

Europe at the polls and at war

The result of the recent European election means that *Conscience* now has fewer supporting MEPs. Only 10 of our 22 supporters were re-elected, but we have gained 5 new supporters already (see page 2 for details). The overall result is that the conservative Christian Democrats are now the lead group as opposed to the Socialist group who previously had a majority.

More conservatives in power are never good for peace and the recent NATO bombing of Kosov@ and Serbia highlights how easily governments resort to military action as a supposed solution. The war cost British taxpayers two million pounds per day and it will cost millions more to rebuild Kosov@ let alone Serbia. This money could have been spent to much better effect on peaceful attempts to resolve the conflict.

Worryingly Britain and America have only pledged funds to help rebuild Kosov@, leaving Serbia isolated and missing the opportunity to rebuild links between the various ethnic groups that make up the population of the Balkans. There are still many tensions between the new countries formed by the break up of Yugoslavia and seeking to make one ethnic group a pariah does not bode well for a long-term peace in the region.

It is vital that we work with our supporting MEPs and recruit new supporters to our cause in order that our arguments have as strong a voice as possible in the European Parliament. It is only by recognising public opposition to militarism and then investing in peace that Europe will truly become a peaceful continent.

Campaign

NEWS European Elections

Ten of our 24 supporting MEPs were re-elected, the drop being due partly to Labour losing so many seats and partly to individual MEPs not re-standing. In addition we have gained 2 new MEP supporters due to our lobbying prior to the election. Both the Green Party and Plaid Cymru with 2 MEPs each have policy in line with our aims - MEPs from these parties who have not yet confirmed their support are listed in *italic*.

Supporting MEPs by region

Scotland

Ian Hudghton (SNP), David Martin (Lab), Bill Miller (Lab)

Wales

Jill Evans (PC), Eurig Wyn (PC)

North West

Terry Wynn (Lab)

North East

Stephen Hughes (Lab)

Eastern

Richard Howitt (Lab),

Eryl McNally (Lab)

South West

Glynn Ford (Lab),
Graham Watson (LD)

London

Ricahard Balfe (Lab), Pauline Green (Lab), *Jean Lambert (Grn)*

South East

Dr Caroline Lucas (Grn)

We have no supporting MEPs in the following regions; Northern Ireland, Yorkshire & The Humber, West Midlands, East Midlands.

Members who wish to congratulate supporting MEPs on their election, or to lobby MEPs not on this list will find addresses at their local library. Please remember that you have between 4 and 11 MEPs representing your region. Bearing in mind past patterns of support you may wish to concentrate on MEPs from the Labour, Liberal Democrat and nationalist parties.

Apologies to those who requested the European lobbying pack advertised in the last newsletter and didn't receive it. Complications with the Bill and unplanned activity due to the war in the Balkans, combined with staff illness prevented us from producing this pack.

Parliamentary update

Due to the Parliamentary summer break being moved forward our Bill, which had been scheduled for July, will now go before the House on Tuesday 19 October. Full details of the Bill and our plans for lobbying will be published in our autumn newsletter, which will be sent out in September.

As a result of members' lobbying since the last newsletter five more MPs have signed EDM 115 including two new supporters.

This brings the number of new supporting MPs gained during this campaign to twenty.

Party Conferences

Our plans for lobbying work at the party conferences are not yet finalised, but if you are member of a political party and are planning to attend their annual conference, we'd like to let you know what we are planning.

- Please call Loraine on
020 7561 1061 or e-mail lobby.conscience@cablenet.co.uk

Non-Military Security Prize

Those wishing to enter this year's Non-Military Security Prize essay competition have until 31 August. For full details contact Loraine at the office (details as above).

The Hague Appeal for Peace Conference

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venue for peace - the Palace of Peace in the Hague is the home of The International Court of Justice, often called the world court.

