

working for peace since 1934  
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the new **peace matters**  
WORKING FOR PEACE WITHOUT VIOLENCE



Spring cleaning at Tyne Cot cemetery to impress visitors at this major tourist attraction.

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The *Peace Pledge Union* is the oldest  
non-sectarian pacifist organisation in  
Britain. Through the War Resisters' Inter-  
national 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

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Next Council meeting Sept 3rd..

**E**VER since Plato pointed out that the meaning of things is not always what it seems over 2000 years ago, philosophers, sociologists and more recently neuroscientists have strained to apprehend what that meaning might be. We amateurs, of course, have no need of polished theories but as Socrates, Plato's teacher, noted life lived without forethought or principle is a life profoundly vulnerable to chance. He called this an unexamined life dependent on the choices and actions of others unlike a life enriched by thinking about things that matter - values, aims, society and the meaning of life.

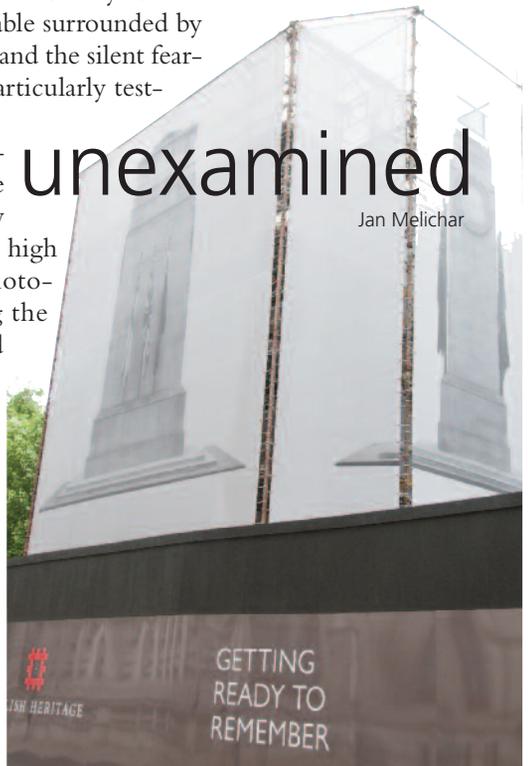
Those of us who believe that war has no place on any list that describes a good society may be uncomfortable surrounded by the legion of believers in the efficacy of war and the silent fearful majority. The next few years will be a particularly testing time.

Until Tony Blair discovered the 'humanitarian intervention' the British military more or less existed in a private enclave largely divorced from wider society surrounded by high fences which you were not allowed to photograph. They even had a program 'Keeping the Army in the Public Eye' so that they would not be forgotten. How things have changed. Today hardly a news bulletin goes by without some military story. Many documenting the misery the British military are causing in far way countries; many too lauding and sentimentalising soldiers and their supporters - military covenant, armed forces day, special privileges for ex soldiers and more. And now preparation for four years of war nostalgia are well underway and Andrew Murrison, Minister for International Security Strategy, is the Prime Minister's front man.

Whatever the many and varied reasons why people and groups want this commemoration, the one that should concern us is the state's. It may be as Murrison says that

## unexamined

Jan Melichar



Cenotaph Whitehall July 2013 being smartened up so as not to disappoint. Note the slogan and choose your own interpretation.

## PERSPECTIVE



**Passing the torch.** Figure representing 250 entombed Belgian soldiers under the collapsed roof of Fort Loncin, Liege after bombardment. At the centre of Liege is a telling reminder of the effect of passing the torch. The dates on its bland war memorial start at 1106.

(see <http://goo.gl/obEKs>) Ending his speech with the familiar trope he said 'The torch clearly has to be given to the next generation, they are the custodians of this.' We should not mistake what that torch is all about and closely examine its contents.

