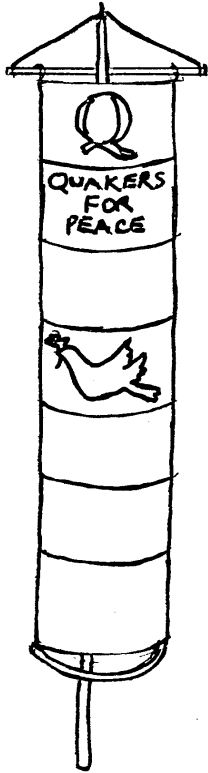


# The Peace Board

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

Issue no: 12 April 2002

## Full spectrum peace witness



Kits for one-person banners like this are available from the NFPB office for £10, or get the instructions from our website or by post - see back page for our address.

### War Prevention Works - 50 stories of people resolving conflict,

by Dylan Mathews and published by the Oxford Research Group, 130pp, available for £12 (individuals), £16 (institutions) or £8 (concessions - please state reason) from: Oxford Research Group, 51 Plantation Road, Oxford, OX2 6JE

P&P - Please add £3 for UK and £5 for abroad.

Also available to buy online at:  
[www.oxfordresearchgroup.org.uk](http://www.oxfordresearchgroup.org.uk)

'Full spectrum dominance': a term the US introduced to describe the scope of its planned military power-projection in the report 'Vision for 2020', and which is now becoming visible in its actions around the world. Both phrases have within them recognition that matters of peace and security need to be addressed at many levels, from the military on land, sea and in air and space; in economic relationships; in environmental matters and in relationships between peoples.

One aspect of this came home to me whilst I was putting this newsletter together; I received email accounts of groups of activists travelling to meet and to talk with people where US bases linked to the 'star wars' project are sited. One was in Australia, where there is a US facility at Pine Gap near Alice Springs.

Another group, meanwhile, was travelling by dog sled across Greenland, where the US's base at Thule is also likely to have a role. The bases at Fylingdales in Menwith Hill in Yorkshire connect us with these other parts of the world and together they give a clear indication of the enormous size of the system envisaged.

It is vitally important that we support efforts that seek to address behaviour and policies that harm living things, humans and others. But none of us can do everything. This is such an obvious truism, but we can easily find ourselves unable to do even simple things when the enormity of the problems overwhelms us. Conversely, when we

are able to recognise and acknowledge that there is a vast spectrum of activities that people throughout the world are undertaking we can feel encouraged that our own efforts - however modest - are contributing to the whole.

### Affirming the alternatives

'Well, what would you do?' is a question bounced back at peace activists by those who can see no alternative to bombing in the interests of peace. The Oxford Research Group's timely book "War Prevention Works" (see box) contains accounts of 50 different activities that have been undertaken and have had a real impact in either preventing or limiting the consequences of military action. An attractively produced book, it is a must for Meetings and others who want their peace witness to be not just as a form of resistance, but a way of promoting alternatives.

### Quaker light

A much-reproduced panel from the Quaker tapestry shows a white light being spread out in the full colour spectrum as it passes through a prism, symbolising unity with diversity. The image is also a reminder that, as Friends, we need to start with the light and return to the light in our peace work. When there is so much darkness and cynicism, it is more important than ever that we seek with imagination and commitment, ways of acting not just against war but *for* peace in our communities and throughout the world.

*Philip Austin*  
NFPB Co-ordinator

# Building Understanding, Sharing Faith

Clare Whitehead writes:

The Unitarians in Oldham have been providing space for peace, justice and environmental groups for many years now. They have established space within their building, called The One World Centre, which is well known in the town. The chapel building is in a prominent, central and fairly neutral part of town. When thinking about 'One World Week' last year, the question came up: "well, what about One Oldham?" That question led to the planning of an interfaith gathering. The bulk of the planning for this event was done by two women, one Unitarian and one Quaker. The theme - 'Being at One' - just seemed to emerge.

