time to rush to the studios and pronounce on a matter of relative insignificance. 'I am slightly saddened that there doesn't seem to have been a note of gratitude for the soldiers who risked their lives to save those lives,' he said, referring to pacifist hostages recently rescued from captivity in Iraq.

Only a very few people are in a position to know exactly what was said after the SAS burst in on the three Christian Peacemakers – and even they may not have precise recollections. People at the Christian Peacemaker Teams' head office, however, were quite clear about their prompt expression of thanks. The MoD, challenged about Jackson's reproach, explained that 'information about the thanks had not filtered through to the MoD when General Jackson made his statement'. They added: 'to be fair, he did not actually say that no expression of gratitude has been made.' So much for military intelligence....

What's rather more interesting is why Jackson felt the need to make such a comment. Was the general's action perhaps a calculated attempt to rally some public support for his embattled institution? Not much good news has come out of Iraq since the staged toppling of Saddam Hussein's statue, so singing the praises of the brave SAS lads who rescued a handful of civilians might be thought worth an outing in front of the cameras.

Singing to the US navy in 1944, Bing Crosby outlined the plan: you have to 'accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative, latch on to the affirmative, and don't mess with Mr In-Between'. The Telegraph, loyal to a fault, did its own bit of accentuating the positive for General Jackson: 'The full gamut of Britain's intelligence services was involved in the hunt for the hostages, in an operation that cost millions. Agents from MI6, MI5, the Joint Communications Headquarters at Cheltenham and soldiers from the Special Air Service and the Special Reconnaissance Regiment were all involved in the three-month hunt.' For many this became the accepted version of events. It neatly eliminated the negative – that the res-

cue appeared to be the result of a last minute tip-off and the kidnappers had scarpered. The millions spent on a hunt that actually failed were soon forgotten.

The general's tone of voice may have been authoritative, but to carp about lack of gratitude from three frightened and disoriented men who had been held captive for 119 days showed lack of understanding. Unless, of course, he was playing to popular prejudices: hopeless peaceniks rescued at great risk by troops whose energy and resources were

a real champaign moment

meant for more 'important' activities.

In the USA they have 'Operation Gratitude'. This was founded in March 2003 by Carolyn Blashek, who 'realised the importance for the troops to feel support from the folks back home'. And as a result of her efforts perhaps they do. It must surely be demoralising for any group toiling supposedly on our behalf to feel criticised and unsupported. Think of social workers, teachers and others like them, often pilloried in the media and given little sympathy or moral support for the often difficult jobs they do.

America also has its 'Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund' whose US chairman, Arnold Fisher, has just become a KGB. So has Richard Armitage, former US deputy Secretary of State, also known for his part in the Iran-Contra scandal (the illegal sale of arms to Iran). Sundry US generals have also received knighthoods. What message do these honours convey? The wrong one, surely. Or maybe they're no more than an inexpensive way by which Tony Blair can show his gratitude to people who have been of use.

When speaking of the dead and injured in war it is difficult to separate the private from the public, the personal from the official. Commemorations of the 'million British dead' after the First World War developed a public language of remembrance whose concepts entered the private domain – and have since turned into incantations ('fallen heroes', 'glorious dead') that shut down the ability to call a

Jan Melichar

spade a spade. Part of the PPU's work is to alert people to this at every opportunity. 'Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind,' John Donne famously wrote in 1623. His sentiment appeals, but how many have meant it as he did, or have felt thus diminished?

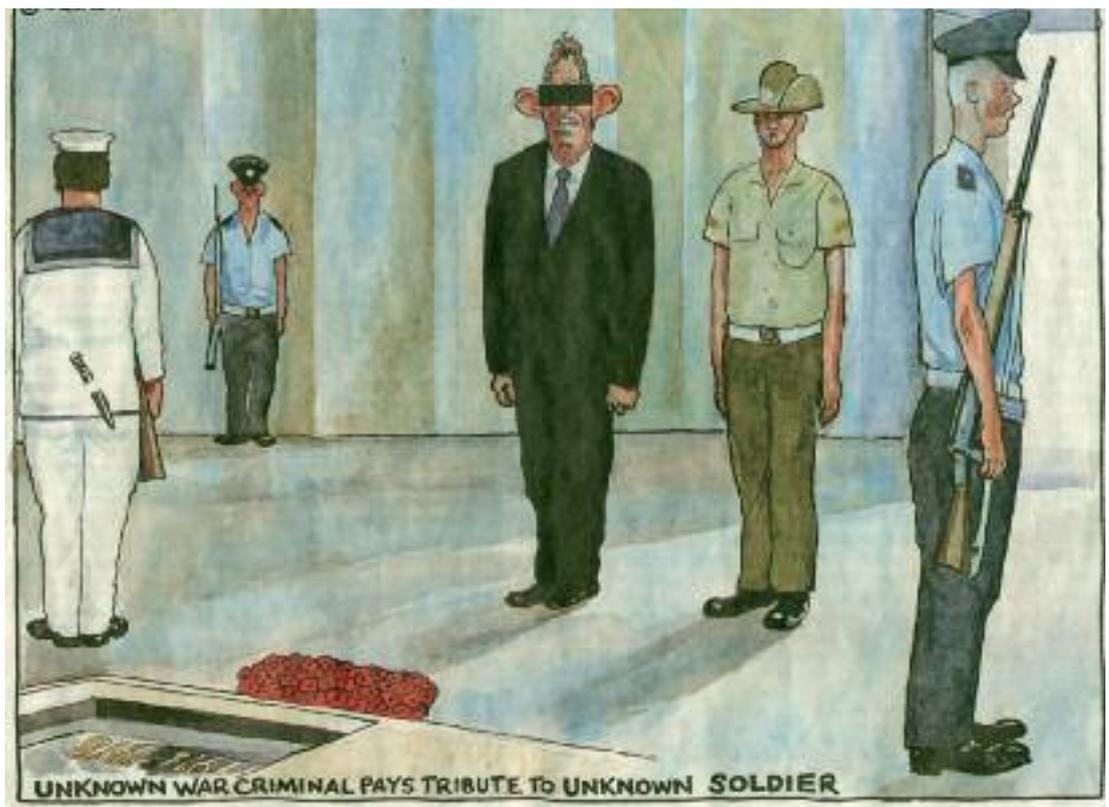
It was certainly put aside by the statesmen and politicians who decided on the war, by the millions who supported the war, by the generals who gave the orders and by the soldiers who went out to kill. Donne's words have painful meaning for the families and friends of those who were killed. But the emotions of the rest have been stirred by a deceit: the supposed 'nobility', 'honour', and 'valour' of war. Soldiers invaded another country and killed, directly or indirectly, men, women and children: a fact that has been made almost unmentionable.