**Do you have** some CO related material in your attic? Letters, photographs, scrap books etc - WW1 or WW2 that you can let us have for **our archive** or loan for us to copy? While various institutions hold material about COs the PPU's CO Resource Centre is the only such place which has the values of the COs at its core

Also if any of your **relatives were COs** we would like to hear from you. More **details** & online form at <http://goo.gl/oMPJR>  
**contact** [info@nomorewar.org.uk](mailto:info@nomorewar.org.uk)

he wants people, young people in particular, to 'explore the counter intuitive, to challenge publicly held orthodoxies and to explore aspects of the conflict that remain obscure or contentious' the PPU would be at one with him. He speak of the importance of understanding the past so that we do not make the same mistakes again which is all very well but the question is what lessons? It's hard to see signs of any government 'learning the lessons' about how to prevent and avoid war. He speaks of the brave lad Jack Cornwell who died doing his duty but he does not say anything about the vast propaganda machine and fundraising that sprang up after his death aimed at youngsters to do their duty. Sounds familiar?

### 10 years and counting

The US/UK-led invasion of March 2003 has brought a decade of high and low intensity armed conflict to Iraq. But this conflict is not yet history. It remains entrenched and pervasive, with a clear beginning but no foreseeable end. In major regions of the country armed violence continues to exact a remorseless toll on human life, young and old, male and female, across society.

Since the beginning of 2003 the Iraq Body Count project has been continuously tracking, analysing and maintaining a public record of civilian deaths and has documented 112,017 - 122,438 civilian deaths from violence between 20 March 2003 and 14 March 2013. A further 51,400-52,000 are expected to be added pending further analysis.

# 174,000

killed in violence in Iraq since 2003

**Details:** <http://goo.gl/2Ji7n>

## PPU NEWS

Peace Matters readers will be pleased to know that we have been successful in securing a substantial grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund which will enable us to employ a much need member of staff and to take on some of the work on conscientious objection that we have written about in previous issues. We are interviewing a number of candidates as PM goes to press.

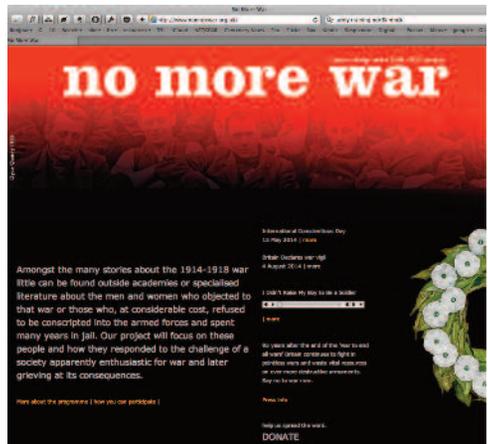
We would also like to thank those of you who have responded generously to the annual appeal; it's not too late if you have not got round to it. Despite receiving a grant we however are far from being able to fulfil all the plans we have for the coming few years. Plans which we hope you will want to support in a variety of ways.

We are focusing on World War One conscientious objection and the anti war movement leading up to the war. The aim is to give voice to the somewhat different

values expressed by the opponents of that war in what is likely to be 4 years of war nostalgia. The British are obsessed by this conflict above all others and it is an obsession that suits many constituencies. For some it will be a time for reinforcing myths - the war was a good thing for women - it was not; for others - the revisionists - it was not so bad despite the millions killed in fact it was a good an necessary event.

The war's portrayal is shaped by contemporary cultural mores so we should be aware of the narrative being developed by the government. How people perceived the war at its end is no doubt very different to the way we understand it today. The vast outpouring of grief on the

first anniversary of the armistice can barely be comprehended today and is diminished by today synthetic mourning. The wild rejoicing at being alive at the end of it was frowned upon by some moralists though the rejoicing at surviving had its darker side, not only in the private misery of many who felt guilt for surviving their comrades, but also in the celebration of victory. Sensitivities about the feelings of the bereaved exerted a powerful taboo on saying the war was futile as indeed it was. A taboo no doubt welcomed by the gov-



Vist PPU's new microsite at [www.nomorewar.org.uk](http://www.nomorewar.org.uk) to keep in touch with commemoration related developments



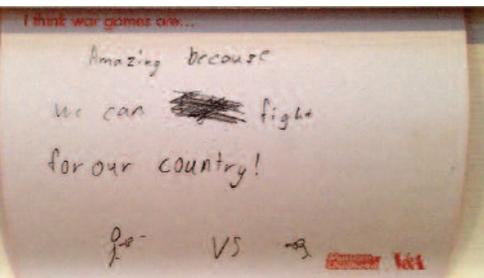
An interesting exhibition about 'war toys' at the Museum of Childhood in London. On until March 2014.