Many faith groups participated and contributions included stories, readings, poems, prayers, chants, songs and music. Contributions were from Adventist, Anglican, Buddhist, Catholic, Hindu, Methodist, Muslim, Quaker, Unitarian and others and the chapel was full. New connections and



"For me, the different religions are beautiful flowers from the same garden, or they are branches of the same majestic tree. Therefore they are equally true though, being received and interpreted through human instruments, equally imperfect"

M. K. Gandhi

alliances were made, the general encouraging feeling was -"lets do this again".

The second Interfaith Gathering took place at the Indian Association Hindu Temple On 24 February and the theme was 'Growth and Renewal'. Quakers were among many taking part. These two gatherings of Oldhamers in all their diversity have provided an opportunity for friendship, understanding and connections to develop, they have felt optimistic. A small group of Quakers now have a regular worship group in Oldham and have just found a home in The One World Centre. This feels optimistic too.

## Seeking Peace and Justice in the Middle East

*Form a statement of the Middle East Council of Churches Executive Committee, meeting in Cairo in February*

"The council serves all the peoples of the Middle East, and most especially the marginalized and the poor. It works to deepen the foundations of Christian-Muslim coexistence, building it upon true knowledge, mutual respect, and equal rights and obligations within the environment of one homeland, sharing one commitment in the face of challenges that confront the regions peoples.

Those attending reviewed the current international and regional situation.

Internationally, the repercussions of the events of September 11th, 2001, continue to be felt in our region. Members held the view that deepening a culture of dialogue among all people of our region is the best response to what has recently been described as the clash between cultures, civilizations and religions.

Regionally, the Executive Committee continues to feel the suffering of the Palestinian people. It expressed its solidarity with them. The council, on the occasion of the meeting of its Executive Committee, turns its gaze toward the Palestinian people as they struggle in the cause of gaining their legitimate rights, recovering the lands that have been forcibly taken from them, reuniting their dispersed people so that they return to their homeland, and founding their independent state in their homeland with Jerusalem as its capital. The council applauds their determination, and renews its solidarity with them. In this context, the council reaffirms that Jerusalem, the City of Peace, has a special and holy character. Addressing the conscience of the international community and all those who love peace, it urges that they call to account those who wield power, demanding that they implement the resolutions of the United Nations and its Security Council, establishing a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East.

There will be no peace without the liberation of all the lands Israel now occupies in Palestine, in the Syrian Golan Heights, and in Lebanon. Furthermore, there will be no comprehensive and just peace in our region without lifting the embargo against the Iraqi people. That siege which has continued for more than a decade has killed children, women and the elderly. Finally, there will be no peace in the region so long as the people of Cyprus know no peace.

The peace we desire for our region does not occlude our hopes for peace throughout the world, a peace built upon justice, equality and affection. The oppressed, the poor, the refugees, the marginalized, the exiled and those suffering discrimination because of race, color or religion must see justice done. **We are all brothers and sisters in humanity. May God guide and empower us always to strive for that which gives the Almighty glory and serves the good of humanity."**

## Still a chance for nuclear disarmament?

Whilst anti-nuclear campaigners in many corners of the globe are preparing for making their views known to government representatives attending the next phase of the NPT conference process (see box below), the US has announced its new approach to nuclear weapons. Far from being a clear indication of its continued commitment to the undertaking made at the last NPT Review Conference in 2000 – for global nuclear disarmament – this shows a commitment well into the middle of the century to develop and to be ready to use nuclear weapons in a much wider spread of scenarios than previously acknowledged. Needless to say, this ‘posture review’ has drawn widespread criticism from a range of sources. Here are just two...

