



Disarm



... For Peace

Quaker Peace & Social Witness
Peace & Disarmament Programme

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Now is the Time

*Sam Walton describes a new ecumenical coalition working to strengthen the
Nuclear Non-Proliferation treaty*

British Quakers have joined with an alliance of UK Churches to launch a campaign - *Now is the Time* - to press governments to put all bomb-grade material under international control and commit to making the use and possession of nuclear weapons illegal through a new Nuclear Weapons Convention. *Now is the Time* also calls for all nuclear armed states adopt a policy of 'no first use' of their nuclear weapons and refrain from upgrading their nuclear armaments.

The alliance QPSW is working with includes the Church of England, the Church of Scotland, the Methodist Church, the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the United Reformed Church, the International Affairs Department of the Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales, the President of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Scotland and the Archbishop of the Church in Wales.

The alliance called the campaign *Now is the Time* because recently we have seen a willingness not seen in recent years to move towards zero nuclear weapons. The target is 10,000 signatures of the petition to assist our call to the Government that *Now is the Time* to deliver a world free of nuclear weapons.

What *Now is the Time* is calling for may not be quite the "Ban the bomb now" demands that



many Quakers feel strongly about, but we have had to negotiate the campaign with all of our partners, some of whom may consider Quakers to be more extreme on peace issues than they would normally be comfortable with. However is good to be working within such a broad ecumenical coalition, as it lends real strength to our advocacy that we are not only 'radical' Quakers, but a broad coalition across many churches and therefore more likely to be heard by civil servants and ministers.

Shirley (Baroness) Williams, the Prime Minister's advisor on nuclear proliferation, said "We have only a few years, at most a decade or so, to control and eventually abolish nuclear weapons. The churches have already played a crucial part in breaking the bonds of debt on poor countries and their leadership on this issue is equally important and urgently needed."

I would encourage Friends to back *Now is the Time* by signing the petition online at www.endnuclearweapons.org.uk. You can also download a paper copy of the petition which can be brought along to meeting for signing on this website.

Parts of this article appeared in *the Friend* - www.thefriend.org

Introducing the Sustainability and Peace Programme



I am very pleased to be writing as the programme manager of QPSW's Sustainability and Peace Programme. This is a new programme, with the aim of strengthening

the ability of Quakers in Britain to live as a sustainable community, and supporting Friends to speak out confidently in the world on sustainability issues. It will consider the underlying causes of climate change and environmental degradation and the changes needed to be made, both individually and collectively, in response. QPSW plan to provide practical support to Friends wishing to live sustainably, as well as exploring broader issues, such as the way our economy works.

This new QPSW programme will also look at the way in which our failure to live sustainably impacts on conflict and peace. The effects of environmental degradation and climate change are potential causers of conflict threatening the livelihoods, security and rights of communities across the world, particularly those already vulnerable and marginalised. Living sustainably is central to building peace.

Some of you may recognise my name. I previously worked for QPSW's Economic Issues Programme, particularly supporting Friends on campaigning around economic justice issues. Prior to this I studied for a master's degree in conflict, violence and development studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London.

To be kept updated on our sustainability work please get in touch with your name, local Quaker Meeting and contact details.

Sunniva Taylor – QPSW Sustainability & Peace Programme Manager

020 7663 1047 - sunnivat@quaker.org.uk

Taxes for Peace Not War

Many Quakers may have already heard about **conscience**, but may not be aware that it is changing...

conscience have gone from being THE PEACE TAX CAMPAIGN, to **conscience TAXES FOR PEACE NOT WAR**. Although **conscience** still campaign for peace tax – the legal right of conscientious objectors to have the military part of their taxes spent on peacebuilding – we have expanded our remit.

conscience now campaign for a progressive increase in the amount of tax spent on peacebuilding, and a corresponding decrease in the amount spent on war. In addition, we advocate for non-military security and provide information and resources to support the development of peacebuilding and conflict prevention methods.

With our new remit in hand **conscience** has been busy: holding a discussion in “The Nature of the Beast” exhibition at the Whitechapel Gallery in London; demonstrating with our Grim Reaper and Taxman Tom; changing the **conscience** website – which will go online soon; we also have a new report on alternatives to the current approach in Afghanistan due out in April.

