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peace matters

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Remembrance and peace

Why they must go together

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

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Peace Pledge Union

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

**For information, visit
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Bad Korea moves

Symon Hill, PPU Co-ordinator

“What are you going to do about those two men with ridiculous hair?” asked a caller to the Peace Pledge Union office a few weeks ago. It took me a moment to realise that she meant Donald Trump and Kim Jong-un.

Now I don't have enough hair to give me much choice about hair-styles, so I'll refrain from judging anyone else's. But there is much that can be said – and done – about Trump and Kim, who have been ramping up militarist rhetoric and showing off their weapons.

Trump and Kim's threats are not against each other – they are against each other's populations. Kim brags that his missiles could kill people in the US. Trump threatens to “totally destroy” North Korea.

It is a reminder that war is never fought against an aggressor. Even when this is the justification, war means attacking people who happen to live in the same place as the aggressor.

Innocent people will be the foremost victims of any war in Korea. Thankfully,



there are people around the world working hard against this possibility. We explore this movement more on our news pages (4-7) alongside news of War Resisters' International, the armed forces' attempts to recruit women and the disruption of the London arms fair by some inspiring nonviolent direct action.

Those who justify war often imply that some lives are worth more than others. As Remembrance Sunday approaches, the Royal British Legion tell us that we should remember only members of British and allied armed forces.

In contrast, white poppies represent remembrance for all victims of war, a commitment to peace and a rejection of

militarism. On the centre pages, you can read exciting news of the latest developments in our remembrance work along with ideas for promoting white poppies in your area.

You can also read about campaigns against militarism at university (pages 10-11), Holly Thompson's poem that won third place in our Writing for Peace award (page 13) and playwright Michael Mears' reflection on responses to his play on pacifists in World War One (pages 14-15).

Last but certainly not least, we have an obituary of longstanding PPU activist Tony Augarde, who died earlier this year (page 12). He is sadly missed.

Armed forces claim to be feminist

Armed forces in the UK and elsewhere have been mocked by feminists and LGBT+ activists after claiming to have an inclusive approach to gender and sexuality.

UK “Defence” Secretary Michael Fallon announced that women would be allowed to join the RAF Regiment from September, meaning all roles in the Royal Air Force will now be open to women.

Several army units have recently made similar decisions. Recruitment adverts are appearing in magazines aimed at female teenagers.

Similar moves have been made elsewhere in the world. In June, the Indian army announced that combat roles would be open to women. When the Swedish government decided to reintroduce conscription in March, they claimed to be following “feminist” principles by conscripting both men and women.

Feminist pacifists expressed anger at the idea. Indian feminist writer Sharanya Gopinathan insisted that war and feminism are incompatible.

“The army is designed for war,” she wrote. “Even in times of peace, they are tools in the nationalist project; another idea that doesn’t bode well for

women and is firmly rooted in patriarchal ideas of conquering and belonging.”

The UK armed forces also saw a publicity opportunity when US president Donald Trump announced that transgender people would no longer be allowed to join the US military. The UK’s Ministry of “Defence” leapt on social media to tell trans people in the UK that they are welcome to sign up.

“So glad we’re not going this way,” tweeted Alex Burton, a British rear admiral, about Trump’s decision.

Many trans people were less than impressed. “The armed forces are promoting war, not trans equality,” said Lenny Grey, a trans member of the Peace Pledge Union. “They’re happy to have whoever they can to aid them in causing unnecessary suffering and death.”

The armed forces’ enthusiasm for inclusivity may have less to do with human rights than with recruitment targets. They are consistently failing to meet them. Despite all the propaganda it seems young people are less keen on violence and unquestioning obedience than generals and ministers would like to think.



Call for 'double freeze' in Korea

While the US and North Korean governments ramp up military tension, people around the world are campaigning for peace in Korea.

A number of peace groups have focused on the call for a "double freeze", by which both sides would end military exercises and missile tests in the region. The US government has so far rejected this proposal, while statements about it from the North Korean government have been inconsistent.

Meanwhile, the UK's "Defence" Secretary Michael Fallon has

claimed that North Korea poses a threat to the UK. As there is no realistic possibility of North Korean missiles reaching this far, his claim has been seen as an attempt to justify the involvement of UK troops in support of the US government if war breaks out.