But official sensitivity did not and does not extend to the war-injured, at least where cost is concerned. Dozens of charities were formed (later to coalesce into the British Legion) after the First World War, to help injured ex-soldiers. Such assistance was needed: while the state praised the disabled veterans with fine words it was considerably less free with financial support.

Today the cost of caring for injured forces personnel is far greater: too great to be fully

met or even adequate. Today, injuries are more serious but life expectancy greater. The US administration has been trying to 'hide' the huge number of severely wounded this century – 17,000 so far. 20% of these have serious head and brain injuries. Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz estimates the cost of caring for injured US veterans of the Iraq war to be at least \$35 billion. He says the cost of the Iraq war will be \$1,026 trillion (if troops withdraw by 2010, that is). As for Britain, there is a formidably complicated tariff of payments and compensations for injuries; it has also been announced that if a widow sues the MoD over her husbands' death her widow's pension will be cut.

The release of the three pacifist hostages was described as a 'champagne moment'. A few days earlier, MPs had begun debating how to replace the UK's Trident nuclear weapons system, at an estimated cost of £25 billion. General Jackson's view on the difference between conventional and nuclear weapons is straightforward: to him they are 'somewhat apples and oranges'. A weapon is a weapon, as long as it does the job. No doubt more champagne corks will pop as the contracts for the new submarines and missiles are signed. No doubt there will be little haggling over the price of this weaponry, and even less over the human cost of war.



The number of soldiers absconding from the Army has trebled since the invasion of Iraq. Figures released by the MoD show that over the past five years the number of soldiers who have gone Awol and failed to rejoin their units has been rising from 86 in 2001 to 118 in 2002 and 135 in 2003.

As the Iraqi opposition to the occupation has intensified and coalition casualties increased the numbers leapt to 230 in 2004 and to 383 in 2005. MoD officials admit these figures are troubling, because the number of soldiers who go Awol for a short period, but who then return has remained fairly constant.

Gilbert Blades, a military lawyer, claimed the true extent of absenteeism and the 'refusenik' problem was being disguised. 'If they played up the problem that wouldn't be good for morale.

It's hard to see the Government's decision to tighten up the definition of desertion as anything other than an attempt to stop people from refusing to serve in Iraq.

It would be good if this aversion to all things military could grow into a wider objection to military 'solutions'.



Stop the War demo March 2006 London

america's way with death

In February, officials in California delayed the execution of 46-year-old Michael Morales. His lawyers argued that a lethal injection would constitute cruel and unusual punishment, prohibited under the US constitution. Their case was based on a study published last year that suggested some inmates were given too little anaesthetic before receiving fatal doses of other drugs, and might therefore experience unnecessary pain.

Doctors and nurses are prohibited by healthcare professionals' ethical guidelines from participating in or assisting with executions, and the technicians involved have no specific training in administering anaesthetics. 'My impression is that lethal injection as practiced in the US now is no more humane than the gas chamber or electrocution, which have both been deemed inhumane,' says Leonidas Koniaris, a surgeon and one of the authors on the paper. He is not against the death penalty per se.

Without adequate anaesthesia, the authors say, the person being executed would experience asphyxiation, a severe burning sensation, massive muscle cramping and cardiac arrest - which would constitute the "cruel and unusual" punishment expressly forbidden by the US constitution's Eighth Amendment.

43 of the 49 inmates studied were probably sentient, and 21 may have been 'fully aware'. Because a muscle relaxant was used to paralyse them, inmates would have been unable to indicate any pain.

Ironically, US veterinarians are advised not to use neuromuscular blocking agents while euthanising animals precisely so they can recognise when the anaesthesia is not working. They recommend using a single large dose of barbiturates because they recognise that a drug cocktail may mask pain felt by animals.

international conscientious day monday 15 may

On International Conscientious Objectors' Day, Monday 15 May 2006, a ceremony will be held, commencing at 12.00 noon, at the CO Commemorative Stone, Tavistock Square, Bloomsbury, London, to honour men and women conscientious objectors to military service all over the world and in every age. The keynote speaker will be Chris Cole, Director of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, and flowers will be laid for individual COs representing some 60 countries in past and present times, some of whom were executed for their stand, and many others suffered severe hardship. All are welcome, especially including former COs and their families.

Ceremonies in other parts of the country will also be taking place. In Manchester a ceremony will take place in the Peace Garden, St Peter's Sq on Sunday 14 May at 1.00.

For details, contact the PPU office.



Tavistock Sq CO Day 2005

A senior official of the Coalition Provisional Authority said: Iraq was awash with cash. We played football with some of the bricks of \$100 dollar bills. It was a wild west, crazy atmosphere.” Adding succinctly: ‘We blew it.’

a park named arndt

Last month Helsinki city council decided to name a park after Arndt Pekurinen, a pacifist and leading figure in the original War Resisters section in Finland.

Arndt Pekurinen first refused military service in 1926 and was repeatedly imprisoned between 1929 and 1931. The 1931, alternative service law kept him out of prison but the law only applied in peacetime. As war came Arndt was again convicted and eventually sent to the front where he was executed for refusing to wear a uniform or carry arms. The first two soldiers ordered to shoot him refused.

After the war, there was an inconclusive investigation into the circumstances of his execution and for over 50 years he was forgotten. A book, *Courage: the life and execution of Arndt Pekurinen*, published in 1998 revived interest and following a campaign by the Committee of 100 in Helsinki resulted in the naming of the park.

Arndt was inspired by Jonathan Swift: ‘As people are not eaten, butchering them is of no use.’

Meanwhile in Canada in response to the US war on Iraq peace activist Issac Romano had the idea of a peace monument in Nelson. Remembering the 100,000 draft age Americans who crossed the border to Canada during the Vietnam war years, many of who still live in the area, he proposed a monument - ‘The Welcoming’ – an 18 meter peace sign in a water pool over which would flow a water arch indicating the US/Canada border under which Americans from one side are welcomed by open armed Canadians on the other.

Perhaps unsurprisingly American veterans groups protested and threatened to boycott Nelson. The town relies on tourist dollars so the plans for the monument were turned down. Undeterred Romano is now organising a reunion for war resisters old and new, American and Canadian.

life imprisonment for desertion

Since the US/UK invasion of Iraq in 2003 the number of British soldiers going absent without leave or failing to rejoin their units after authorised absence has steadily increased. The number was 118 in 2002, rising to 135 in 2003, 230 in 2004 and 383 in 2005. The view that there may be a direct connection between these figures and British involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan seems to be shared by the Ministry of Defence, if a little noticed amendment to the definition of, and penalties for, desertion, inserted in the 2006 Armed Forces Bill, is anything to go by.