Eight thousand people came in an atmosphere of peace and understanding. There were higher admission charges for the Europeans and North Americans, lower for the rest and a fund to help with costs for delegates from the Southern Countries. They came from all over the world, although the largest delegations appeared to be Dutch and American.

We were treated to a lavish opening ceremony with great speeches from Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Rigoberta Menchu and Jose Ramos Horta. Judy Collins sang and ended the spectacular with *Amazing Grace*, written by a former slave ship captain. The events over five days included workshops, plenary discussions, and exhibitions, as well as entertainment.

A bewildering array of workshops and teach-ins were held, delegates rushing from workshop to workshop. The continued bombing of Kosovo was a desperate reminder that there was not peace in the world. Some of the workshops made me feel hopelessly sad as one workshop after another talked of wars continuing and wars that are not wars, that are called economic sanctions but still kill children in Iraq every day. Other workshops talked about small victories. There was a strong sense of people across the world trying to build a better planet.

During a conference it is possible to become totally absorbed in the day to day; the excitement of the moment takes over the reality. Getting home at the end of it, it then dawned on me: not one British newspaper or TV channel reported a word of it. They were dominated by all the bombing of Yugoslavia and simply not prepared to discuss the nonviolent approach, or indeed the causes of conflict and injustice.

Time to abolish war - bold steps for peace: Saturday 23rd May 1999

This was a follow-up to the conference in The Hague and was an enjoyable mixture of a Seminar for Peace, a rally with speakers and music, and stalls; all very well attended. The Seminar, consisting of three very interesting, informative speakers, followed by questions, overflowed to a parallel session outside.

Professor Paul Rogers of Bradford University talked about Kosovo. While the war demonstrated NATO's global reach, there was a contrast between stated war aims and what was actually happening. While it was ostensibly a NATO war, 90% of the forces are American and 10% British and French. Kosovo is an example of the ready resource to military "solutions" and the lack of commitment to peacebuilding.

He noted emerging evidence that the peace movement had not exaggerated the dangers of the Cold War period. While there have been some reductions in nuclear forces the nuclear age is not over. NATO is committed to first use and relies on nuclear weapons, while Russian policy depends increasingly on nuclear weapons, and a new nuclear arms race has emerged between India and Pakistan.

Professor Ed Garcia of International Alert noted that the countries of SE Asia and the Pacific are rich in resources though the people are poor materially, and that the politics is one of exclusion. The people are hospitable, the land beautiful, but there are incessant conflicts. He pointed out that parliamentary democracy is not the same as democratic society and that political democracy must be linked to economic democracy.

He said that just as politics is too important to leave to politicians so peace is too important to leave to diplomats, and that it belongs to ordinary people. Change can be generated by the power of citizens and progressive organisations and can be achieved through peaceful means. However, working for peace is a marathon, taking much time and involving several generations. Building peace is a journey of hope and requires patience, freedom from fear and the joy of companions who share a common purpose.

Marigold Bentley, Education Advisor to Quaker Peace and Service, pointed out that the twentieth century saw wars in which women and children were the principle victims. It also saw the growth of human rights, the creation of the United Nations, more technology and an improved quality of life, and the end of apartheid and the Cold War.

But there is the terrible legacy of a culture of war. History teaches us that social change is about violence. It is difficult to introduce a culture of peace through state education which is involved in the culture of war. Other groups are freer to challenge the culture of war, to stop young people being indoctrinated. Peace education goes beyond enabling people to understand how wars come about. It also encompasses making conflict resolution and mediation skills more available and demonstrating that change is not only brought about through wars. What is needed is a hopeful vision and an investment in peace.

Some dates for your diary

14-17 September

Campaign Against Arms Trade picket of DSEi 99 - the UK's largest ever arms-trade show. There will be a procession, vigils and direct action, both in London and Surrey.

- CAAT, 11 Goodwin St,
London N4 3HQ,
tel: 020 7281 0297,

*e n q u i r i e s @ c a a t . d e m o
n . c o . u k
www.caat.demon.co.uk*

19 October

Lobby of Parliament in support of *Conscience's* 10-minute-rule Bill.

