



PEACELINKS

News from the Fellowship of Reconciliation

nonviolence in action

Winter 2020-21



The Pandemic Issue

also inside ...

Award for
FoR Trustee

Peace and Race

Successful Webinar
explores questions
of race and peace.

Story Project

Meet Jack,
our digital
storyteller

Director's Diary

This last year has been a time of immense noise and immense silence. It's a strange combination yet one that fits neatly into an end of year reflection.

As a movement, we have been noisy making connections and rejuvenating our engagement with the International Fellowship of Reconciliation. We have spoken out on many occasions about actions of the UK Government and we have gathered in small groups for a 'peace of cake' conversation. This noise has provided life, ideas, and energy. It has helped focus activity yet also deepened a small corner of the fellowship.

Our noise, in many ways, has been followed by a strange form of silence. A silence is found in the form of our 'normal' pattern of activity resuming. So, the latter half of the year, when the second lockdown returned, saw a more traditional pattern of activity with a little extra. Our Peace Sunday saw a huge increase in reach thanks to a special collaboration with the Methodist Choir of Great Britain. Remembrance Day was extra special thanks to our collaboration with the Peace Pledge Union and an online act of remembrance.

This strange silence was broken when violence erupted in Ethiopia and Western Sahara. Our

Fellowship joined with others around the globe in praying for peace and writing to our Government urging action. It was a good way to break the silence. It reminded us that our call to be peacemakers has no boundaries. Instead, it is a global call, rooted in faith and lived out in conversation, prayer, and action.

This pattern of activity, silence, and new activity mirrors the journey we've all made through the Christmas period. From the quiet of advent to the noise of Christmas we are entering a strange form of silence again. Yet, as Howard Thurman noted, that is when the real work begins. So I leave you with a reminder of his powerful words, that we featured on a Christmas Card a few years back:

*When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among others,
To make music in the heart.*



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PEACELINKS

Volume 34 no.2

published by the

Fellowship of Reconciliation
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Registered charity 207822

www.for.org.uk

***"We are one in Christ
and can never be at war."***

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We are always looking for news and events for Peacelinks and our website. Please send your articles and images to peacelinks@for.org.uk

Members and supporters have received this edition either through the post or via email. If you would rather receive it the opposite way to which you have done please write to, call or email the office, and we will change it for the next time.

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This issue was released digitally.

New President for England & Scotland

The Revd Dr Inderjit Bhogal OBE has been appointed Honorary President of the Fellowship of Reconciliation England and Scotland. The appointment was agreed by members of the Fellowship who attended the Annual Council, held on 20th June 2020. Inderjit is already active as President of the Methodist Peace Fellowship, a network of Methodists within the FOR.

His appointment to the newly-created role will last for three years until the Annual Council of 2023. It is a voluntary role that will provide opportunities for the Fellowship and Inderjit to spread wider a message of peace, reconciliation, and justice to churches of all denominations.

Inderjit responded to the appointment saying:

“I am deeply honoured and humbled by this appointment, and hope to fulfil my responsibilities well. I value the work of FOR, especially the insistence on the centrality of reconciliation. All of us are called to share in God’s continuing ministry of reconciliation.

In this ministry of reconciliation we dare to hope for and dream of a different society. A decent society where “widest extremes” can be joined, all people can be safe and have equal opportunity.



Inderjit speaking at Methodist Conference 2018

They can flourish and enjoy the fullness of life. It will be a society where different parties agree to be in an open and honest relationship in which they share openly and honestly in difficult conversations.

A reconciled society, congregation or church will not be one without differences and disagreements. It will be one where division is not destructive. Instead, there is a shared commitment to listening to each other and the enhancement of life for all.

I am committed to working with all FOR members and partners and others in this ministry”.

FoR Members Call for Action

FoR Members have called for Action, Fellowship and Growth.

1 in 5 FoR members completed our survey, issued earlier this year. This phenomenal response, double what we were expecting, was enjoyable to read through and the answers began to provide a clear steer for what our next steps should be.

