

The Peace Board

Peace news and views for, from and about Quakers in the North of Britain

Issue no: 11 July 2001

Offensive plans

A major international conference was held in Leeds in May on the theme of "Keep Space for Peace".

As the conference of the Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space (GN for short), it brought together a wide body of expertise, strengthened by the joint sponsorship of Yorkshire CND and Scientists for Global Responsibility.

Although it now looks as though plans for the Missile Defence system will face a tougher task coming to fruition than we feared at the time of the conference, this is no time for complacency. Opening speakers at the conference shared their knowledge of the wider agenda for the weaponisation of space by the US military, based on concepts of dominance rather than common security. Missile defence is envisaged as being just one part of this.

NATO itself has given only a cautious response to the US which is also a small sign of encouragement. But so much has already been invested in the project by the US government and there is so much that the defence industry, with its close ties to the former, has to loose.

With rather more to loose, though, is global security. There are clear indications that countries throughout the world regard the proposals as offensive - in both senses of the word - and are strongly inclined to invest more of their resources in competing in a new arms race, should they go ahead.

The Leeds conference was buoyant in its determination to not let this happen. On both sides of the Atlantic and in different corners of the world we heard of growing movements to oppose US Missile Defence plans. The Pentagon-created internet once again will have a vital role to play in keeping this international network connected and informed. In the meantime, in Britain we all have a role in asking

our government to clarify its own position and to link up with and support the range of groups and individuals taking action on this issue.

A new Early Day Motion (EDM 23) raising serious questions about US proposals was tabled on 20 June, and within days had nearly 200 MPs' signatures. Has yours signed? For more information contact the NFPB office or visit our website (details on back page).

A view of the US National Security Agency base at Menwith Hill near Harrogate, likely to play a key role in US Missile Defence plans.



Our Friends in the North

Harrogate PM

Jenny Wistreich (York MM rep to NFPB) writes:

We've been quite busy in Harrogate. We have a database of 18 Friends keen on peace concerns, eight of whom have email, to whom I communicate instantly if there are pressing issues such as Lindis and Anni's recent court appearances and Menwith Hill events. As a group we have had two business meetings after Meeting for Worship, one public meeting and will shortly have a more reflective meeting for all F/friends on what peace means to us. We have had NMD on the agenda of two PM's which resulted in the Meeting sending letters to the MP and candidates and the press. We publicise and try to co-ordinate transport to all MH events, and five of us recently attended the MH Forum meeting in Otley at which it was decided that they would hold a public meeting in Harrogate. Lastly, I always get something in our monthly newsletter on an aspect of peace, and a list of forthcoming events, so our circle of "activists" is growing.

Northumbria MM

A minibus full of young (mostly) Friends and attenders from Newcastle PM made it to the Meeting for worship at Menwith Hill at the beginning of June. They were keen to involve some of the young people in the meeting in this activity - a welcome presence amongst the long-time peace activists!

Walter Crawford

Caroline Westgate writes:

We are sad to record the death on 6th June of Walter Crawford, at the age of 81. Walter was an active and devoted Friend from Northumbria MM. He worked with NFPB as a co-opted member of the group looking at the problems of the arms trade.

Walter was born in Glasgow. memories of his upbringing there helped to form and sustain the Socialist convictions which remained with him all his life. He steadfastly upheld our Peace Testimony and, among the many responsibilities he undertook for Friends, he served on a number of peace-related committees with an energy which began to diminish only towards the very end of his life.

No matter how intractable the problems to be address, nor how apparently slender the available resources, Walter maintained a quiet conviction that somehow God's purposes for the world were being advance by our efforts. This optimism strengthened and sustained those of us with fainter hearts and spirits.

We will miss his perseverance and clarity of vision, his wisdom and compassion. We hold his wife Enid, his three sons and their families, in our thoughts and prayers.

Westmorland General Meeting

Scilla Ellworthy of the Oxford Research Group spoke at an open meeting of the GM in March as part

of the "Preparing for Peace"

Project. The next event is a talk by

Hugh Beach, a former Master General of the Ordnance, on the theme of "Is War an effective instrument of political policy?" taking place at the Chaplaincy centre at Lancaster University at 2pm on 14th July.

Wilfred Dally

Peter Kennedy, East Scotland MM, writes:

Wilfred John Dally, an honorary member of the Northern Friends Peace Board, loved the summer solstice and it was somewhat fitting that he died one day before it this year, Wednesday 20th June. Thereby, even in death, Wilf brought his F/friends together on the solstice weekend!

At the outbreak of the second world war Wilf registered as a Conscientious Objector. He joined the Friends Ambulance Unit and after a basic first aid course worked in the Middle East and Greece. After the war he decided to make medicine his chosen career. He went to Queen's College, St Andrews University, Dundee (now Dundee University) to study medicine in 1947.

After his medical training he moved to a one-man general practice based in his home, Glen House in Edzell, north Angus. He remained here all his working life. A much loved and respected member of the community he threw himself into the many activities that village life offered.