- See our next newsletter for full details.

20 October

Peace movement lobby of Parliament calling for the reform and strength-ening of the UN in line with the Hague Appeal for Peace Agenda.

- 'Forum for UN Renewal',
3 Whitehall Court,
London SW1A 2EL,
tel: 020 7930 0272,

*u n f o r u m @ g n . a p c . o r g ,
www.gn.apc.org/unforum/*

Planning ahead

As a result of our objective to obtain the right for those ethically opposed to war to have the military part of their taxes spent on peace-building, lobbying MPs is a key activity. It is essential that we continue working to convince MPs of the validity of our case and to persuade them that legislation is needed. We must also continue strengthening the organisation by recruiting new members. Members are tangible evidence that there is a demand for this legislation, and they are our main source income.

But there are other issues closely linked to our objective. One is peacebuilding and the uses to which a Non-Military Security Fund could be put. Another is war tax resistance, the ultimate expression of people's conscientious objection to military spending.

We will soon be preparing our plans for the year 2000. Obviously lobbying work will continue, and membership recruitment cannot be neglected, but given adequate staff time, money and resources, what other issues should we tackle? We would welcome your views on this and some ideas are given below.

- Developing more specific proposals for the use of the Non-Military Security Fund.
- Developing proposals for a centre to promote the development and use of civilian nonviolent peacebuilding techniques, as mentioned in Gerald Drewett's article in the last newsletter.
- Promoting the need for and potential of peacebuilding, including researching successful examples of peacebuilding.
- Establishing a register of people who want their contribution to society strengthened by policies of nonviolent security rather than undermined by militarism.
- Researching and publicising peacebuilding projects which people might wish to support.
- Providing information about the role of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe and other bodies involved in peacebuilding.
- Researching and publishing briefings on forms of war tax resistance, including covenanting as a form of tax diversion.
- Researching legal defences to withholding war taxes.
- Investigating the possibilities of war tax resistance linked to European Union defence policies and the common European Security and Defence Identity.
- Developing stronger links and joint projects with our sister campaigns in Europe.

Obviously we cannot do all of these as well as our core activities with our current resources - it would take many more staff and resources - but we should consider which ones we feel are important and whether we can find the resources to tackle them.

- If you have comments or wish to suggest other activities, please write to or e-mail us at the office, 601 Holloway Road, London N19 4DF, conscience@cablenet.co.uk

Members' News

Annual Event

We held our annual event in Newcastle upon Tyne on 5 June. The annual event replaces the more formal Annual General Meetings of old and is designed to involve more members in discussing issues relevant to the campaign.

The event started with a workshop on conflict resolution and over lunch we were entertained by children from the Woodcraft Folk who read peace poetry. After lunch Bruce Kent talked about the Hague Appeal for Peace and Jeremy Corbyn MP led a discussion on parliamentary campaigning. Prior to the event we were filmed by the BBC laying flowers in memory of the victims of the war in the Balkans.

Next year we are planning to hold the event in southern England - suggestions welcome!

Membership Questionnaire

There was a good response to this year's Membership Questionnaire. Those who responded overwhelmingly approved the accounts (94%) and the appointment of the Executive (96%). A similar majority (95%) agreed with the aims and targets set out in the Annual Review with several members commenting on the need to promote our ideas about non-military security during and after NATO's campaign in the Balkans.

Appeal update

Many thanks to all those who responded to our recent appeal to help promote our campaign in the European Parliament. After only a week of responses we have already raised over £3,000.

I Object

Ronald Mallone, now General Secretary of The Fellowship Party, witnessed before the Southern area Tribunal in Southampton County Court on June 19, 1940.