From the survey some key learnings were

- Members are busy – often a member of at least one other peace group
- Members join FOR because they want to take Christian Action for peace, and want to see the movement spend time providing Christian Education

- Members want to have more chances to pray for peace
- Members want the Fellowship to be campaigning on Climate Change
- Members want to be enabled to speak out about the arms trade
- Members lament the lack of active youth work and would like to see that return

This clear steer will be reflected in the 2021 plan of work which is slowly being worked out. So look out for more chances to get involved and help keep our movement for peace active.

No Racial Justice? No Lasting Peace

Summer 2020 was the year race relations hit the headlines. Deep inequalities and structural racism were highlighted by the pandemic. When George Floyd was killed by police in the United States his death sparked global protests and a renewed focus on how individuals, churches and institutions can tackle racism both in themselves and society.

The Fellowship worked with Rev Farai Mapamula and Rev Azariah France-Williams to put on a special evening conversation called 'No Justice? No Peace!'. Farai spoke about her experience as a Zimbabwean Minister in the West Midlands. Azariah read extracts from his book 'Ghost Ship' exploring the reasons behind the racism he has experienced at many points of his ministry. The gathering of close to 100 people then moved

into a time of conversation, prayer and listening.

Central to the event was an exploration of the impact of racism in the church. This included others sharing their first-hand pain of experiencing racism and others sharing their wish to learn how to stand up when they see racism being displayed. This openness to engage with each other proved to be a turning point in the evening and all felt blessed when it concluded with powerful prayers led by Reverend Eve Pitts, the first Black female minister in the Church of England.

This evening will not be a one-off event. A series of events are being planned for Spring 2021 to help continue to gather people to reflect, respond and pray for a new world order, based on love, that stands up to racism.

Military Spending and Overseas Aid

Statement from the Fellowship of Reconciliation regarding the cut in Overseas Development Aid and Reiteration of Increased Military Spending as stated in Parliament on 25th November by Rishi Sunak, Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Richard Bickle, Chair of Trustees, said:

"The Chancellor showed where the true priorities of this Government lie. Having removed at least £4 billion a year from the poorest communities through cuts in aid, he reminded everyone of the increased military spending of £6 billion a year to £24 billion over 4 years. This decision won't lay the foundations for peace and tackling poverty. Stopping conflict and building peace is enabled

by tackling global poverty, not investing in even more weapons of war. We hope the diverse array of voices speaking against this cut will be heard."

The changes will add to the existing military budget of £41.5 billion in 2020-21. By 2024-25 financial year the budget could be £47.6 billions.

The Chancellor said the UK would spend the equivalent of 0.5 % of our national income on Overseas Aid in 2021, that is £10 billion. This is down from the 0.7% which has been the UN's target for international aid since 1970. The UK achieved it for the first time in 2013 and made it law in 2016. Under some circumstances the government can reduce it without new legislation.

Wilson-Hinkes Award won by Trustee

FoR Trustee Simone Ramacci was recently awarded the Wilson Hinkes Peace award. This award recognises significant contributions from individuals who further peace, justice or reconciliation.

Simone was put forward for the award recognised because of his use of social media for 'grass roots' peacemaking. In his acceptance talk, he focussed on the need to widen opportunities for all to be involved in peacemaking. He said "Not everyone can afford to have enough free time for the kind

of peace work we imagine is the gold standard, so it is our duty today to discover the next generation of peacemakers even if they don't look like us and they don't sound like us, and empower them to find new and creative ways to amplify their voices and be heard".

Part of the award included a stipend of £500. He generously decided to split this sum between his local community and peacemakers around the globe supported by the International Peacemaker Fund.

Witness during the Pandemic

In March, António Guterres, Secretary-General of the UN, called for a global ceasefire in light of the coronavirus, saying: “The fury of the virus illustrates the folly of war. The threats we face as a planet, health pandemics and climate change among them, demand a coordinated international response with no room for continuing to waste resources on armed conflict.”

FoR was one of twelve member organisations of the Network of Christian Peace Organisations that wrote to our government, urging it to robustly support Mr. Guterres’ call by discontinuing the sale of arms during this crisis and calling on all involved in current conflicts around the world to lay down their arms.