The exhibition recognises the controversial nature of such toys and their social context and seems to aim at speaking critically and informatively to both child and an adult.

While not exactly the kind of exhibition one might have put together short of saying 'don't play with war toys' the texts are wholly reasonable.

We cannot know what people take away from it and of course we have no way of knowing how representative the comment below is.

One of the invited replies



ernment fearful of a revolution.

These are not issues that will feature prominently in our forthcoming work but we should all be aware of them. The past is infinitely more

complex than the simple narrative being touched up for our consumption. Our aim will be to present a radically different response to the war.

What became WW1 was not inevitable or even a probable outcome of international rivalries before 1914.

### WW1 Update

Members of the peace groups working together on the commemoration of WW1 have produced and circulated the joint briefing about WW1 COs and the women's peace movement 'Opposing World War One: Courage and Conscience', available on each other's websites. A small delegation from the group visited the

civil servant in charge of the Government's WW1 plans, at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport to raise issues of concern and ask for WW1 conscientious objectors to be taken account of, in particular in the education activities being planned. These it appears are the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, and follow up work will be undertaken with them. Concern was expressed that the commemorations should not be used to promote the military. We were assured it was not intended that the events would be jingoistic or militaristic. The government's own plans for the war commemoration were discussed, and their plans for August 4, 2014, the day Britain declared war on Germany, have now been announced. They include a service in Glasgow following on the Commonwealth conference, a service in Westminster Abbey at which candles will be lit and then ceremonially blown out to represent the famous phrase about 'the lights going out across Europe' – and for the European countries a service at St. Symphorien war cemetery near Mons which contains both German and British war dead – the theme to be reconciliation.

***'THESE YOUNG PERVERTS, IDIOTS AND RACKETEERS ARE DANGEROUS...PUT THE BUNCH OF THEM BEHIND BARBED WIRE.'***

(Sunday Pictorial 1940)

Lucy Beck

IT is refreshing to read a book on COs aimed at the general reader, not an academic audience, but based on thorough and original research. Ann has interviewed some COs and their families, as well as drawing on taped interviews at the Imperial War Museum, and researched the section of the Mass Observation archive collection on pacifism and conscientious objection. Mass Observation described COs as largely middle and lower middle classes. 'to the conventionally minded some of them look odd and arty...Actually the chief odd things from the conventional point of view are a tendency to be vegetarian, love their mothers, love animals, and not all of these things are unconventional.'...They were individualistic, but also highly principled and thoughtful people.' I like the description from Edward Blishen of the difficulty faced by hard-working silent farm workers when they met their CO helpers: 'the conchie, with his horrible habit of asking questions, and his general passion for talk'.

And yes, the author spent time with our archives and our archivist too. One or two factual errors have escaped the editing (the number of white poppies sold in 1938 actually reached 85,000, not 35,000) but the stories of conscientious objectors, their reasons for becoming COs and what happened to them during and after the war make fascinating reading.

What would you have done in the war? It wasn't just the decision whether or not to join the armed services – whether you could cope with losing friends, family, jobs and on occasion your liberty; if you did become a CO, did you co-operate with the system by helping with forestry, agriculture, ambulance work, fire-watching, mining or bomb disposal – or did you stand out absolutely and refuse any part of the system of military and industrial conscription, risking prison and harassment? Ann discusses all these dilemmas and the different decisions COs took, quoting from their personal statements

**Conscientious Objectors of the Second World War**

Refusing to Fight  
Ann Kramer..2013

This is an unusual book for two reasons – it is written by a PPU member, and it comes from a publisher of military history. Ann Kramer has written other books for them and persuaded them to let her write this – and a companion volume on COs of the First World War, to be published for the centenary. It is slightly disconcerting to think of COs as being part of military history but it is to be hoped this book will help a wider audience understand the importance of their courageous stand.