South Korean president Moon Jae-in, who was elected earlier this year on a demilitarisation ticket, has faced criticism for continuing to engage in joint military exercises with the US.

In South Korea, thousands of people have demonstrated against

preparations for war. In North Korea, the extremely repressive nature of the regime means it is very dangerous to voice criticism of the government, but we can be confident that even in North Korea there are people working secretly to resist the regime and its militarism. In Japan, the US, the UK and elsewhere, there have been demonstrations against war in Korea.

Pacifists have pointed out that, as always, it will be innocent people who suffer most if the situation turns to war.

Nodutdol, a Korean group based in New York, published a statement calling for an end to the war rhetoric on both sides.

"North Korea is in actuality populated with everyday people," they wrote. "We hope this moment of increased attention on North Korea can help us to move toward establishing peace for the entire Korean peninsula that is rooted in the desires of the Korean people, and not in the geopolitical ambitions of the United States."

Britain hosts global pacifist meeting

Pacifist representatives from as far afield as Chile, Israel and South Sudan gathered in London in September for the latest meeting of the council of War Resisters' International (WRI). The Peace Pledge Union is the British section of WRI.

The meeting coincided with the DSEI arms fair, allowing participants to join in the protests. Pacifists from Germany and the Canary Islands were among those arrested (see pages 6-7).

The meeting heard from pacifists from South Korea, Turkey and elsewhere about the latest developments in their countries. The next WRI assembly will take place in Colombia in 2019.

Over 100 peace activists arrested at London arms fair

"I watched police vehicles rushing to Parsons Green underground station to try to protect us from people intent on pursuing their interests with bombs," wrote the PPU's Albert Beale in the Guardian in September. "And I remembered that only days ago, at the massive arms bazaar in London's Docklands, that same police force had arrested around a hundred of those of us intent on non-violently resisting the lucrative business of supplying people intent on pursuing their interests with bombs."

The nonviolent protests against Defence & Security Equipment International (DSEI) resulted in at least

112 arrests. Long-term planning by groups belonging to the Stop the Arms Fair coalition ensured that hundreds of people were involved in action to disrupt the set-up of the fair in the week before it began on 12 September. At certain points, lorries containing arms industry equipment queued up for hours as police struggled to remove large numbers of people who "locked on" (tied or glued themselves together) in the middle of the road. By the day before the fair started, sources inside the venue were quoted as saying that the set-up was significantly behind schedule.

As usual, some of the police looked uncomfortable with what they were required to do; others were enthusiastic or indifferent. Nonetheless, the policing was noticeably more over-the-top than usual. On two occasions, Quakers were arrested while sitting silently in a Meeting for Worship. Meanwhile 98-year-old pacifist Margaret Slee was threatened with arrest after she parked her wheelchair

(below) Police accidentally proclaim the truth about DSEI



in the road.

Many of the arrested activists appeared in court at the end of September to be charged with “wilful obstruction of the highway”. Trials are expected early in the new year.

The Stop the Arms Fair coalition brought together a wide range of groups (including the PPU), from well-known active organisations such as the Campaign Against Arms Trade to activist affinity groups, faith groups and networks working on issues such as feminism, climate change and LGBT+ rights.

In one of the most dramatic moments, pacifists from around the world spoke outside the fair about the effects of the arms trade on their own countries. They were members of War Resisters’ International (WRI), of which the PPU is the British section.

South Sudanese pacifist Moses Monday said, “If we want to achieve a peaceful world, we have to work for it,” he insisted. “And for that, nonviolence is key.”

The group Art the Arms Fair displayed art works before and during the fair, including knitted white poppies to remember the arms industry’s victims (see front cover).



(above) 98-year-old pacifist Margaret Slee blocks the road to DSEI



(left) Nonviolent activist Sarah Reader is dragged away and arrested

(below) Olivia Mullen signs the peace pledge while standing in the road to DSEI, becoming a PPU member



White poppies: a new chapter

Sophie Morrison and Symon Hill report on exciting developments in the white poppy campaign.