Wilfred Dally continued

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As a member of the NFPB Wilf served on the group that assisted Arthur Booth in writing 'Orange Green' - which attempted to document the Northern Irish conflict. He first came to Board Meetings as a representative of Scotland Quarterly Meeting and was made an Honorary Member of the Board some years ago in recognition of his devoted service.

At the time of his death he was in the process of writing up a history of the Board. It is hoped this project can be completed in the near future and published in his memory.

Peace Papers additions

New pieces have now been written (and are being produced at the time of writing) for this publication. Themes covered include:

Working for peace in relation to international institutions; Using our Meeting Houses as a resource for building a culture of peace; Involvement in Local Agenda 21; multi-faith religious education; restorative justice; peace work in the former Soviet Union and 'building peace with our purse'. Copies of these and the first set of papers available from the NFPB office for £11.50 including P&P.

New NFPB working groups take off

NFPB has set up new working groups, in line with its prioritising exercise at the end of 2000. The groups were appointed at a meeting of the Board in March, and had initial discussions at that meeting in Penrith. Three of the groups have since held further meetings. Their work areas are as follows:

- **Building a culture of peace:** This includes encouraging and supporting meetings to reflect on this general issue during 2001, to host one of our "Building a culture of Peace" workshops (first ones held this spring - contact NFPB office for details), and identifying key themes and arranging activities for the coming *Decade for a Culture of Peace.*
- **Challenging Militarism:** With generous additional funding from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust for three years, this group is focusing on specific aspects of militarism in the north of Britain and developing resources and activities that support local and regional witness, linking this with a sound but clear analysis of the problems and of positive alternatives.
- **Communications:** The smaller of the groups, this has a responsibility to develop an overall communications strategy for NFPB, ensuring that we do this as effectively as possible, amongst, between and beyond northern Friends.

Money matters

Friends responded generously and with messages of positive support to our appeals last year and this year. As a result of our extra fund-raising efforts during last year we ended 2000 in much healthier financial position. **Thank you!**

Copies of our Annual Report are available from the NFPB office. (Please send a SAE)

Quaker presence at Faslane

Mary Alice Mansell, West Scotland MM, writes:

The first time I saw the Faslane Naval Base was while I was on a cycling holiday and I was immediately struck by the ugliness of the installation in such a beautiful landscape. I had the image of a festering sore on good clear flesh. The next time I had this image was during a Meeting for Worship at the North Gate to the base, about two years ago. It then became evident to me that the transforming power of love was what was needed: that more and more people needed to

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Faslane continued

" Calling for Peace "

Additional funds for NFPB are now coming in from subscribers to *The Phone Co-op* through our affinity scheme. Save yourself money on phone charges and support our work at the same time through this scheme. (And get an 0845 - local rate in the UK - phone number for yourself at no extra cost!)

For more info: 0845 458 3095 www.gn.apc.org/nfpb/co-op.htm

come to that place to seek divine love to be directed towards the site of potential evil and destruction.

West Scotland MM has been holding a Meeting for Worship four times a year at Faslane for the past several years. Everyone who attends comments on the depth of the Meeting. The intense spiritual experience.

The Meeting for Worship is often to support the Trident Ploughshares actions; the next Meeting will coincide with the start of the 22 October action and Big Blockade. The Meeting will take place at the North Gate of the base at 11am; a coach will leave Glasgow Meeting House at 9.30am.

With increased international tension from US Missile Defence proposals, we need to make our presence known as people of peace. It is much easier to prevent an abomination being established than it is to have it removed or its consequences reversed.

Young Friends appeal focusing on Chechnya

Bethan Hillas, YFGM's rep to NFPB, writes:

In February Young Friends General Meeting adopted a new appeal. It will raise money for *The Little Star Project* which is a psychological rehabilitation programme for children traumatised by the conflict between Russia and Chechnya.

The project was created by Chris Hunter and the Centre for Peacemaking and Community Development in Moscow in 1996.

Voluntary staff at Little Star use art, drama and play therapy techniques which, as well as care and attention from local counsellors and psychologists, help the children to come to terms with the violence and destruction they witnessed and to try to help them adapt to their present situation. Young Friends General Meeting hope that we will be able to raise money to help to train more counsellors and psychologists to work with children in Grozny and refugee children in Ingushetia.

For further information about the appeal please contact the YFGM office at Woodbrooke. Cheques should be payable to "YFGM Little Star Appeal".

Friends and Oldham

Clare Whitehead of Hardshaw East MM writes:

We are all deeply concerned about the racial tension which has been stirred up by right-wing extremism. The situation is not simple; we are working, praying and learning. There is no Oldham Meeting, although there are several of us living and working in the borough (see *The Friend* letters, 8 June).

At present we are involved in collecting names to accompany a statement opposing racism, which will be printed in our local paper, *The Oldham Chronicle*, on 5 July. This statement was drawn up by Quakers and others. Other work is ongoing and outcomes are as yet unknown. The statement reads:

"Opposing Racism: A statement
We, residents of the borough of Oldham, believe that the scapegoating of communities and the spiral of blame and counter-blame need to stop.