## REVIEW

In a darkened warehouse at the back of the Truman Brewery in London visitors sat on a hospital bed between two facing projections of two Turkish cos talking to each other about their incarceration in a psychiatric hospital- unfortunately in Turkish but the subtitles helped.

This and the associated exhibition were a strange experience. The aim was to highlight the experience of men who refuse to be conscripted today. Refusing to be conscripted in the military can be costly in many countries today. Here two Turkish men placed in a psychiatric clinic talked about their experiences,

and writings – including many PPU members. Some took the hard route of helping at the sharp end of the conflict - 465 COs volunteered for bomb disposal work and about 160 others went into the Parachute Field Ambulances, some parachuting into Normandy on D-Day. Many joined the Friends Ambulance Unit working in war zones all over the world. Some COs who offered to become ‘human guinea pigs’ in medical research were just as brave, submitting to be given scabies, for example, deliberately.

Being a CO in WW2 was on the whole not as hard as for the pioneers of WW1, but they had different things to cope with: doubt, guilt and awareness of the threat of occupation and the nature of the Nazi regime. William Elliot was one who signed the PPU pledge and said ‘I think the signing of the card meant commitment... I had terrific wrestles with my conscience going on all the time, right on during the war. I

remember one night I walked about all night instead of going to bed when there had been a particularly dastardly raid on our shores by the Nazis and then, of course, common-sense prevailed and I realised we were doing exactly the same thing to them. This was the crux of the whole thing. Retaliation was no good. But certainly it wasn't without terrific heartache.’ Eric Farley also thought deeply but



decided ‘it seemed to me that the endless chain of military murder being countered only by greater murder had to be stopped.’ Not all COs or PPU members kept to their original position. Arthur Wragg writing in Peace News before the war

pleaded for acceptance of those who changed their mind: 'The whole basis of the PPU is freedom of conscience to do what individuals feel to be right... We must not allow ourselves to impose our own feelings on the consciences of others.'

Accounts of the treatment of some COs in prison and elsewhere bear disturbing echoes of the brutality of some members of the armed forces today to prisoners in Iraq and Afghanistan (as well as to young recruits). 'The most extreme instances of deliberate and organised cruelty against conscientious objectors occurred at Dingle Vale training camp in Liverpool and Ilfracombe training camp in Devon.' When details



May 15 2013 at the CO stone London

of beatings and ill-treatment leaked out they were raised in the House of Commons and eventually a court of inquiry was set up. On the other hand sometimes COs found that individual soldiers understood them better and were easier to relate to than members of the public. COs who felt like outsiders from society identified with those poor families they went to help in disadvantaged areas of large cities such as Liverpool, Manchester, London and Cardiff where they devel-

In recent months the Greek State has launched an **attack against conscientious objection**. Some objectors have been arrested and charged, and many have received an official letter obliging them to pay a fine of 6,000 Euros. More at <http://goo.gl/oySxi>

The WW1 peace group is now planning a major event in Tavistock Square on May 15, 2014, International Conscientious Objectors Day, in conjunction with the Right to Refuse to Kill group which normally organises it – it will be 20 years since the CO stone was unveiled by PPU's then President, Sir Michael Tippett.

We hope groups around the country will consider arranging commemorative events on that day to make this a national event.

## INTERNATIONAL CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS DAY

15 MAY 2014

oped pioneering methods of social work. The Pacifist Service Units set up by PPU and others are an area of pacifist work we can be proud of, and should know more about.