Historically, desertion has been defined as going absent with the intention of never returning, with special penalties applicable for desertion in the face of the enemy. The new definition includes absence which is not necessarily intended to be permanent but which is intended to avoid particular kinds of service, including overseas operations for ‘the protection of life and property’ and ‘military occupation of a foreign country’. Between them, these definitions cover British operations in Afghanistan and Iraq (as well as former Yugoslavia). The maximum penalty for such desertion is life imprisonment, whereas ‘ordinary’ desertion incurs a maximum of only two years.

If life imprisonment seems unduly harsh, it is sobering to recall that it was as late as 1998 before the death penalty was abolished in the armed forces for desertion in the face of the enemy, mutiny, and certain other military offences.

A further example of military sensitivity to a small but potentially significant climate of resistance to certain armed forces operations is apparent in the insertion in 2004 of a new caveat in the RAF leaflet setting out the procedure for claiming discharge as a conscientious objector: ‘Because objection to military service on grounds of conscience can often attract disproportionate Parliamentary and public interest, it is necessary for the MOD to be kept fully informed of all cases from the outset, and at times to assume control of them’.

In fact, the last publicly recorded case of a conscientious discharge (from the Marines) was in 1996. The sentence of eight months imprisonment recently imposed by a court-martial on air force medical officer Malcolm Kendall-Smith, for refusing orders to go to Iraq, arose from his argument that the British operation was contrary to international law, and, so far from claiming a discharge, he made clear his wish to continue as an officer, so long as he could remain within the constraints of international law. The MOD has, however, clearly been embarrassed by the publicity surrounding the case.

homeland security

Margaret Melicharova

best friends

On March 16 the UN Assembly voted to set up a new human rights council to boost and monitor the human rights commitments of member states. Only four countries voted against it. One defaulter was the USA; another was Israel.

If the USA can be said to have a special relationship with any country, that country is Israel. Sure, there's that old link with Britain, but Britain's a dull elderly relative. Israel is young and feisty, inviting gallant support.

And support is given. Since the 1970s the US has annually handed Israel billions of dollars in economic and military aid; Israel doesn't even have to say how the cash is spent. The US has vetoed UN resolutions censuring Israel; and it wants Israel's nuclear arsenal ignored. At US-sponsored peace talks to end the Israel/Palestine conflict, Palestinian delegates felt they faced two Israeli camps, one with an Israeli flag, the other flying the Stars and Stripes. ('We acted like Israel's lawyer', said an American who was there.)

Earlier this March, two American professors started a bitter row by asking why, exactly, the US has done so much for Israel. After all, the alliance is hazardous and attracts hostility. While both states do whatever they think necessary to ensure security, what Israel does for its own security has put the USA's at greater risk.

The professors say it's the Israel lobby (not all members are Jewish) that keeps the US government on Israel's side, led by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. Founded in the 1950s, today AIPAC has 100,000 active members. It 'works with Congress to increase military assistance to Israel', teaches students how 'to effectively advocate for a strong US-Israel relationship', and has successfully influenced US foreign policy in the Middle East, not to mention its colossal defence expenditure.

The professors think the lobbyists have so much influence because of their positions and wealth, but also because most Americans dread being labelled 'anti-semitic': that's how criti-

1956

'If I were an Arab leader I would never make terms with Israel. That is natural: we have taken their country.... We come from Israel, but two thousand years ago, and what is that to them? There has been anti-semitism, the Nazis, Hitler, Auschwitz, but was that their fault? They see only one thing: we have come here and stolen their country. Why should they accept this?'

David Ben-Gurion, first-premier of Israel



HOMELAND SECURITY**2003**

'Violence is a symptom, the occupation is the disease. There must be a moral solution and a practical solution. As the occupier, we have the responsibility to lead this process. This is what I, an Israeli patriot, tell my own people.'

Uri Avnery, journalist, politician, founder member of Gush Shalom, Israel's peace group

cism of Israel and its policies is often perceived. The professors now stand accused of anti-semitism themselves.

'A national home in Palestine'

Ariel Sharon told AIPAC, 'You help strengthen the friendship between Israel and the US – a friendship based on the shared values of freedom, democracy and the sanctity of life'. Whose life?

Desire to return to their historic home has been part of Jewish culture for centuries. With Russian anti-Jewish pogroms in and after 1881, desire became determination. The first World Zionist Congress met in 1897, singing the anthem 'Hatikva' ('Hope') for the first time. Jewish settlers in Palestine started building Tel Aviv. In 1917 they helped the British drive the Ottoman Turks out of Jerusalem; a leading Zionist, Dr Chaim Weizmann, developed a synthetic chemical crucial to the British explosives industry coping with the Great War. And so British foreign secretary Arthur Balfour wrote his famous letter: the British government favoured 'the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people' in Palestine – 'it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities'. But the British also promised Palestine's Arabs self-determination, as reward for their assistance in the war. The British Mandate in Palestine (1922-1947) solved no problems. On its watch, Irgun was founded: an armed Jewish resistance group resorting to terrorism against civilians and British soldiers alike.

Today's foreign secretary Jack Straw recently conceded that Britain's imperial past has caused many modern political problems. The UN can also take some blame. In 1947 two UN committees met to discuss Palestine. One, dominated by Western powers, dealt with partition; their report divided Palestine into 3 linked areas for Palestinians and 3 linked areas for Jewish immigrants. The other committee was mostly from Arab/Muslim countries, and they supported a bi-national state: 'a national home for the Jewish people' was admissible, but a Jewish state would violate the rights of the indigenous population. And a state that came into being against bitter opposition from the Arabs of Palestine and beyond would 'jeopardise peace and international security throughout the Middle East'. This committee was ignored.

2003

'I believe our future has to be based on our learning one day to live with the Arabs and Palestinians. I believe that's an attainable goal, but not by means of some imposed Pax Americana.'