I read this statement: "Because I believe in the religion which Jesus taught in word and action, it is wrong for me to support war indirectly or directly. Jesus teaches me to love my enemies, to bless them that curse me, to pray for those which despitefully use me and persecute me, not to resist evil, but to be perfect. He commands me to love God fully and to love my neighbour as myself; only by acting thus, can I establish on earth God's kingdom of love. God is the loving Father of all. He forgives all, and expects me to forgive those who trespass against me, to forgive my sinning brother unto 70 times 7 ...

Jesus not only taught this way of love, but died rather than use violence. He refused to defend Himself and prayed to God to forgive those who tortured Him to death. He said that ... His followers do not fight. To the end He used love, believing ... that Satan cannot cast out Satan ...

Since God is the father of all men, German men and women are among my brothers and sisters and it is not God's will that I should bayonet and machine gun them, starve them by blockade, or make it possible by indirect or direct assistance for anyone else to do so. Whatever I do to God's children, I do to God Him-self. War is not love or perfection. War involves indiscriminate mass-murder, deliberate falsehood, hatred, immorality, and kindred vices. Killing is evil. Nor does He excuse defensive killing. It was the defensive sword of Peter which Jesus condemned, and since it was wrong for Peter to defend by violence our Saviour Himself (the highest possible cause) there is no cause on earth which it is right to attempt to defend by violence.

War is for me a test of my faith in God. I believe that the power of God, love, is unconquerable. If I were to use anything but love to overcome the evil of aggression and war, I should be admitting that war is a better way of getting things done than the love of God. I should be acknowledging that there are some things against which God is powerless. My actions would show that I did not believe in God, because I should not be believing in love, and love is God. Were I to use Hitler's methods to face Hitler, I should be guilty of atheism, the denial of the Holy Spirit. I should be confessing that when it comes to a crisis, the best method of solving that crisis ... is that of Hitler. But the power which Hitler and all war-makers use, is not the greatest power in the world. I believe that love is the greatest power in the world, and that I must use it to convert evil-doers to the way of Jesus. I believe that since the world was created by God, there will never be peace or happiness in it, until we run it in God's way, and that individually we must obey God as revealed

in Jesus. I believe I am called to follow Jesus and to practise love at all costs towards all people, and I should still have to do that were I the only person of that opinion in the whole world ...

To support war would mean the denial of my God, the apostasy of everything I value in life ... It is God's will that I should love my neighbour as I love myself ... Jesus says that I must keep God's commandments, which include 'Thou shalt not kill.' No one can give me the right to kill or injure another, or to support those who are usurping the place of God by taking life. I cannot love my neighbour and support war at the same time, I cannot serve God and evil. I can serve only one master - God ...

At present, all my time not taken up with teaching and preparation for teaching is devoted to lay preaching, Sunday School teaching and to peace work with the Peace Pledge Union and the Fellowship of Reconciliation. It is my Christian duty to end war: peace and peace alone can end the suffering and sin of war. I am fully prepared to go to prison, or to die, rather than to assist the war, whether by indirect killing, noncombatant work, ambulance service at home or abroad, or by civil work such as agriculture or forestry ... My witness I shall maintain whatever it may cost me. I may have to show my love by laying down my life for my friends but I shall not kill or assist others to kill. I do not fear those who may kill my body, but place my entire faith in God."

The Tribunal unanimously ordered "That the applicant shall, without conditions, be registered in the Register of Conscientious Objectors."

We welcome copies of statements made to National Service Tribunals, written by members, families or friends, for publication in future issues.

Centrepeace

Looking forward to a nonviolent 21st century

This issue's centrepeace focuses on the Hague Appeal for Peace. In the first section Loraine Monk, *Conscience's* Parliamentary Officer, reports from the Hague Appeal for Peace international conference. After this EC member Monica Frisch outlines the content of the UK follow up meeting.

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Elenchus

John McDonnell was elected as MP for Hayes & Harlington in 1997 and will present the *Conscience* 10 Minute Rule Bill to Parliament on 28 July

What book has most influenced you?

The Communist Manifesto

What cause do you care about most passionately?