The story of COs is not just a personal one – they were supported and encouraged by organisations such as the PPU, and the Central Board for Conscientious Objectors (based at the PPU's Dick Sheppard House). The effects on the PPU in terms of surveillance, court cases, and vilification are well covered. For the PPU abuse about WW2 still crops up occasion-

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More at [www.nomorewar.org.uk](http://www.nomorewar.org.uk)

**PERSPECTIVE**

While President Obama is struggling to manage the legacy of mutually assured destruction, nuclear deterrence has assumed a radically altered form. Powerful states no longer secure peace by threatening to launch unimaginably destructive weapons at each other. Instead, weak states seek nukes so that they can threaten to lose control of them in the event of foreign support for violent regime change. Bashar Assad was prevented from trying this by the Israeli strike on the Syrian reactor in 2007. But we have to wonder whether his resort to Sarin gas on a small but verifiable scale is intended to make Western powers shudder at the consequences of his regime's unravelling.

ally, but I was still surprised at the quoted attack from the Bishop of Rochester in 1958: 'Whose hands are red with the blood of the tortured victims of the Gestapo and bombed civilians...It was the pacifists of the Peace Pledge Union who successfully tied the hands of the Government...and turned the League of Nations into a figure of fun.' On the other hand the Archbishop of York wrote to the Times in 1940 to defend COs when public bodies such as councils were dismissing them from jobs: 'I regard this as utterly deplorable and in the deepest sense unpatriotic. We are fighting for freedom, including freedom of conscience as its most vital and sensitive element. The State has recognised the reality of conscientious objection to military service, and it is part of our glory that it does this.' Much of the fiercest opposition came at the time of the retreat from Dunkirk in 1940. Just before that in April the Evening Standard accused 'cranks, pacifists and paid agents' of being engaged in subversive propaganda to undermine the war effort' and claimed that both Berlin and Moscow were funding the 'peace at any price campaigns'. My favourite insults come from the Sunday Pictorial editorial in June 1940: 'elegant sissies who fester the restaurants of London, gossiping like girls about their "hearts" and "inner souls"...weedy, long-haired intellectuals who enjoyed the honey in the peace day and now go pale at the thought of defending the land from which it flowed'.

Some surprising groups were discriminating against COs, including the Co-operative Society. Some councils had lively debates on the subject of employing COs, including as teachers. Two teachers were sacked in Torquay for being members of the PPU leading to a fierce council debate. The Torquay Times said the PPU was disseminating 'propaganda more cunning and crafty than anything that so far emanated from the fertile brain of Dr. Goebbels'. (In fairness there were protests from the NUT, head teachers and pupils and other parts of the press but the decision stood.) Mass Observation found that the most critical members of the public were women, and older men. 'Discrimination and hostility directed towards COs was at its

most intense during the first half of the war. As time progressed, attitudes softened. COs' humanitarian work with the homeless and bombed out civilians, their medical work and work in hospitals, their involvement in civil defence, fire-fighting, bomb disposal and their service abroad with the Friends Ambulance Unit and parachute units won them respect from both military personnel and civilians who worked with them.' The number of COs was far greater than in WW1 (over 60,000 men plus 1,000 women) – but the First World War COs 'had blazed a path for their predecessors, gaining them some sort of acceptance, however grudging and reluctant it was. Second World War COs did not therefore have to fight for the right to exist. Instead they made a different contribution – they showed that it was possible for individuals to stand up against state control and to challenge the prevailing militarism. They set an impressive example.'

Lucy Beck

**BIG BLOCKADE**  
**Atomic Weapons Establishment**  
 Burghfield  
**2nd September**  
[www.tridentploughshare.org](http://www.tridentploughshare.org)

## Egypt, and the world's revolt

Paul Rogers

How do Egypt's latest huge street protests relate to popular eruptions elsewhere in the world? A war involving Egypt and Syria in 1973 supplies part of the answer.

Are the extraordinary mass demonstrations in Egypt particular to that country or are they a part of a much wider pattern, connecting with events in Turkey and Brazil? Do they link also to public outrage in Greece, the indignados in Spain, the Occupy movement in the United States and the large student protests in Chile in 2012?

Whether or not the Egyptian protests are related to this phenomenon, one of the most remarkable issues is the way that much of the very source of these "revolts from the margins" can be traced to a war instigated mainly by Egypt almost exactly forty years ago.