We recognise that there are enormous problems to be solved, not least the existing segregation of our communities in neighbourhoods, schools and activities.

We need to draw upon Oldham's tradition of combating the racial hatred and divisiveness stirred up by right-wing extremism.

We are committed to a borough where our communities, in all their diversities, are safe, valued and respected. Oldhamers are central to working for this change."

The Peace Board is published by the Northern Friends Peace Board four times a year and is sent free to all Northern Quaker meetings. If individuals or other groups would like to receive it they should send a cheque (for £2.00, payable to 'NFPB') to:

Philip Austin, NFPB, Victoria Hall Knowsley St, Bolton BL1 2AS

Tel: 01204 382330 / 0845 458 3095 (UK local rate)

Email: nfpb@gn.apc.org

We welcome any news, letters, poems, suggestions for action etc from Friends and these should also be sent to this address

Some dates for your diaries

- 4 July - Independence FROM America protest Come with cars, coaches etc and join the **CAAB CAVALCADE** - linking NSA Menwith Hill with Fylingdales then on to Whitby to join the demonstration organised by Fylingdales Action Network (FAN)
- 16 July - 4 August **Faslane - Fylingdales fund raising walk** "Walk for the World", for CND with public meetings along the way. People wanted to take part in the final day of the walk, from Whitby to Fylingdales. Info: 020 7700 4524
- 29 July **Dumfries "Third Annual World Peace Prayer Ceremony"**, inviting people of every race, religion and culture to join in one voice and spirit to pray for peace. Contact: Tel: 01387 740642 wpps@allantonhouse.fsnet.co.uk.
- 4 August - **Meeting for Worship at Menwith Hill** Contact CAAB: anniandlindis@caab.org.uk, 01943 466405
- 6 August - **Hiroshima Day** - events around the world. Have you planned anything? (Why not buy one of NFPB's "From the Ashes of Hiroshima..." postcards to send to your MP - and others - as a reminder of the need for nuclear disarmament.)
- 1 Sept. **Meeting for Worship at Fylingdales** (check with NFPB office for details, in light of current foot and mouth restrictions)
- 7-9 September & 26-28 October - **Mediation skills** introductory course over two linked weekends at Woodbrooke
- 11-14 September "*Peace Procession*" and peace vigil planned for **DSEi (Defence Systems and Equipment International)**. London Docklands. Also new CAAT Non-violent action Network being set up. Contact: martin@caat.demon.co.uk. 020 7281 0297.
- 6 October - **Meeting for Worship at Menwith Hill** (contact as for 4 July)
- 11-13 October- **Quaker Testimonies for Today: Peace** - course at Woodbrooke.
- 22 October - **blockade at Faslane** organised by Trident Ploughshares and Scottish CND. Call Scottish CND on: 0141 1222 or TP on 01324 880744
- 20th October - 1st November - join CAAT's campaign to close down **COPEX 2001** (Contingency Operations & Procurement Exhibition), Sandown race-course. Contact as for 11-14 September
- 11th November - **Remembrance & Reconciliation**. Last year a number of groups marked the 11th November with events focusing on these two themes, as a contribution to the International Year for a Culture of Peace. Some will be doing the same this year, working with others towards a peaceful future.

Building a Culture of Peace - From Paper to Practice

A workshop for Friends and others

This decade - 2001-2010 - has been declared the "UN Decade for a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence" and the World Council of Churches' "Decade to Overcome Violence". This is an opportunity for us all to find ways of developing and nurturing a culture of peace in our religious Society and in the wider community..

Friends and many others will have signed the United Nations' "Manifesto 2000"; six pledges which the UN sees as necessary for building a culture of peace. Our own Quaker tradition also has many fine words which reflect the reality of the peace testimony in the lives of Friends over time. Our Quaker tradition challenges us to put our words and intentions into practice.

- What is it that we can each, individually and as groups, do now to contribute to the process of building a culture of peace?
- Is there a distinctive Quaker contribution to building a culture of peace that we can share with others?
- What can we learn from other experiences that might be valuable in building a culture of peace.

Northern Friends Peace Board is offering this workshop to Friends' Meetings and to other interested groups. It is an opportunity to explore with others what peace means to us personally and to find ways of giving life to the words of peace in our own lives.

This is a one-day workshop, typically taking place on a Saturday, with facilitators from Northern Friends Peace Board. It involves participants in a series of structured discussions and other exercises to explore and to identify ways forward. There is also some input as well as points for reflection and worship.

If you are interested in having such a workshop, you will need a minimum of 15 interested people, and be able to pay £50 towards our costs.

Contact:

Philip Austin, Co-ordinator ,NFPB B, Victoria Hall, Knowsley St, Bolton BL1 2AS
Tel: 0845 458 3095 email: nfpb@gn.apc.org