Ephraim Halevy, former head of Israel's secret service

In 1948 David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first premier, announced the birth of Israel. Back in 1924 he had said: 'The Arab community has certainly the right for self-rule. It is inconceivable of us to deny this right or diminish it.' But, as the professors point out, 'the creation of Israel involved acts of ethnic cleansing, including executions, massacres and rapes, and subsequent conduct has been often been brutal'. 750,000 Palestinians were driven out of their homeland in 1947-9. In 1967's Six Day War, up to 260,000 Palestinians were forced from the West Bank. Land designated as Palestinian now became the Occupied Territories; fortified Jewish settlements were later built there. After 2000, when the second intifada was triggered by Ariel Sharon's arrogant visit to Jerusalem's mosque compound (one of Islam's most revered sites), Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz said Israel's armed forces were becoming 'a killing machine whose efficiency is awe-inspiring, yet shocking'.

attitude problems

One of the first things the early Zionist settlers did was create an army – so effectively that in 1948, when five Arab countries declared war on new-born Israel, it easily defeated them. Further military victories followed. Over time, for various reasons Arab governments dropped armed conflict; but Israel, its army supported by economic growth and international money, did not. It saw itself as still at war – against the Palestinians, who had no army at all. Pro-Palestinian forces were barely-controlled Islamist commando militias and suicide bombers from extremist groups. Israel's determination on a military way out, bulldozing (often literally) Palestinian resistance, kept the conflict unresolved.

A more subtle obstacle to peace was defined by former Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat in 2002: 'We are ready to sit down now with any Israeli leader, regardless of his history, to negotiate freedom for the Palestinians, a complete end of the occupation, security for Israel and creative solutions to the plight of refugees, while respecting Israel's demographic concerns. But we will only sit down as equals, not as supplicants; as partners, not as subjects; as seekers of a just and peaceful solution, not as a defeated nation grateful for whatever scraps are thrown our way.'

Arabs in Palestine have indeed routinely been treated as inferiors. (An experience, sadly, that Israel's Jews might have been expected to

understand and avoid inflicting.) At first they held out for a single state with a majority Palestinian population and a shared administration. But in 1988 they said Yes to partition; Yes to Israel having most of what had been Palestinian land; Yes to Jewish administration of Israel. But the Israeli government failed to recognise what an enormous step that was, or understand Palestinians' obstinacy in still holding out for what mattered to them most: including the right of refugees to return, and Arab East Jerusalem as their capital. In 1988, worn down by poverty, unemployment and Israeli military rule, the terrorist group Hamas was founded in the ghettos of the Gaza Strip and began hitting back.

Israel's moderate leader Itzhak Rabin – murdered by an Israeli extremist in 1995 – understood that Israel's security depended on some recognition of the Palestinians' claims. He agreed to areas of Palestinian autonomy in Gaza and Jericho; peace treaties with other Arab countries followed. But then came suicide bombings, and new no-compromise Israeli leaders. Hardliners on both sides were the real policy-makers, and self-perpetuating armed violence destroyed peacemakers' efforts to find agreement.

better relations?

Something else happened this March: Israel went to the polls, and the majority vote was for disengagement. Not a negotiated settlement, alas, but unilateral withdrawal behind the security wall Israel is building round Palestinian land it wants to retain. (Interviewed in April, former Mossad chief Ephraim Halevy said, 'Walls can be taken down. We keep saying this. Walls can be taken down.') The Palestinians' homeland will still be fragmented and hard to travel in. Its farmland and water supplies will still be restricted, and its people crippled poverty-stricken.

To someone eager for peace, it can seem that national relationships and futures might do better if they were taken out of the hands of the military and politicians. Respected writers and commentators could be listened to instead. Not a new thought, but attractive. Israeli novelist Amos Oz, for example, has an interesting suggestion for the new government. Instead of letting non-recognition of Hamas political leadership prevent negotiation with Palestinians, try using a non-Western mediator: the Arab League, which even has a serviceable peace plan. 'It's not unthinkable

that a deal between the pragmatic Israeli and Arab governments can be reached, and brought before the Palestinians as a referendum. Considering that most Palestinians still tell surveys they're ready for a two-state solution, there's a chance of an agreement. Instead of Israeli disengagement – bound to leave many issues open and bleeding – we can work with Egypt and Saudi Arabia for a lasting peace.'

'Hamas political leadership': even before they won Palestinian elections in January, Hamas (aware that they couldn't be a government and a terrorist organisation at the same time) were looking at non-violent options. 'Historically we believe all Palestine belongs to Palestinians, but we're talking now about reality, about political solutions.' Their leaders have offered a long-term ceasefire. Reasonably, they ask for reciprocity from Israel. A Middle East specialist spells it out: 'Hamas must enforce the truce it has offered and prevent terrorism not only by its own militants but by other terrorist groups as well. But for Hamas to be able to pull this off, Israel must stop its targeted assassinations and incursions into Palestinian areas. Even more important, it must declare that the lines to which it's withdrawing in its unilateral disengagements are not permanent borders.' ('Walls can be taken down...')

Controversial American professors are right to remind their country that it has urgent problems at home. From health care to the implications of climate change, from massive debt to the global economy, the US administration has obligations demanding attention. Without US interference and bullish militarism, without its repeated failures to understand different cultures and points of view, a locally-achieved peace in the Middle East has a better chance of lasting. And if that happens, its long-term consequences could bring calm to other troubled areas of the non-Western world.

As for anti-semitism, Israeli novelist Yitzhak Laor says this: 'Anyone seen as an enemy of Israel is still perceived to be carrying on Hitler's work. Similar paranoid traits can be found in connection with "the new anti-semitism", an ugly charge aimed at anyone who criticises Israel's destruction of Palestine. The Holocaust made all Israelis to a certain extent survivors. We Israelis need to pinch ourselves and say: we are not the victims.'

2006

'Talk to us no more about recognising Israel's "right to exist" until you obtain a commitment from the Israelis to withdraw from our land and recognise our rights. We are tired of the West's racist approach to the conflict, in which the Palestinians are regarded as inferior. Though we are the victims, we offer our hands in peace, but only a peace that is based on justice.'

Ismail Haniyeh, Palestinian prime minister and member of Hamas

military lessons

Oliver Haslam



'For your mates, for your family, for each other. To train, to learn, to better yourself.

For the travel, for the action, for adventure. Confidence, courage, pride. As a unit, as a team, through it all. Together. Mechanised Infantry. Forward as one.'

The words above are from a British Army recruitment advert currently being broadcast on terrestrial television. It sounds great fun in the Army, doesn't it? Plenty of charging around in the countryside with your mates, travelling to new places full of action and adventure. A great way to develop

confidence and what's more, your family will be awfully proud of you. Just what every young person wants.