*“The bottom line is this. If the US now cedes the moral ground previously staked out in the policy of nuclear deterrence - the hallmark of which was no first use of nuclear weapons - it will fulfil the terrorists’ and the outlaws’ most demonic picture of the US as a state that preaches probity and restraint to others but reserves complete freedom of action to itself, now apparently including the use of nuclear weapons. Were this to occur, the previous doctrine of deterrence - mutual assured destruction - would be replaced by unilateral assured destruction American-style. If this develops, the response will be a runaway nuclear arms race. The proposed use by the US of nuclear weapons as a regular part of war fighting would require it to abrogate a solemn commitment it has given the world community*

*and would change our world far beyond the way in which it was changed by the outrages of September 11, 2001. Where this would then lead is beyond human calculation.”*

**Richard Butler, former head of the United Nations Commission to disarm Iraq and former Australian ambassador to the UN**

*“Now is the time to speak together in one voice! Join us in our call for a legal end to the nuclear madness that never went away. Let us focus our efforts, exercise our citizenship muscles, and use every nonviolent means to get rid of the nuclear threat once and for all. Hiroshima and Nagasaki can never happen again! Speak Out! Take action! We cannot do it alone, but together we will succeed!!”*

**Yours for a sustainable and nuclear-free world, The Abolition 2000 Global Council**

The coming NPT conference may still offer a glimmer of an opportunity to get the non-proliferation agenda back on track, however and we owe it to coming generations not to give up in despair at this point. We can surely unite with the US in wanting to see the eradication of weapons of mass destruction – all weapons of mass destruction.

### STOP PRESS

Meanwhile, as the UK prepares for the NPT conference, Defence Minister Geoff Hoon tells the Commons Defence Select Committee that the UK would be ready to use nuclear weapons against Iraq if it felt it to be ‘Appropriate’.

### Non Proliferation Treaty Preparatory Committee, New York, 8-19 April 2002

The event has the task of overseeing the implementation of the undertakings already agreed at the historic NPT Review Conference in 2000, encapsulated in 13 practical steps. A sheet outlining these steps and a leaflet from NFPB in the lead up to the conference are available from our office. These and other materials are also available via our web site. (see over)

## A Call for Conversion

The Campaign Against Arms Trade Christian Network Pax Christi have collaborated in putting together a statement and other materials under this heading. These have been endorsed by a range of organisations and individuals - including ourselves and other predictably sympathetic peace-oriented church groups, as well as Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Wales and other clergy.

The project is to be formally launched at an event in London on 15th April with an invitation to other church figures to sign on. A briefing paper is already available and a briefing pack should be ready by May. This is all leading up to the annual Day of Prayer against the arms trade, 16 June. In the week preceding that day, the statement will be presented to Tony Blair. Why not see if you can introduce the call to ecumenical groups in your area and work towards planning something for the Day of Prayer? Copies of the pack will be available from CAAT for £2.50.

**CAAT, 11 Goodwin Street, London N4 3HQ**

### From the statement:

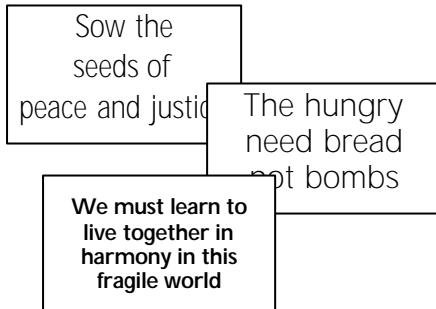
“We are at the beginning of the World Council of Churches Decade to Overcome Violence and the United Nations Decade for a Culture of Peace Non-violence for the Children of the World, we believe that this is an opportune moment to begin a process of conversion which will lead us to action and change. In particular

- ◆ *the UK government must tighten its export controls and keep to those guidelines already in place*
- ◆ *Government subsidies to arms export companies - totalling around £800m per year - must end.*
- ◆ *the government should help companies involved in the arms trade reorientate from civil to military production by creating a National Conversion Fund*

We call upon dioceses, parishes, groups and all individuals of goodwill to join our call to conversion and action in a spirit of love, justice and peace.”


## Sticking points

Whilst getting our much-used envelope re-use labels printed (see below) we have also now made available sheets of mini-stickers carrying short messages of a peaceful nature. These are available at 50p for a sheet of 65 stickers, including postage. Some of the designs are shown below.