**In 2011–12** conflict continued to be a major concern most notably in the Middle East, western Asia and Africa, but also with increased levels of interstate tension in East Asia. Perhaps the biggest single factor that has shaped the significant global decline in the number of armed conflicts and casualty rates since the end of the superpower confrontation has been the dramatic reduction in major powers engaging in proxy conflicts.

However, the relationship between states and conflict may be changing. In recent years there has been an increase in the number of intrastate conflicts that are internationalized—that is, that have another state supporting one side or another. Such involvement often has the effect of increasing casualty rates and prolonging conflicts. Shifting interests and changing capabilities as a result of a weakening of the unipolar post-cold war security balance and the emergence of elements of multipolarity are clearly affecting the overall international order.

Nevertheless, some developments in 2011–12 could be seen as warning signs that if the positive trends in conflict that emerged in recent decades are to be sustained, new ways need to be found to build cooperative international relations to manage the changing global security order.

**SIPRI Yearbook July 2013**

### **The Egyptian context**

The Yom Kippur/Ramadan war in October 1973 – so called because it coincided with these respective religious holidays – was characterised by Egypt's determined efforts (and those of Syria) to regain territory lost in the six-day war of June 1967. The initial Egyptian assault across the Suez canal and through Israel's Bar Lev defensive line was successful, but within a few days the Israelis had regrouped. Israel was aided by a huge air-bridge of military supplies established by the United States, which was one of the factors prompting the Arab members of Opec to use the price of oil as a weapon against Israel's western allies.

The political impact of the decision was modest, but the economic outcome was huge: oil prices rose almost overnight by more than 70%, and there were further big increases in the months that followed. By May 1974, just seven months later, oil prices were over 400% higher. Soon, economic stagnation combined with inflation, to critical effect across the world.

The sudden shock might in principle have led to a serious questioning of the western economic model – especially as *The Limits to Growth* had just been published, with its cogent argument that a transit to sustainable economies was needed. Instead, the economic crises of the later 1970s generated an ideological move in another direction: towards the neo-liberal free-market model espoused by the influential Chicago economic school. Their corollary in the political arena was the "Reaganomics" and "Thatcherism" of the early 1980s, which in turn were supplemented by the international financial institutions' "Washington consensus" and the City of London's deregulation (the "big bang") in 1986.

The rise of neo-liberalism was given another huge boost by the collapse of the Soviet Union and its bloc in 1990–91, followed by Russia's troubled embrace of "turbo-capitalism". Across much of the world, a new policy mix – wholesale privatisation, free trade and financial deregulation took centre-stage. The mantra of the era's economic ideologues said it all – "there is no alternative".

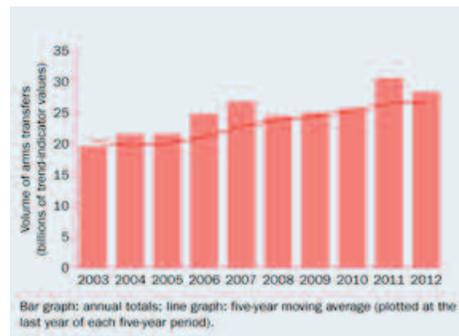
### The common factors

Where do events in Egypt, which late on 3 July 2013 led to the army's ousting of the president, fit into this pattern? An important aspect is that behind the spectacle of millions of people on the streets is an entrenched elite stratum with many senior military personnel at its core. For the moment, Egypt's military may retain much popular support in the face of Mohammed Morsi's failures; yet it is also relevant that, in the context of a weak Egyptian economy whose problems were accentuated by the transnational financial crisis since 2008, the government now overthrown had faced almost impossible expectations.

But if Egypt's predicament has few if any direct connections with that of Turkey, Brazil and the other places where unpredictable populist movements have arisen, there are two binding features. The first is that the Arab awakening in Egypt (as elsewhere in the middle east) has been motivated not just by opposition to autocracy and repression but by a revolt against systems experienced as deeply unjust in economic terms, in that they consign millions of educated and aware young people to lives with few if any prospects.

In that respect, events in Egypt do connect with the wider failure of the world economy to deliver emancipation and economic justice. The twist in this story is that this world economic system, in its currently unregulated and disastrous form, arose directly out of events set in motion by Egypt and Syria forty years ago.