My thirteen-year-old niece came back from school the other day gushing with enthusiasm for the armed forces. Not from seeing this exciting advert, but because she'd just spent an afternoon at school with the RAF. They came to visit her school to help them with maths. Apparently her maths teacher is not up to the job and the RAF know everything there is to know about maths. They did maths exercises about the angle you can windsurf into the wind. They also studied how much a school bag or sweatshirt with a RAF logo on it would cost if there was 40% off in a sale.

'We want the children to come and have a fun maths lesson and go home and talk about it with their parents and sisters and brothers, and say we had a fun day doing things with the RAF. It's not hard recruiting, but a subtle way of spreading the message.' (Group Captain Dawn McCafferty, RAF's Inspectorate of Recruitment)

Now that she knows everything about life in the RAF she can't wait to get onto the Internet whenever she visits me. She goes straight to the RAF and Army websites to play on all the games they have there. The RAF site is great for kids - all those funky cartoon-style graphics make it really fun. And it's really handy the way any time you click on the RAF target logo you go straight to raf-careers.com. 'Did you know that for many [RAF] jobs you don't need any formal education qualifications?' my niece said to me. 'I read it on the RAF website.'

My nephew has caught the bug too. Boys his age love joining clubs, especially if there is a bit of mystery or adventure promised. The RAF and Army both have clubs young boys and girls can join online. The RAF's is called 'Altitude' and the Army's is 'Camouflage'. My nephew went to the Camouflage site (www.mycamouflage.co.uk) and was a little daunted by the long form he had to complete (name address, date of birth, telephone number etc.) to join the club. Until he filled it in the only part of the site he could access was 'Army Careers'. He wanted to get straight to the

'Games', 'Events', and 'Free Stuff' but couldn't see any more until he told the Army all about himself. I'm sure they will be in touch before too long with lots more hard to resist offers.

So he decided to have a look at the RAF's club for kids.

'Aged 14–15 years and 9 months? There's even more on offer when you join the exclusive Altitude club. As well as the chance to win an RAF iPod when you sign up, we'll send you your membership card and keep you updated with all the latest from the RAF, all completely free.

News on aircraft and technology developments. Sports, fitness and adventure activities updates. Information on careers opportunities. Chances to win amazing RAF prizes. (www.rafcareers.com/altitude)

He was quite excited about the prospect of a new iPod (particularly with an RAF logo on it) and was keen to find out more about sports, fitness and adventure activities. Unfortunately his school is unable to provide much after school activity and he's never had the chance to go canoeing, rockclimbing, abseiling etc.

He was also intrigued by the age range accepted for membership of the Altitude club. 'Why can't you be a member if you're 15 years and 10 months old?' he asked. 'You can apply to join the real RAF once you are that old' his sister replied. 'They told us when they came to teach us maths.'

What recruiters don't say when they visit schools is as much a problem as what they do say. They don't point out that a newly recruited UK child soldier of 16 years old only has a five month window (after the first month) to legally leave the armed forces before the age of 22. Nor do they mention that the UK is the only European country to recruit under 18s. Or that the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which the UK is party, makes clear that the recruitment of under 18s should only be in exceptional circumstances.

The recruiting teams do talk about human rights, however. PPU recently heard from a teacher whose school received a pack entitled 'An Introduction to Human Rights' (the accompanying letter was addressed to 'Dear Headmaster', despite the Principal and Vice-principal being female - not a great start!). It was from the Army Careers Advisor for Northern Ireland, who also offered to send someone to 'deliver' some of the lessons in the pack,

adding: 'the main benefit of this is that this introduces someone to the pupils who has had actual hands on experience with the issues raised'.

Throughout the Army's human rights pack there is frequent reference to all the good work the armed forces do for peace. But no mention at all of human rights abuses by the UK military, of the people killed by UK soldiers or of the psychological trauma so many soldiers suffer when they return from war. I wonder if the Army ever take soldiers suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or maimed civilians to talk about human rights on their school visits? They too have hands on experience with the issues raised.

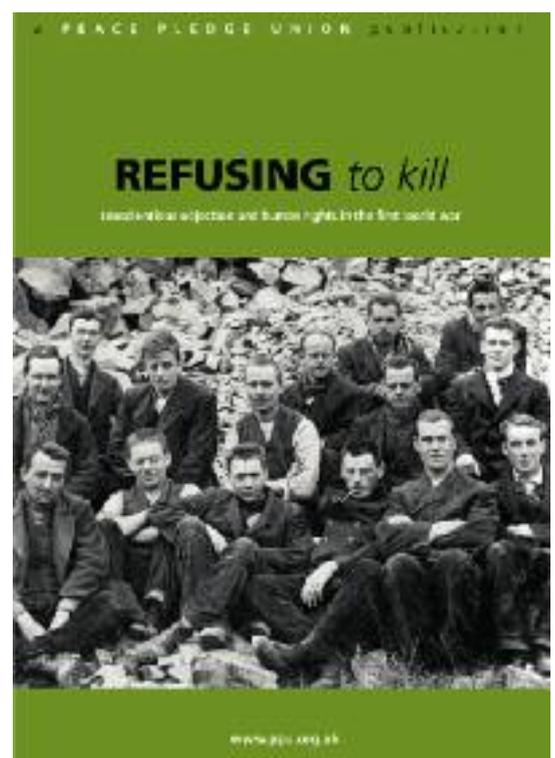
The military have a whole recruitment package specifically tailored to attract children, wherever they may be. Each element supports the others. At home they excite children with TV adverts about military life telling them how good they will feel once they join up. At school, lessons are taken by military personnel whose primary aim is to recruit, not to educate. They use misleading 'educational' materials plastered in military logos, adverts and strap-lines ('Army: Be the best'). Children are enticed to websites and clubs by the prospect of fun games and exclusive access. Once there, they are groomed to accept the benevolent hand of the military as one that will care for and support them at every stage of their military career.

The glaring problem with this recruitment

NEW FROM PPU

Refusing to Kill follows the story of conscientious objectors through the First World War. From the moment they received call-up papers to the day they were released from prisons, army units and work camps they faced personal dilemmas, violence, humiliation and hardship. But they were admired by many.

Refusing to Kill is a fascinating introduction to a little known chapter in the grim history of World War One. It is also part of our history with which we should all be better acquainted with.



package is the sheer dishonesty – often by omission. Adults may be able to unpick the truth from the exaggeration, misdirection and lies, but children can't. Schools should be places of peace and honesty where violence is discussed in an open and frank manner – and finally rejected as a means of solving disputes. Children should not be exposed to insidious recruitment programmes in schools, backed up with websites and adverts promoting the same militarist message.