We were encouraged by the prompt, creative response of British manufacturers to the urgent need for new ventilators and the London ExCel Centre which hosts the DSEI Arms Fair, being used instead for a socially productive purpose as the Nightingale Hospital.

On VE Day, our Chair, Richard Bickle, released the following statement:

“We will join people throughout the UK and around the world as they reflect on the end of fighting in Europe during the Second World War.

As we do so, we remember that there are no real winners in war, casualties occur on all sides and

The coastal town of Dunbar was the setting for a special service of remembrance to mark 75 years since the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Covid19 restrictions meant attendance was limited for outdoor gatherings and worship.

Many different church traditions were reflected throughout the service led by Rev David Mumford, an FoR Trustee, retired Priest and member of St Anne’s Scottish Episcopal and Methodist Church in Dunbar. The first Bible lesson was read by the Rev. Fred Harrison from Dunbar Parish Church and the words of Pope Francis were read, calling on humanity to reject war forever and to ban nuclear weapons.

This year reflections were shaped by a special reading. The granddaughter of Rev John Dorward, a Church of Scotland missionary in Nagasaki at the time of the bombing, worships at nearby Belhaven Parish Church. She had permitted his eyewitness account of the devastation at

This crisis is teaching the world much about the values of compassion and fairness, and the ability of societies to care for the most vulnerable as the basis of security. All our efforts now are rightly focused on preserving life and we have been heartened by the huge efforts made to this end, and by the strengthening of community bonds across the nation. The coming weeks will be painful for society. We will need time to grieve and to reflect. We hope that the bonds of common humanity, coupled with the compassion and imagination being deployed today can create a lasting legacy for future generations.

conscript armies are forced to fight one another. Many of those who returned as heroes brought with them deep wounds from all they had seen and done.

There are few people still alive who remember the relief felt at the end of the war in Europe, however the need to build lasting peace is as needed today as it has ever been.”



Nagasaki to be read.

Prayers offered included thanksgiving for the recent United Nations Treaty countries outlawing nuclear weapons and that all nations would sign up to the Treaty.

Finally, the vigil ended with prayers for peace between countries.

Wales stops Saudi Training

Cymdeithas y Cymod, the Fellowship of Reconciliation in Wales, has recently made progress in their campaign to stop military training being offered to Saudi Air Force pilots by the Royal Air Force.

Anna Jane Evans, from Cymdeithas y Cymod, explained the reason they were concerned:

“30 Saudi pilots were trained in RAF Valley again last year and now this expansion will massively increase the number of flights by opening the Llanbedr airspace for RAF training use. We cannot simply sit back and pretend that all is well while innocent civilians are being maimed and killed in Yemen and other countries. Arms companies and military power will never bring peace and

money spent on these so-called developments could be used to secure real jobs to develop the north-west Wales economy sustainably for the long term.”

A summer of letter writing and awareness raising by them and campaign partners Peace Pledge Union ended when a ‘pause’ on the RAF opening Llanbedr for training was announced.

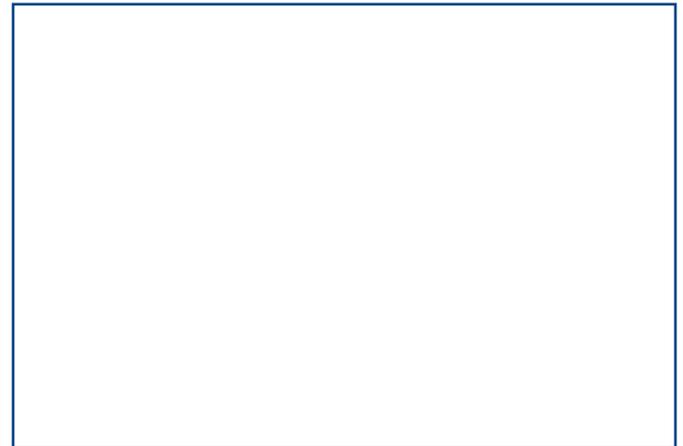
At the end of August, Pryderi Llwyd Jones, Chair of the local Cymdeithas y Cymod branch welcomed the pause saying: “This is a pause and it is not a time to relax in our campaigning but to be vigilant in a world where the arms industry is growing and war victims increasing.”