The second feature is the sheer unpredictability of mass protest, a matter of great concern to political elites and their security cohorts across the world. That really is deeply worrying for them, and something that will cause them to double their efforts to track what is happening and predict its evolution – an effort no doubt aided by the use of Prism and the other forms of mass surveillance, what, though, if even those systems don't have a proper handle on what is happening? That will give political elites sleepless nights in the weeks and months to come.



**World arms sales**

## Intervention and Prevention

Rene Wadlow

*Violence: Analysis, Intervention and Prevention.* Sean Byrne and Jessica Senehi Ohio University Press 2012

Sean Byrne and Jessica Senehi of a peace studies centre of the University of Manitoba have written a useful analysis of approaches to violence and conflict resolution. It is written as a textbook for the increasing number of university-level classes in Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS). However, the book is a well-structured presentation of ideas and approaches and can be of use to a broad range of peace-makers.

Ultimately the goal of violence prevention is nonviolence and peace. The classic readings in nonviolence represent a body of thinking that gave birth to Peace and Conflict Studies as a conscious focus and a field of study by a group of scholars, practitioners, and activists from many different disciplines.

All conflicts are unique, and broad social conflicts involve a complex intermeshing of psycho-cultural, historical, religious, demographic, economic, and political forces. We need to find ways in which individuals and groups at odds can empower themselves and others to move

effectively and in moral ways toward desired goals.

Individuals need to enhance and develop their access to psychological, social, and material resources, thereby developing grassroots empowerment and helping others to empower themselves.

As a textbook, there is an extensive bibliography, website addresses of organizations and “think tanks” working on conflict issues, and for each chapter a list of “Suggested Questions for Further Discussions”. Also as a text book, there is a good deal of analysis of the writing of others on conflict issues such as Elise and Kenneth Boulding, John Burton, Johan Galtung and Jean Paul Lederach as well as presentations of the psychological contributions of Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers.

However, the book is of value for those of us whose university studies are well behind but who are concerned with what intellectual considerations may provide for our own efforts at resolution of violent conflicts.

As has often been pointed out, conflict as such is not bad and may even lead to constructive change. What we wish to prevent is violence, aggression and a permanent harm to the

personality of the “other”. We need to de-legitimize violence as a way of meeting basic needs, overcoming frustrations or advancing one’s interests.

The book is organized on the basis of a web of violence. “The web of violence is expressed in the interrelationship among personal, collective, national and global levels that link the personal to the global which in turn frames the public discourse about what is violence and what can be done about it.” This web of violence is discussed on a continuum going from violence directed at a single person within the family, the school and the work place to ethno-political conflict to war among states.

Personally, I am currently most concerned with violence in Syria and Mali with the fear that the violence may spread to neighbouring states. Thus it was the sections on ethnopolitical conflict and the techniques of Track II (non-official) diplomacy which was of most interest to me. In the book *Roots of Evil*, Ervin Staub writes about a critical loyalty to humankind, that is, “creating positive connections between groups by expanding contacts, positive reciprocity, cross-cutting relations and superordinate goals.” There is a need to join people across conflict lines, promoting shared values and distributing resources in

ways that encourage cooperation and interdependence. Citizens must have the opportunity to get together in critical spaces to share stories and to build trust, forgiveness and repair relationships rather than to tie their destructive stories to the past, to atrocities and to grievances.

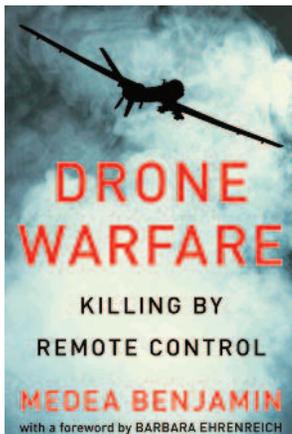
The problem in such situations as Syria and Mali is that there have been very few cross-cutting institutions in which people of different ethnic or religious communities could meet and possibly find ways to cooperate. Rather each community has closed in on itself with few "bridge builders" who could play a role in more than one segment. When the fuse of violence is lit, there are few people already organized to facilitate

negotiations. In the case of Mali there was no effort to negotiate between the north and south of Mali and so the French forces stepped in. So, today, in both Syria and Mali, we see the great difficulty even to start good-faith discussions and to look at the possibilities of reforms. There are few, if any, 'neutral' institutions, which are trusted by all parties.