We have reprinted our two envelope re-use labels and have now added to our range, reprinting an old QPS favourite 'People need water not weapons'.

Further details and an order form for these and our other resources are available from the office and our web site (see details below).



### Calling For peace



**Join the NFPB - Phone Co-op affinity scheme and:**

- ◆ Get cheaper calls
- ◆ Donate to Quaker peace work whilst doing so
- ◆ Get a 'local rate' 0845 number for your own use

**For a leaflet call us on:  
0845 458 3095  
Or visit:  
www.gn.apc.org/nfpb/co-op.htm**

## Transatlantic perspectives

Contrary to the impression given by much of the mainstream news media, there is not total unity of opinion amongst the people of the US about the 'war on terrorism'. Friends and their organisations are amongst those who have taken a leading role in challenging the militaristic response. So much so, that some parts of American Friends Service Committee are under police surveillance. Writing for the Denver Post in March, AFSC General Secretary Mary Ellen McNish and Clerk Paul Lacey say:

***"We must uphold the civil rights of all Americans, of immigrants to this country, and indeed of people all over the world. We must work hard to seek social and economic justice all over the world, to change government policies that foster gross inequalities and suffering. Let us not justify government-supported illegal and secret acts - extremism - as a means to deal with dissent."***

The AFSC are one of the bodies support a demonstration to take place in New York on 20 April, hoping to see parallel acts in solidarity in others parts of the world on the same day.

Friends Committee on National Legislation, meanwhile, continues to provide focussed briefings and discussion points for Friends in the US. And some US relatives of those killed in the 11th September attacks speak out in the US and more widely, under the banner of 'Peaceful Tomorrows', advocating a non-military response to terrorism.

**www.afsc.org  
www.fcni.org  
www.peacefultomorrows.org**

## Peace Education Conference

In a collaboration between the Department of Peace Studies and the Peace Education Network, a conference on 'Education for Peace and Citizenship' is to take place in Bradford on 14 June. It will be aimed particularly at exploring and developing ideas for peace education in the context of the citizenship curriculum. For details, contact **Valerie Clements in QPSW on 020 7663 1087 or email [valeriec@quaker.org.uk](mailto:valeriec@quaker.org.uk)**.

## Dialogue with Decision Makers

A good turn out gave the first of our workshops on this theme in mid-March a very positive feel. Facilitated by Janet Bloomfield of the Oxford Research Group, it explored the nature of dialogue and its role in working for change in different areas of peace and disarmament. We are keen to arrange similar events in other parts of the Board's area and would be pleased to hear from Meetings interested in hosting such an event.

## Peaceworkers UK

One of the goals of Peaceworkers UK is to establish a UK Civilian Peace Service, a report about which has been written by Marieke Junge and Tim Wallis. They write: "a UK Civilian Peace Service would increase public understanding of . and recognition for all the valuable work that civilians contribute to the prevention and reduction of violent conflict. This could change perceptions about how conflicts ought to be handled in the future, emphasising the full range of instruments that are available for influencing its outcome." A summary of the Report, Tackling Violent Conflict: The Case for a UK Civilian Peace Service, is available from:

**Steering Group for a UK Civilian Peace Service, c/o Peaceworkers UK, 162 Holloway Road, London N7 8DD**

**E: [info@peaceworkers.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:info@peaceworkers.fsnet.co.uk)  
[www.peaceworkers.fsnet.co.uk](http://www.peaceworkers.fsnet.co.uk)**

The Peace Board is a newsletter of the Northern Friends Peace Board. It is sent free to Northern Quaker Meetings and others. If you would like additional copies for your group or yourself, please get in touch. A donation to cover extra postage would help, but is not essential.

**Victoria Hall, Knowsley Street, Bolton BL1 2AS Tel: 0845 458 3095  
E-mail: [nfpb@gn.apc.org](mailto:nfpb@gn.apc.org)**  
Please send any news, views, letters, reviews etc. to the above address.