Donald’s Story Inspires Students

The partnership between FoR and the Student Christian Movement kicked off with a special week of webinars that took a group of students through many different elements of peace and pacifism.

A highlight of the week was the chance for students to quiz a Conscientious Objector. 94-year old Donald Saunders joined the call and shared some of his Peace Testimony. His personal experiences of being a CO in WW2 sparked long conversation about what individual students would do in the situation of war. His participation in the session was matched by recording a special video of his story which was shared via FoR social media, gaining hundreds of views.

One participant in the week of activity was a final year student called Jack. He was so inspired by



the conversation with Donald that he applied for the placement with FOR, provided by the Methodist Church, and will be spending his year collecting other stories to share. Find out more on the opposite page.

A Testimony of Peace

Hello, my name is Jack Woodruff and in September I joined the Fellowship of Reconciliation as a Digital Story Teller and Network Support. Over the summer I graduated from the University of York, where I studied my undergrad and masters in Mathematics, specializing in mathematical biology. Among other things, this involved the maths behind the R number that we keep hearing about on the news! Previously, I have worked as a Community Project Worker for a parish church in York and as an Outdoor Activity Instructor in Ormskirk.



During my degree I got involved with the Student Christian Movement (SCM). I currently volunteer as their Campaigns Rep on the SCM General Council. Alongside this, I volunteer as a Scout Leader and on the Student Cross Recruitment team, which is an all-age ecumenical pilgrimage during Holy Week. In my remaining spare time, I enjoy playing guitar or walking the dog.

It was in September 2019 when I first felt a real calling to fully engage with the peace movement. With SCM and FaithJustice UK (a network of Christian young adults passionate about justice), I attended the No Faith in War day of the DSEI Arms Fair Protest. Leading up to the No Faith In War day I didn't really know what to expect. I just knew that I believed in peace and that war is never the answer, but what I didn't expect was the strong sense of community among strangers and the abundant generosity we all shared. We were all united in our belief in peace.

This belief in peace is what makes me so excited for this role. The stories of peacemakers are a powerful tool in raising awareness about the

peace movement and inspiring others to get involved. The project, called 'A Testimony of Peace', will capture these stories through video interviews. At this stage, we are looking to form a wider picture of how Christians fit into the story of peace activism over recent decades. We would love to hear from you if you, or someone you know, has been involved with peace activism – both recently and historically.

A key focus will be on capturing stories of conscientious objectors, from the second world war or the time of national service, who were inspired by their faith not to fight. This is vital as many are now passing away, yet their passion and belief made a real difference to how they lived. We would also like to hear from relatives of conscientious objectors to learn how their status as a conscientious objector influenced them.

If you would like to find out more about the project or have stories, objects or family information to share please fill out the form, replies to the survey can be posted to the FoR office or emailed to jack@for.org.uk.

Questions

Is it your own story, or a relative's?

My story

Relative

Other: (please specify)

Do you have...?

Objects

Photos

Video Footage

Please give a brief overview of the story. e.g. Where & when did it happen? What happened?

How did your faith influence your decision to become a peacemaker?

What, or who, inspired you to get involved with peacemaking?

Annual Council hears from the Pacific

Sixty members attended FoR's Annual Council which took place via the online Zoom video platform on Saturday 20th June. We logged in from our homes for what became an excellent three hours plus lunch break.



We started with a prayers and a powerful message from Manchester-based anglican priest Rev Azaria France-Williams who asked if we would give up our peaceful existence so others can live a life of peace. He said that without justice there is no peace and that peacemaking today breaks illusions. We have to step out from the status quo.

Next we heard names of those members who had died since last year, added to the Roll of Honour. Then Richard Bickle chaired the business session during which our director John Cooper and Trustee David Mumford poke about our 2019 activities and finances. The reports had previously been emailed to members.