It is easy to see how over-stretched and under-funded teachers might welcome someone from outside teaching their class for an afternoon. Schools often don't have the resources to provide adventurous activities (rockclimbing, canoeing etc.) for their pupils, or they fear litigation if a child is hurt. If the military offer these for free it must be hard for schools to turn them down. The military are not concerned with just educating children and giving them a bit of fun though. They want to get something back from their visits: more young recruits.

Because schools and teachers are under-resourced the armed forces are able to enter many schools easily. Masquerading as education they go about recruitment and lay the building blocks to the acceptance of militarism amongst children. It is time to end the military recruitment of children in schools and to stop grooming vulnerable young people to accept militarism through child-focused websites, offers of free iPods and lessons about RAF sweatshirts. Children deserve better.

You can help. If you hear the military are visiting your child's school, write to the school, your MP and contact the press. Please also send examples of militarism in schools to the PPU.

au revoir

The PPU's Education officer for the last two and a half years, Oliver Haslam, is leaving the staff at the end of April to pursue a career designing websites. We would like to thank him for his hard work and his valuable contribution both in the office and representing the PPU outside. During his time with us he has helped in the production of the *Martin Luther King CD*, and researched and written the recent *Refusing to Kill* book (and free CD for teachers/students) about Conscientious Objection and human rights in the First World War. We will always be reminded of his work with the peace mural in our yard at Peaceworks – Oliver contributed the sun! Indeed he organised the production of the mural and helped to erect the scaffolding, teach the children and paint as required. A confirmed atheist, he also represented the PPU on a recent *Songs of Praise* about Dick Sheppard, the PPU's founder. He has actively participated with other peace groups in the Peace Education Network helping with several conferences. We will miss him but wish him all the best for his future.

Lucy Beck, for PPU Council

action for peace where you live

'It's not hard recruiting but a subtle way of spreading the message'

Group Captain Dawn McCafferty, RAF's Inspectorate of Recruitment

The armed forces regularly visit schools. They do so apparently to provide careers guidance, to help discipline and motivate disaffected pupils, and to 'educate' children. PPU are concerned that they are also there for recruiting purposes.

The Army, RAF and Navy all have a number of Service Presentation Teams made up of serving personnel which 'tour schools throughout the country with the aim of providing a greater awareness of the Services and the career opportunities that are available within that Service'.

There is a 'volunteer mentoring' programme for disaffected pupils which 'consists of MOD personnel acting as mentors to individual pupils in local schools'.

The armed forces are also involved in 'educating' children through the RAF's Maths Education Programme and the Army's Introduction to Human Rights pack (see page 11).

By far the greatest involvement the armed forces have with children is through the 'Cadet Forces: The Ministry of Defence (MOD) is keen that young people see the armed forces and the MOD civil service as a first choice option when they think about careers. The MOD tries to do so by developing and supporting Britain's youth through sporting, adventurous, military and community training activities.'

The military are trying to recruit school children during school hours, on school premises and with taxpayers money. 'If they are not caught at this point [16], they are likely to take up other careers and be permanently lost to the armed forces.' (Select Committee on Armed Forces Bill 2001)

If you are concerned about the military's 'subtle way of spreading the message' you should make your concerns heard. Send the letter below to your MP, the local press and radio stations. If you have children, send the letter to your child's school or raise the issue at the Parent Teacher Association and with the school's Board of Governors.

PPU would be very interested to see any replies received in response to the letter as this can help with our future work on militarism in schools. We would also be grateful for reports of military involvement in schools in your area.

The text of this letter is available at www.ppu.org.uk/lt.html

second coming

René Wadlow

Occupied Minds : A Journey through the Israeli
Psyche. Arthur Neslen. Pluto Press, 2006.

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold'. W.B. Yeats' oft-quoted 'The Second Coming' seems to be the current theme song in the Israel-Palestine drama. After the elections in the Palestinian Authority which brought a Hamas-led government to power, followed shortly by elections in Israel which reflected the wide divergence of attitudes, all sides fear that there is no 'valid partner' with which to negotiate, and it is not clear what it is that is negotiable.

If these were the elections that are to take place in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the attitude of many would be 'Wake me up when it is all over.' However, the Israel-Palestine area for a host of reasons - ranging from the Crusades to the idea of the return of Jesus - has always been an area of concern to 'outsiders'. Those of us who have worked for a negotiated settlement and for reasonable relations (if not reconciliation) have our work cut out for us. There seems to be little willingness for direct negotiations among government officials. This may open a door for Track Two, non-governmental efforts. More than ever, we will have to see what peace movement people in the UK and the rest of Europe can do to be helpful both directly in the Middle East and in the Jewish-Arab communities at home.

One necessary step is to try to understand what Israelis and Palestinians are talking about and on which issues there is real passion. When one is not directly involved in an issue, there is much that falls outside our ability to 'feel' the issue. If we are not waiting for the Messiah, or the return of Jesus, or the Madhi, it is difficult to understand why Jerusalem can not be divided followed by cooperation between the administrations of the two (or three, if the Christian holy places are given a special administrative status) sections of the city.

One good place to start in understanding is to read Arthur Neslen's interviews. The author (or the publisher) chose 'occupied'

minds as a reference to the occupied territories of the West Bank. A more accurate title would have been 'preoccupied minds' - what issues keep coming back over and over in the minds of the Jewish Israelis.

The book is a set of 50 interviews, well carried out by a UK journalist of Jewish background. He lets each person speak with a minimum of direct questions. There are useful footnotes which explain references made by the speaker to history, Israeli society or Jewish theology. Although some 20-25 percent of Israelis are Arabs, nearly all of whom are Muslims or Christians, the interviews are only with Jewish Israelis. Thus the recurrent reflections on what it means to be a Jew and especially what it means to be a Jew and not believe in the Divine, often referred to here as G-d, the non-vowel of the Hebrew carried over into English.

There must be Israelis who are concerned about the weather or what they will eat at the next meal, but they are not found in this book. As Neslen writes 'The project was conceived as a platform for an unrepresentative but enlightening cross-section of voices to tell their own stories in the own way...The opinions expressed in this book are those of the interviewees, and not necessarily those of the author or publisher.'

Thus there are more interviews with Rabbis who are able to articulate the changing relations between the religion and the state of Israel than with farmers, more with intellectuals and with former government - especially military - officials who have to transform the ideology into practice. As Neslen writes 'Individuals in societies that see themselves as permanently at war often view each other through military field glasses, as combatants, infiltrators, morale boosters and traitors. Zionism, the belief in an ethnically centered Jewish state, still commands overwhelming support among world Jewry. Israel is revered as a safe haven in extremis.' A good number of interviews are with people who left difficult situations - Iraq, Russia, Ethiopia - or less difficult situations but with complex motivation, people from France, Iran, and the USA..