Over 67 million people have died in wars since the end of “the war to end all wars” in 1918. Hundreds of millions more have been injured, traumatised, impoverished and bereaved.

Remembering these people should naturally involve learning from the horror of war and developing nonviolent alternatives.

This is the message of white poppies, which stand for remembrance for all victims of all wars - whether civilians or members of armed forces, of all nationalities. The Peace Pledge Union believes that the best way to remember the victims of war is to challenge militarism and build a culture of peace.

The white poppy has not always been understood. White poppy wearers are accused of disrespect and white poppy wreaths have been trampled on. Yet despite the controversy, white poppy sales have reached record levels in the last three years.

White poppies were first produced in 1933, by the Women's Co-operative Guild. Since the 1980s, they have been distributed by the Peace Pledge Union.

Last year, we were victims of our own success, with our systems creaking under the strain of the volume of orders. This year, we have new computer systems, more staff and new procedures to ensure that we get white poppies to those who want to wear them - although ordering by the beginning of November is always recommended!

On Remembrance Sunday (12 November), a wreath of white poppies will be laid at the Alternative Remembrance Sunday Ceremony at noon in Tavistock Square, London. Local groups are planning similar ceremonies around the UK.

(below) Volunteers packing up white poppies in the PPU office





(left) PPU supporters in Leeds distributing white poppies in the street

Promoting white poppies: some ideas

Wear a white poppy!
This year, we have “business cards” that summarise what white poppies represent. You’ll get a few when you order poppies, and can give them to people who ask why you’re wearing one.

Sell white poppies in your workplace, community, trade union branch, faith group, student society or other organisation. There are discounts for large orders.

Promote white poppies on social media - and share your thoughts. You can follow @PPUtoday and facebook.com/peacepledgeunion.

New this year: donate a White Poppies for Schools pack to a local school. More information at whitepoppy.org.uk.

Encourage a local shop, pub or cafe to sell white poppies. We offer a 40% discount for a display box of 100.

Write to your local paper, or call a radio phone-in, to explain why you’re wearing a white poppy. We’re happy to provide advice.

Tell us what you’re doing! We’re keen to promote local events and initiatives but we need to know about them.

Get in touch!

To order white poppies online, find a list of local outlets and read more about the issues, see whitepoppy.org.uk.

You can also contact us on 020 7424 9444 or at mail@ppu.org.uk.

Resisting militarism at university

Wayne Sharrocks writes about militarism on campus and the PPU's support for students campaigning for peace.



(above) Wayne Sharrocks in the PPU office.
(above right) Students at Leeds protest in front of recruitment stalls

I am a pacifist. But only a few years ago that couldn't have been further from the truth.

I grew up in a military family. My grandad received an award for bayoneting someone, which led him to being one of the men to carry Winston Churchill's coffin. My dad joined the army when he was 16. I vividly remember summer weekends at regimental family days, where I could climb onto military vehicles and crawl around under cargo nets. At the time I saw all this as fun.

Eventually the days of playing war fade with age but seeds that have been planted begin to grow. What once was a game becomes a career option. When I was 15, I decided I was going to join the army. I joined at 17, and left at 24.

I was what I would call now an ideological recruit. As Child Soldiers International puts it, "Adolescent boys with few economic and social opportunities are seen as easy recruits by the MoD".

But the military isn't just made up of people with few options. It also houses graduates from the middle and upper classes.

It is also important to say that the military is not the only part of the war system. For there to be war, there needs to be an arms trade and a government working together. There needs to be complicity from public institutions, media, education and culture.

The armed forces' main presence in universities is through the Officer Training Corps (OTC). This is a strange mixture of student society and active reserve unit. It claims to promote "training and skills" and "a great social life".

The reality is written on their own website, which states: "The UOTC has two key roles. Firstly to provide a positive military experience to those Officer Cadets who ultimately go on to civilian employment, so that they are minded to act as positive advocates for the Army and secondly, to aid in and facilitate the recruiting of regular and reserve officers."

The OTC is a clever way of planting seeds. Like any bitter pill it is easier to be taken with spoonfuls of sugar: a military ethos comes with skiing trips and socials.