Child poverty

What piece of legislation would you pass?

Wealth tax

Who are your greatest inspirations?

The late Harold Laski and Frank Dye

What government ministry would you like to create?

Anti-poverty department

Which living politicians do you most admire?

The rank and file of my Constituency Labour Party

What institution would you abolish?

The City

What would you like to see your taxes spent on?

Tackling poverty

How would you like to spend December 31st 1999?

With my family in Zanzibar

Which human quality is most underrated?

Self-sacrifice

The world would be a better place with less ...

Political ambition

The world would be a better place with more ...

Political honesty

People might be happier if they spent more time ...

Gardening

What's the best invention?

The spade

What's the worst invention?

Party Whips

What makes your blood boil?

Unprincipled politicians

What makes you glad to be alive?

The hugs of my three-year-old son

What would you like to do more of?

Sailing my wooden dinghy

What do you put off doing?

Questionnaires

Elenchus is a Greek word meaning: "a way of uncovering truth by short question and answer"

These two books provide an excellent foundation for individuals and groups who are serious about the business of peace. They encompass several dimensions of creative and co-operative approaches to resolving conflict, and between them they cover all age groups. They draw on examples from school, home, the local neighbourhood, the world of work and other havens of peace that we so easily turn into arenas of war.

Working Together is aimed at people who think that co-operation is one of the most fruitful ways to forestall and reduce harmful conflict. It combines theory with practical suggestions for developing skills for working together. It is written with parents, teachers, youth workers and young people in mind. It deals sensitively with co-operation at home, in the local neighbourhood and at school. The authors pull no punches in decrying some of the models provided by adults in positions of power and responsibility.

This book is divided into five parts covering fundamental questions of self-knowledge, co-operation at home and in school, the adolescent years and the wider world. This modest A4 book of fifty-four pages is full of encouragement and enlightenment with several practical exercises, games and theory grounded on empirical research. Readers will be rewarded, entertained and informed for their effort.

Conflict Resolution is a much more academic analysis of the business of peace. It packs an enormous amount of information into less than 200 pages. This is its strength as well as its weakness. Readers who need a brief overview of the wide variety of approaches to conflict resolution will be well rewarded by this book. It aims to be a foundation guide and very adequately lives up to that claim.

This guide covers the broad principles of conflict resolution and how they can be applied in family and neighbourhood mediation, in cross-cultural and multi-faith settings, in the work place and in resolving environmental conflict. An enormous amount of research work and data analysis has gone into this book, and for those who are committed to avoiding and resolving conflict it will be a very useful reference. However, conflict is in the nature of the human beast. This book leaves the reader at a loss as to how to deal with those for whom conflict becomes the pathological driving force of their lives.

As a starter pack for your peace library you will find it hard to beat these two publications. Almost anyone interested in the broad subject of peace at the end of the second millennium will find something of relevance in both books. The information presented is often tantalising, at best inspiring the reader to delve more deeply into a particular approach or theoretical framework.

Working Together: a handbook for co-operation, Peace Pledge Union, 54pp, PPU, 1998, ISBN 0-902680-44-7 (pbk), £9.50. Available from PPU, 41b Brecknock Road, London N7 0BT, for £11 (inc. p&p).

publication details continue on page 6

Conflict Resolution: a foundation guide, Susan Stewart, 176pp, Waterside Press, 1998, ISBN 1-872870-65-1 (pbk), £12. Available from Waterside Press, Domum Road, Winchester SO23 9NN, for £13.50 (inc. p&p).

We omitted the publication details for *The Lost Art of Forgiving*, reviewed last issue.

The Lost Art of Forgiving, J Christoph Arnold, Plough Publishing House, 1998, ISBN 0-87486-950-1 (pbk), £7.99. Available from Plough Publishing House, Darvell Bruderhof, Robertsbridge, E Sussex TN32 5DR or 0800 018 0799, for £7.99 (inc. p&p).