Nearly all the interviews have a good photo of the person speaking so one has the feeling of participating in a real conversation. This is a book to read in segments, not continuously. I

had the feeling of being in a greenhouse like those for vegetables and in need of 'coming up for air'. This is a useful book especially for those who wish to be directly involved in facilitating cross-cultural dialogue. In the same way, it may be useful to read the earlier interviews of Palestinians: Wendy Pearlman *Occupied Voices: Stories of Everyday Life from the Second Intifada* (New York: Nation Books, 2003). It is from these preoccupations and experiences that the curtain may ring up on a new drama.

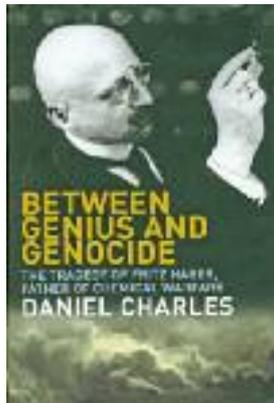
As Yeats wrote in *Wheels and Butterflies* 'Yet we must hold to what we have that the next civilisation may be born, not from a virgin's womb, nor a tomb without a body, not from a void, but of our own rich experience.'

harry mister

1914-2006

Harry Mister, who died in January at the age of 92, had not only a lifelong commitment to pacifism, but made it his life's work. Strongly influenced by his Methodist minister in Wood Green, north London, Harry's response to the rising tide of war in the 1930s was to join the newly burgeoning Peace Pledge Union. He also became involved in late 1935 with a group in Wood Green led by a young journalist, Humphrey Moore, planning a weekly newspaper as an antidote to the prevailing mood by 'serving all who are working for Peace'. After the launch of *Peace News* in June 1936 Harry remained part of the group behind the paper – adopted from its sixth issue as the paper of the PPU – not on the editorial side, but concerned with promotion and distribution.

Having a permanent slight limp, Harry was not required to prove himself a conscientious objector in the Second World War, and initially continued his chosen training in pharmacy. In 1941, however, his employers became involved in war work and Harry resigned – even though 'they were such nice people', as he recalled not long before his death. Humphrey Moore, who had stepped down in 1940 to make way for John Middleton Murry as editor of *Peace News*, and was now deputy editor, invited Harry to become circulation manager.



Between genius and genocide - the tragedy of Fritz Haber.

Fritz Haber, Nobel laureate in chemistry, confidant of Albert Einstein and German war hero died leaving an uncertain legacy. For some he was a benefactor of humanity inventing a way to capture nitrogen from the air to produce ammonia-based fertiliser. For others he was a war criminal who personally supervised the unleashing of chlorine gas against British, French and Canadian troops. A week after his first gas field test, Clara, his wife shot herself.

As Hitler's influence spread Haber, a Jew, was exiled from Germany and died in Switzerland. He did not live to see the day when one of the most effective insecticides made by his institute, Zyklon B, was used by the Nazis in concentration camps to murder millions of people, including many members of Haber's family.

This is a story filled with ambition, patriotism, hubris and tragedy set amidst huge technological advances, arms races and war.

In the face of withdrawal by commercial distributors and outlets from connection with what was seen to be a 'seditious' paper, it was Harry's genius to organise and enthuse a dedicated band of volunteers to sell PN on a thousand street corners around the country – and with 44,000 copies weekly at its high point, that was no mean feat.

At the same time Harry organised the distribution of PPU publications and developed a long series of *Peace News* monthly pamphlets. By the end of the war Harry conceived the idea, in conjunction with the essayist and dramatist Laurence Housman, of establishing a bookshop to promote the alternative new world of peace and co-operation which it was hoped would arise out of the ashes of war. Housman opened the shop named in his honour in October 1945, but Harry's entrepreneurial ambition did not stop there. In 1948 he pioneered the idea of fundraising Christmas cards, under the trade name *Endsleigh Cards* – called after the street in which the PPU offices stood – and persuaded organisations such as Oxfam and Help the Aged to stock them. In 1954 Harry began publishing Housman's *Peace Diary* and *World Peace Directory*, now in its 53rd year as an indispensable tool for peace activists everywhere.

In the meantime Harry had 'come out' as a peace activist by joining in Operation Gandhi, when in January 1952 a small band developed from the PPU's Nonviolent Resistance Group sat down on the steps of the War Office – as the ministry running the army was then more honestly named – in protest against British commitment to nuclear 'defence'. Harry and the others were fined 30s, and although for the first time in over 15 years Harry had his picture in *Peace News*, it was, modestly, only of his back as he sat facing the others. As Operation Gandhi developed into the Direct Action Committee against Nuclear War, Harry arranged to accommodate DAC in PN's new offices at 5 Caledonian Road, Kings Cross.

The building had been acquired by Harry's response to an enquiry whether he could make use of a gift of £5000, the product of a legacy which the inheritor found embarrassing. Harry suggested buying a permanent home for both PN and Housman's, organised a band of volunteers to refurbish it, and, apart from providing that permanent home, the building has housed a number of peace and



Harry running a bookstall at PPU AGM.

community organisations.

However, with the continuing rise of the nuclear disarmament movement, and the mass-action Committee of 100 (Harry joining its first sit-down in February 1961) began to supersede DAC, tensions arose in the PPU as to concentration on a particular form of war rather than war itself. In April 1961 PN and Housmans parted from the PPU, much to Harry's disappointment, because he had an abiding loyalty to both groups. Harry continued as business manager for PN and Housmans, but also served for many years on PPU Council. He saw no contradiction in PPU's primary concern with the abolition of war and the service of PN and Housmans, although equally rooted in pacifism, to the wider peace movement. Peace also became a family concern, with Harry's brother Alan serving as a PPU field worker, his wife Ivy working in Housmans, and his four children roped in to help in whatever way they could.