We found that elections of Trustees is possible on Zoom. There were 7 candidates for 3 positions on the Board. Matt Gardner took us through the Single Transferable Vote method. Having read the candidates' statements, we then sent him a private chat message of our votes in order of preference. Chris Collins, Simone Ramacci and Robert Weston were elected. The other four candidates were thanked and encouraged to consider offering themselves again in future. The positions of vice-chair, Anne Parker, and treasurer, Carys Underdown, were elected unopposed.

We also elected a new president, Rev Dr Inderjit Bhogal, City of Sanctuary founder, former President of the Methodist Conference, former leader of the Corrymeela Community, and a winner of the World Methodist Peace Award.



In the afternoon we saw a video greeting sent from Fiji by Rev James Baghwan, general secretary of the Pacific Conference of Churches. He talked

through the history of nuclear testing in the Pacific and its effects on the people and islands. He invited us to hear the cries of the people and mentioned the UK people in the forces who had been made to witness the tests.

Dr Becky Alexis-Martin, lecturer in human geography at Manchester Metropolitan University, gave an illustrated talk about the Human Impacts of Nuclear Weapons Since Hiroshima.



In the Pacific, USA, Britain and France all engaged in Nuclear Imperialism, carrying out atmospheric tests in the 1950s and early 1960s over islands that had no real say in what happened.

In particular Becky focused on Kiritimati (Christmas Island), the largest coral island in the world. Located in the middle of the Pacific, it was the site of British nuclear H-bomb tests, and US tests. It is now threatened by rising sea-levels due to climate change.

20,000 servicemen worked on the nuclear tests and many were witnesses: although with the backs to the air-bursts, they could see the bones in their hands as in X-rays. Many suffered lasting damage to their health and to their children's health. So did the island inhabitants who remained during the tests and were described as 'primitive peoples' in official documents at the time. Food and water supplies were contaminated by radioactive fallout. Some British test veterans made return journeys to meet islanders in 2018. Becky concluded by noting that Climate Change refugees have no protection in international law.

Our director John Cooper gave an illustrated talk about his recent visit to the Pacific as part of a World Council of Churches Peace and Climate working group. The Covid19 pandemic had prevented them from going to Kiritimati but they had been able to do some work while on Fiji.

They had met local people, including church members and parliamentarians. John spoke about Britain's Nuclear Legacy in the Pacific and what that means for peacemakers today.

The meeting concluded with a prayer from the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia.

Former President of FoR Scotland

Runa Mackay 1921-2020

Runa, who died on 31st May 2020 was for many years president of FOR Scotland. A commitment to peace and justice was an integral part of her Christian faith.

She was born in Edinburgh, the third of five children. She studied medicine at Edinburgh University and specialised in paediatrics. She remembered being a landgirl during the war and the loss of her brother who was killed in Tunisia in 1942.

In 1954 she responded to a call from the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society for an urgent replacement for a doctor in Nazareth. What started as a locum position ended as a permanent post. She had three months every three years on furlough and that was an opportunity to renew relationships with the rest of the family – especially with her nephews and nieces.

She developed a deep knowledge and love for Palestine and that stayed with her on her eventual return to Edinburgh when she retired in 1985. Retirement involved being a locum GP, taking a degree in Arabic and Islamic Studies, being an active member of the Fellowship of Reconciliation and of Women in Black, whose vigils in Edinburgh on Princes Street she regularly supported.

At the age of 66 Runa responded to a plea from Medical Aid for Palestinians and went back to the Middle East to work in a refugee camp in Lebanon. She was to go back again for periods of work in Hebron in 1990 and again in Lebanon in 1992. She chronicled her experiences in her book 'Exile in Israel'.

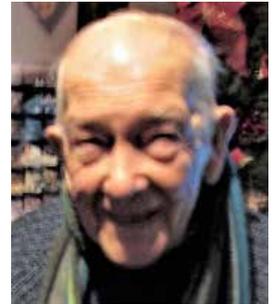
Runa returned to Edinburgh and was a regular worshipper at Stockbridge Parish Church (Church of Scotland). Her wise counsel helped FOR Scotland through some difficult patches and she will be deeply missed.