Outside, external actors can sometimes play a useful role either governmental or non-governmental. Yet in the two cases of Syria and Mali — the intergovernmental organizations — United Nations, League of Arab States, and the African Union — have not been able to provide a framework for negotiations. In the non-governmental sector, some relief organizations have been able to work but with

difficulty. Most relief organizations stay away from "political issues" for fear that it would limit their possibility of providing relief. For non-governmental peacemaking efforts to be effective, there often has to be a long history of contacts so as to build trust and confidence. It is difficult just to "drop in" to settle disputes.

Thus there is a need to develop close links between the academic study of violence and violence-prevention and organizations working on intervention in specific conflict situations. The Byrne-Senehi book is a good overview of the academic approach and should be of value to both students and others concerned with replacing violence with modes of nonviolent conflict resolution.



If you would like to read a fairly comprehensive book on drones that also lays out concrete actions against them the **Drone Warfare - killing by remote control** by Medea Benjamin might be the book for you. Since 2000 the Pentagon's collection of drones has grown from 50 to nearly 7500. Britain as with many things is far behind with a mere 500 but has aspiration with weapons manufacture British Aerospace developing autonomous drones which will

banish the joystick warriors. In the US drones are a \$5 billion business and set for massive growth. Meanwhile more than 200 children in Pakistan and Yemen alone have been killed. But the issues are more serious than merely an ugly weapon system.

#### **Drone Age**

President Obama was the liberal law professor who campaigned against the Iraq war and torture, and now insists on approving

every new name on an expanding "kill list," poring over terrorist suspects' biographies on what one official calls the macabre "baseball cards". When a rare opportunity for a drone strike at a top terrorist arises - but his family is with him - it is the president who has reserved to himself the final moral calculation.

Some like Mark Mazzetti wonder why Obama authorises such aggressive use of drones and is not altogether convinced by the usual arguments.

We stand at the beginning of the Drone Age and the genie is

not going to climb back into the bottle. The chances that this way of war will, over time, reduce the amount of random violence in the world are essentially nil.

Obama's drone policy has set an ominous precedent. It promises, over the long term, to engender more violence than it prevents because it excites no public backlash. It doesn't provoke significant protest even on the part of people who condemn hit-jobs done with sticky bombs, radioac-

tive isotopes or a bullet between the eyes - in the style of Mossad or Putin's FSB. That America appears to be laidback about drones has made it possible for the CIA to resume the assassination programme it was compelled to shut down in the 1970s without, this time, awakening any politically significant outrage. It has also allowed the Pentagon to wage a war against which antiwar forces are apparently unable to rally even modest public support.

The absence of political opposition Mazzetti writes paraphras-

ing Richard Blee, that 'the pistons of the killing machine operate entirely without friction.' This suggests that Obama adopted a take-no-prisoners policy because escalating a programme that had already begun to expand under Bush was the path of least resistance. Under cover of darkness, illicit and even dishonourable motives often steal into the policymaking process. In warfare, the tendency of existing means to define the ends in view leads to a situation where, instead of deploying weapons to achieve

clearly thought-out objectives, the newest weapons system to hand may distort understanding of what objectives are worth pursuing. Could that be happening here? It is one thing if Obama is killing only those who have the intention and capacity to massacre Americans. It is quite another if he is dealing out death in pursuit of ordinary foreign policy goals because it has become so mercifully easy to do. **The CIA, a Secret Army and a War at the Ends of the Earth.** Mark Mazzetti Penguin 2013



Poster from the excellent and wide ranging Propaganda, power and persuasion exhibition at the British Library. The exhibition explores the strategies of state propaganda from the early 20th century to the present