Harry retired from active involvement in Peace News in 1970, and from Housmans in 1980, but he continued as Company Secretary of the overarching organisation, Peace News Trustees Ltd, managing its properties (a second building was acquired in 1963 - later the home of CND and now of CAAT) and finances until his death. He was one of the last surviving links with the pioneering days of both the Peace Pledge Union and Peace News, but he has left behind a rich legacy of not only steadfast commitment to peace and nonviolence, but also of physical resources for the whole movement.

allen jackson

1918-2006

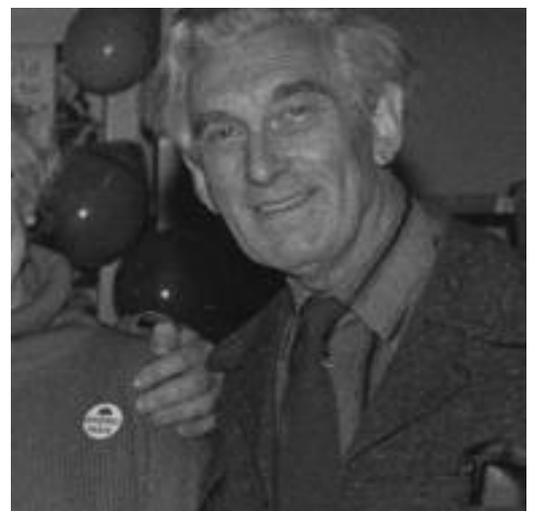
Allen Jackson, who died in February at the age of 87, devoted his life to the twin causes of education and peace. As a young conscientious objector in the Second World War, he volunteered to be a 'human guinea pig' at the Sorby Institute, Sheffield, where Dr Kenneth Mellanby investigated the transmission of scabies (a prevalent disease in the crowded conditions of pre-war and wartime Britain), the most effective methods of healing minor wounds, and the effects of vitamin deficiency. One of the nurses employed to care

for the voluntary patients became his wife Kathleen, and, as he said at her funeral three years ago, was to care for him for the rest of her life. Together, they became a partnership for peace as Kathleen played her own notable part in the Peace Pledge Union and the wider peace movement.

After the Second World War Allen and Kathleen lived for some years in the south west and became active in the Devon and Cornwall Area of the PPU, editing the local newsletter. Later they moved to London, and became joint wardens of Dick Sheppard House, the PPU headquarters, living in the basement flat (where a small annexe was built as a bedroom for their three small sons), supervising the needs of tenant organisations and arranging lettings of the meeting room. They also, of their own initiative, arranged regular evening discussion meetings on current issues to draw people into contact with the movement.

Allen served for many years on PPU Council, including three years as Chair. After finally settling in Welwyn Garden City, he and Kathleen became core members of the Welwyn Peace Group, organising many local activities, including a display about the PPU in the local library.

Having become a teacher almost by accident, and going on to be teacher of teachers, Allen was convinced that the core of education was preparation for life, and an essential component was education for peace. He therefore much encouraged the PPU's own educational work. After retirement he developed a keen interest in photography, and especially delighted in recording photographically many peace events.



Allen at local peace group event.

close the deso

2006 marks the 40th anniversary of the Defence Export Services Organisation. The DESO was set up in 1965, by Harold Wilson's government following a commissioned report to advise on an arms export promotion strategy. This was a time when the UK was a major arms supplier second only to the USA. Stiff competition from USSR, France and the US began to reduce the UK's share. In his report Donald Stokes, former managing director of British Leyland, urged that the best way to reverse this trend was to create 'a small but very

'Successive Customer Satisfaction Surveys of the UK defence industry revealed that over 75% of arms export orders would not have been achieved without the assistance of DESO'.

The breadth of these sales is staggering. In the first quarter of 2005 alone, UK arms were licensed for export to more than 100 countries. The existence of conflict, human rights abuses or development concerns continue to be irrelevant to DESO's arms sales drive.

500. 400 in London with another 100 in offices in 17 countries around the world.

Then as now the Labour government faced two ways without any apparent discomfort. The Defence Secretary Denis Healey told Parliament that 'While the Government attaches the highest importance to making progress in the field of arms control and disarmament, we must also take what practical steps we can to ensure that this country does not fail to secure its rightful share of this valuable commercial market'. Unconcerned by the contradictions in this statement, Healey proceeded to implement the findings of the Stokes Report and by July 1966, the 'central arms sales organisation' which Stokes had recommended was established in the Ministry of Defence. The unit became known as the Defence Sales Organisation and kept the name until

high-powered central arms sales organisation in the Ministry of Defence'; one that should be run by an industrialist with the support of a senior civil servant and a military deputy. Stokes recommended a staff of 15-20, but this has now grown to some

1985 when, with the completion of arms industry privatization, it was changed to the Defence Export Services Organisation. This was, apparently, a 'more accurate reflection of its revised function'.

The DESO exists to sell arms for companies and to lobby for arms exports within government. It identifies potential opportunities for arms sales, then works with the companies and other elements of government to push for deals. DESO appears uninhibited by ongoing conflicts, human rights abuses, or pressing development needs. Nor is it motivated by international security or the 'defence' of the UK. It focuses purely on arms company sales and profits. DESO acts as a state-sponsored marketing department for arms companies, but its importance goes far beyond that. Its position and role within Whitehall means that the arms industry's vested interests are relentlessly promoted across government.

Through DESO, the UK taxpayer subsidises the export of arms into areas of conflict and to governments that abuse human rights. The trade in military equipment also damages economic development at each of global, regional and local economic levels.

Time to close the DESO

Preparations are underway for the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review in which the Treasury assesses the needs of each department. It is possible that DESO could be singled out for attention on the basis that it is a waste of hundreds of civil service posts, is against the public interest, and undermines much less well resourced initiatives on counter-proliferation and conflict resolution. The arguments are clear; what remains to be seen is whether these arguments, together with pressure from the public, can counter the disproportionate influence of the arms lobby and persuade the government to shut DESO.

The Campaign Against Arms Trade has launched a petition calling on the government to close the Defence Export Services Organisation and not to transfer its functions elsewhere in the public sector or to allocate public funds to enable them to be undertaken in the private sector. You can find it at www.caat.org.uk

peace news 70th birthday event

On Saturday 17th June, Peace News – the independent peace and antiwar monthly – will be holding a special all-day event to celebrate its 70th Birthday. Published since 1936, Peace News has been at the forefront of radical peace publishing since its inception.

The - 11am to 5pm - will be made up of workshops and plenary discussions where participants can engage with issues currently covered in Peace News. There will also be the opportunity for people to feed into the editorial direction of the paper, participate in a fun all-ages banner-making workshop and have a play around in the NVDA training games session.

In the evening there will be a Birthday party - 7pm to midnight featuring live bands, film showings and DJs.

Food and drink will be available in exchange for a donation. All welcome. Entry by donation. The Square Occupied Social, 21 Russell Square, London For more info visit: www.peacenews.info or call 020 72788344