The OTC is geared

towards the future “professional” - it’s something good to have on your CV. The OTC ensures that future leaders of public institutions, media, culture and education are “minded to act as positive advocates for the Army”.

There are two levels of recruitment here. One is recruiting people physically into the armed forces. The other is recruiting people’s minds to believe they are doing a good thing. Both are dangerous.

Perhaps even more devious are the arms companies. They market themselves towards future top engineers, business minds, leaders and financial experts. The explanations of their work usually include phrases such as “global defence solutions” and “advanced technology systems”.

There is a concept called compartmentalisation: splitting a huge task into sub-tasks. This technique makes it easier to be complicit in the war system. “I just made a chip”. “I just made a circuit board”. “I was just



doing my job”.

So what can we do about it?

Broadly speaking the war system, state or any powerful structure can control the public by using three types of techniques: wealth, force and status (public opinion). Which of these can we effectively counter?

We could fundraise for the rest of our lives to buy out stalls at freshers’ fairs but we would never have more money than companies worth billions. When it comes to wealth, they hold the monopoly.

We can try to force them out using nonviolent protest and numbers. This is an important tactic but is not enough on its own.

As pacifist activists, we must seek to influence public opinion. We must undermine the slick advertising by showing the reality of war. We must educate but not preach. And we must do this in a way that means people will listen and eventually we can sway public opinion. And when public opinion is swayed, the state -and universities - must listen.

Are you a student or university staff member? Do you have questions or suggestions, or do you want support in resisting militarism at your university?

You can contact Wayne at wayne@ppu.org.uk

Tony Augarde 1936-2017

Bill Hetherington looks back on the life of a dedicated Peace Pledge Union member.

Tony Augarde, who died in February, was a long-time member of the PPU. Although learning to shoot a rifle in his school' Combined Cadet Force unit, his views changed during his time at Oxford University. The phasing out of conscription in the late 1950s meant he did not have to face the challenge of claiming conscientious objection.

On becoming active in the PPU in the early 1970s, Tony served on the Campaign and Development Committee, the Publications Group, and for many years on PPU Council. He contributed a regular page, "Bits and Peaces", to the PPU's former monthly magazine, *The Pacifist*, and wrote a short pamphlet on Gandhi as part of the PPU's education work.

After retirement from his usual work, he served a period on PPU staff in the early 1990s as part-time Remembrance

worker, drafting material on constructive commemoration of war as a step towards its abolition. He organised the PPU's witness against the "victory parade" after the first Gulf War in 1991 and played a significant part in the PPU's protest against the erection of a statue of Arthur 'Bomber' Harris, RAF organiser of "obliteration" bombing of German cities in the Second World War.

However, Tony had a humorous side, and in the days of PPU residential annual conferences, Saturday evenings were lightened by his stand-up routine, often self-deprecatory.

Tony's professional career was with the dictionary department of Oxford University Press. A major work was the *Dictionary of Modern Quotations*, citing the first printed source of the oft-repeated but anonymous "War will cease when men refuse to fight" as a local press report of a banner stretched over the podium of Birmingham Town Hall at a PPU rally in 1936.

Tony's fascina-



tion with word oddities, anagrams and the like led to his classic *Oxford Guide to Word Games*. Another side was his membership of a small jazz group, Vile Bodies, including the radio presenter and biographer Humphrey Carpenter (author of a life of composer and PPU activist Benjamin Britten).

Even into his later years Tony had the occasional pertinent letter from the pacifist point of view published in local or national press. Appropriately, at his funeral his family ensured that the main wreath included a white poppy.

Protest against the war

Holly Thompson

Talking to anyone who'd listen
I'd wander the streets crying
There was no way to help
For too many people were dying.

Most just shrugged me off
ignoring my every word
None of them seemed to care
For a world that needs to be cured.

For too many are gone
It's like a terrible curse
We need to stop the fighting
Before it gets a lot worse.

Holly Thompson is a student at Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg, a Welsh medium school in LLangynwyd, near Maesteg. Her poem won third place in the PPU's Writing for Peace award, which involved entries from young people across the UK.

Other winners Georgina Melia and Samira Idmessaoud featured in the last two issues of Peace Matters.



Holly Thompson (centre) receives her Writing for Peace award from the PPU's Peter Glasgow (right).