In June **conscience** will be hosting a debate entitled “National Security and the New Government”. It will address questions such as: non-military solutions tend to be long-term activities; how can we ensure that spending in this area and plans set out by previous governments remain consistent through changes of government?



conscience
TAXES FOR PEACE NOT WAR

For more information contact us by email at info@conscienceonline.org.uk or call us on 020 7561 1061 or visit our website www.conscienceonline.org.uk

Gayle Kinhead - Campaigns and Communications Officer - conscience

New research - Young infantrymen bear the brunt in Afghanistan

Whilst the civilian population has borne the greatest suffering in the war in Afghanistan, new research shows worrying trends in fatalities of British forces: younger people from poorer backgrounds are suffering most from the increasing intensity of the fighting there.

The official fatalities listing shows that those facing the greatest risks in Afghanistan are infantrymen, who are typically recruited younger and from areas of higher unemployment than others in the armed forces. Of the 107 British forces deaths in 2009, 71 (66%) were from the infantry. Since the infantry account for only 13.3% of the armed forces as a whole, the risk of death for infantry personnel was over 12 times higher than that for other armed forces personnel.

Fatalities in war are the tip of a much larger casualties iceberg, as they are always accompanied by a greater number of

Network of Christian Peacemaking Organisations (NCPO) Election Briefing

Those of you with a paper copy will hopefully have found the enclosed NCPO election briefing. The briefing focuses on the Arms Trade, the Middle East, Nuclear Weapons and Military Spending and is a great resource for anyone who would like guidance on raising peace issues with parliamentary candidates in the run up to the general election.

It can also be found online at www.ncpo.org.uk.

incapacitating injuries and even larger number of trauma-related psychological disorders. Hundreds and perhaps thousands of the young people posted to Afghanistan will be living with these problems long after they return home.

David Gee is an independent researcher, author of a report on military recruitment practices in the UK and founder of the www.BeforeYouSignUp.info



Photos from the Faith (Tadley) Gate at the recent Big Blockage of the Atomic Weapons Establishment in Aldermaston held on March 15.

Date for your diary: Hiroshima Peace Museum Exhibition at Friends House

We are delighted to be able to tell you that Friends House will be co-hosting with CND an exhibition from the Hiroshima Peace Museum. The provisional dates are July 31 to August 11, which will cover both Hiroshima and Nagasaki days, when we remember the atomic bombs which were dropped on those two Japanese cities.

We hope to be involved in the commemoration of both days, as well as putting on an exciting programme of events around the exhibition. This will include a chance to hear from a survivor of the bomb, events for children and young people and talks.

We are still finalising these events, but look out for more details in 'The Friend' and the next edition of this newsletter. In the meantime, we are looking for volunteers to help run the exhibition, if you are interested please contact Chris on 0207 700 2393 or at chris@cnduk.org.

Introducing the new Peace & Disarmament Programme Manager



Sam Walton started in this role in January, joining QPSW from CTC, the UK's National Cyclist's Organisation, where he coordinated a national network of 400 voluntary cycle campaigners. He

attends Wandsworth meeting, and has enjoyed serving on the staff for Friends Southern Summer Event's [Summer School](#) (for ages 11-14), and other events for young Friends. In the past, he brought together the successful '[Free Hich](#)' campaign, following wrongful arrests under the Prevention of Terrorism Act on Nottingham University Campus and re-started the [campaign](#) against Heckler and Koch, a Nottingham based small-arms manufacturer. He has also worked with Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT), and is part of [Legal Team](#) for the Camp for Climate Action.

He is already enjoying working for Friends, and is looking forward to getting into the peace and disarmament work in QPSW.

About the QPSW Peace & Disarmament Programme

Disarm ... For Peace is edited by Sam Walton, the manager of the Peace & Disarmament Programme of Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW).

The Programme is one of a number in QPSW working to further peace, social justice and other areas of Quaker interest and concern.

We:

- Work with Quakers and others to develop a deeper and wider understanding of the Quaker peace testimony;
- Campaign for sustainable global security through disarmament, and against militarism;
- Support the peace movement;
- Lead the Quaker response in Britain to international military crises.

Current priority areas include advocacy work in the run up to the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference in May 2010, preparation for the 350th anniversary in Jan 2011 of the declaration to Charles II - the first written record of a Quaker commitment to peace, publicising peace issues amongst Friends and others, and working with other groups in the peace movement to help forge and maintain a peacebuilding community.

Resources

For the latest events, resources and action opportunities, visit

www.peaceexchange.org.uk

To subscribe to this newsletter or to update your contact details, please contact us at disarm@quaker.org.uk or on 020 7663 1067.

Alternatively, write to:

Sam Walton
QPSW Peace & Disarmament Programme
Friends House
173 Euston Road
London NW1 2BJ

Visit us on the web at www.quaker.org.uk/qpsw

Also available in a large print format

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