David Mumford



Nazareth Trust

Bryan Hayes died peacefully at home on 25th May 2020, aged 87. Bryan was an active member of FoR for around 63 years. He was the North West Regional Secretary, for many years, he organised meetings in Southport, at the Friend's Meeting House. Bryan was always willing to speak out for peace, he was always proud to wear a white poppy alongside the red.



Sarah Hayes

Eva Pinthus died peacefully on 20th April, aged 95. She came from a Jewish family in Germany, escaping in 1939 to England via the Kindertransport. She lived with an English family and was brought up in the Church of England but after the war she found and joined Quakers and volunteered with the Friends' Relief Service in East Germany. She also helped set up the Freundschaftsheim, or Peace House, near Bückeberg, West Germany.

Eva was the first woman to read theology at Birmingham University. She went on to work as a teacher, as warden of two university halls of residence, and as a lecturer in theology in Leeds Beckett Park Teacher Training College. A nurse, theologian, chaplain and academic, she became a lifelong member of FoR and served for many years on General Committee. With her sharp mind, sense of humour and strong, clear views, and absolute commitment, she made a remarkable contribution to peace.

www.ilkleystation.co.uk/news/18460441.death-refugee-nazi-germany/ & www.theguardian.com/education/2020/may/24/eva-pinthus-obituary

Some useful websites

<https://for.org.uk> - our main website

facebook.com/forepeace - our Facebook page.
instagram.com/forpeacemaker - our Instagram page.

twitter.com/forpeacemaker - FoR on Twitter.

for.org.uk/peacesunday - Peace Sunday resources.
for.org.uk/ipf/ - International Peacemakers' Fund.

youtube.com/channel/UC4uilnIWD2v7e7gXLTzOltg
 - our You Tube channel.

flickr.com/photos/forengland/with/13875423525/
 - FoR's photographs web pages.

ifor.org - International Fellowship of Reconciliation and links to other branches around the world.
cymdeithascymod.org.uk - Cymdeithas y Cymod.

mpf.org.uk - Methodist Peace Fellowship.
baptist-peace.org.uk - Baptist Peace Fellowship.
urc.org.uk/our-work/peace-fellowship - United Reformed Church Peace Fellowship.
quaker.org.uk/our-work/peace - Quaker Peace & Disarmament.

anglicanpeacemaker.org.uk - Anglican Pacifist Fellowship.
ncpo.org.uk - Network of Christian Peace Organisations.

DIARY

Every Wednesday: Vigil outside HM nuclear base Faslane, Scotland, north gate on Maidstone Rd, near Helensburgh 4pm. banthebomb.org
 As Peacelinks went to press this was only for people living at Faslane Peace Camp. They were isolating due to the outbreak of Covid-19.

Every Wednesday: Women in Black vigil, 7pm Edith Cavell statue, St.Martin's Place, London WC2, <http://london.womeninblack.org/>

January ??: Peace and Race webinar - see page 3.

January 22: UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons comes into force. Countries who have ratified it (not the UK) are bound by it. The Network of Christian Peace Organisations will be hosting an internet celebration service at 11.30 am.

February 26: Ash Wednesday witness at MoD. <http://paxchristi.org.uk>

March 8: International Women's Day

April 22: Earth Day

April 26 : Chernobyl Day

May 24: International Women's Day for Disarmament



I enclose a donation in support of the Fellowship's work (General Funds)

[] (please write) £.....

I enclose a donation in support of the International Peacemakers' Fund

[] (please write) £.....

Total value of cheque enclosed: £.....

Make Your Gift Go Further: 25p more to FoR for every £1 at no extra cost to you.

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference. FoR is charity number 207822.

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I would like:

- [] to update my contact details
- [] to receive our short regular email newsletter
- [] to receive information about becoming a member of the Fellowship of Reconciliation
- [] information about the International Peacemakers' Fund
- [] to receive a direct debit form so I can give regularly to support the Fellowship

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode _____

Email _____

Telephone _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Please return this form to
 Fellowship of Reconciliation:
FREEPOST PEACEMAKER FPN 3264
 19 Paradise Street, Oxford, OX1 1LD