This Evil Thing

Playwright, actor and PPU member Michael Mears reflects on his experience of performing This Evil Thing - his one-person play about conscientious objectors in the first world war.

When I was just 15 years old, I wrote in white ink on my green school pencil case, the words 'WAR IS ILLOGICAL'.

A pacifist from an early age, despite first my grandfather, then my father, having fought in the world wars, I was mercilessly mocked by my fellow pupils for this statement of faith emblazoned on my pencil case.

But I felt sure in every fibre of my being that I was right.

And it seems that decades before, some of the greatest thinkers of the age like Bertrand Russell (not that I'm comparing myself to him, you under-

stand!), expressed the same sentiments in not dissimilar terms (but in articles and journals, not on pencil cases).

But now, in my fifties, while researching the conscientious objectors, my schoolboy pencil case lost in the mists of time, one question keeps haunting me: how would I have responded if I'd been a young man in 1914?

Would I have had the courage to endure the bullying, the abuse, the solitary confinement, the imprisonment in a ten foot deep pit, the very real threat of execution?

In many ways, the writing and performing of the play feels like a challenge to myself, and of course to those watching it – 'Well, what would I have done? What would you have done?' I fervently hope that I would have had the courage to stand up for my peaceful beliefs - but the fact is that there's no way of knowing, is there?

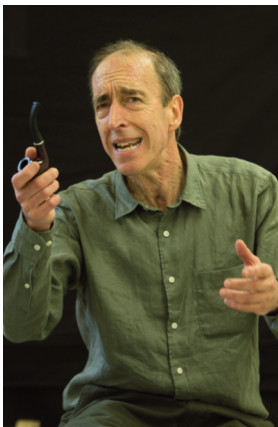
I premiered This Evil Thing at the Edinburgh Festival last summer and the response



was very moving. After the penultimate performance, a rather elderly man came down and grabbed my hand, furiously shaking it, saying 'That was tremendous...' - and I realised that this was former Labour deputy prime minister John Prescott - 78 now and looking smaller and older than you might imagine.

He confessed that he thought being a conscientious objector was simply an intellectual struggle and that he'd had no idea of what they had been through until he saw my play; he was amazed to learn what they suffered.

It has been my hope, and remains so, that in some small way performing my play helps to shine a little light and peace into the world - perhaps making some rethink entrenched beliefs about how nations should resolve their disputes - while giving strength and encouragement to others (and to myself every time I perform the piece) in our belief that war never has been and never can be a true and just solution to anything.



Upcoming performance dates for This Evil Thing are listed on the right. For more details, please visit michaelmears.org.

25 October: The Bearpit, Stratford-upon-Avon

27 October:
Bristol Cathedral

31 October: St Mary's Hall Studio, Canterbury

3 November: Ipswich Quaker Meeting House

6 November: Leighton Park School, Reading

11 November: Galeri Theatre, Caernarfon

14 November: Royal Theatre, Northampton

17-18 November: Sandsfilms Studios, Rotherhithe

21-22 November: Stoke Newington Old Church

24 November: Aberystwyth Arts Centre Studio

30 November: Huddersfield Meeting House

1 December: Christ Church, Sheffield

2 December: Wandsworth Quaker Meeting House

5-6 December: ADC Corpus Christi, Cambridge

Remembrance in numbers

67 million

Deaths in war since 1918
(conservative estimate).

90%

Percentage of 21st century war
deaths that have been civilians.

46 years

Time it would take the 20th cen-
tury war dead to march past the
Cenotaph, walking four abreast.

5,000

Minimum number of civilian
deaths in the war in Yemen, ac-
cording to the United Nations.

£100,000

Donation by BAE Systems to
red Poppy Appeal, paid over
several years from 2003.

60,000

Estimate of British civilian
casualties in World War Two.

£714,000,000

BAE Systems' profit in the first
six months of 2017; nearly all of
their business is in arms sales.

0

Number of civilians who
should be commemorated on
Remembrance Day, according to
the Royal British Legion.

7,000

Number of ex-armed forces per-
sonnel who are homeless in the
UK (according to homelessness
charities), despite government
promises to care for them.

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