

# Update

May 2019

**Northern Friends Peace Board** NFPB, Victoria Hall, Knowsley Street, Bolton BL1 2AS  
[nfpb@gn.apc.org](mailto:nfpb@gn.apc.org) 01204 382330 <http://nfpb.org.uk> Charity SC 024632

## Focus on nuclear weapons

Nuclear weapons have rarely been off our agenda, over the years, with construction and basing of Trident submarines taking place in North West England and in West Scotland respectively. A new NFPB working group is seeking to support Quaker action, at a time which is clearly particularly dangerous. The group is hoping to raise awareness of and action on a number of aspects, amongst them being:

- The need for international action for nuclear disarmament and arms control to be taken seriously. As we write, preparatory work is underway at the United Nations for a review in 2020 of the Non Proliferation Treaty. This is against a backdrop of the US and Russia having decided to withdraw from the INF (Intermediate Nuclear Forces) Treaty on the one hand and the positive potential of the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. (see <http://ncpo.org.uk/nuclear-weapon-ban-treaty> )
- The transport of nuclear warheads along the roads of the United Kingdom, between Burghfield in the South East and Coulport in West Scotland. See- <https://www.nukewatch.org.uk>



- Continued witness and action in relation to the basing of Trident Nuclear Weapons in Scotland. For Scottish CND's website, go to: <http://www.banthebomb.org> .

Friends in Scotland hold Meetings for Worship at the Faslane nuclear submarine base at different times of the year. These take place from 11am on the following Sundays: 19<sup>th</sup> May, 16<sup>th</sup> June, 29<sup>th</sup> September, 10<sup>th</sup> November. Contact the NFPB office for more details (see above)

To take forward these concerns, we are now involved in the UK networking meetings of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), the most

recent of which was in York. We have also made a submission to a House of Lords' select committee inquiry and signed up to a new European Nuclear Disarmament Statement (see <http://bit.ly/2Vogtjc> ). We are hoping to offer workshops to Friends and others to help build capacity for further lobbying and awareness-raising. We will be running an interest-group meeting on these issues at Britain Yearly Meeting, Saturday lunchtime.

## Arms trade witness

NFPB members from different parts of Greater

Manchester supported a vigil in March at the site of MBDA, the missile manufacturer located near Bolton. It took place around the time of the 4<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of the bombing campaign by Saudi Arabia and its allies against Yemen. In it's press release, organising group Bolton CND/Stop the War called "*for a ban on all arms sales to Saudi Arabia and a change of industrial strategy by the UK Government, so that in future the skills and talents of our workforce can be redeployed from making weapons to kill and maim to making useful and constructive products.*"

Meanwhile, a good number of Friends around the North are becoming actively involved in preparation for the Quaker witness at the DSEI arms fair in London in September. See <https://rootsofresistance.org.uk>



## Round-up of peace-related news items

The NFPB office is now producing a collection of web-links every few weeks, covering a wide range of news and information on current issues connected with NFPB concerns. Some of these are the kind of thing we have been routinely sharing via social media. Since not all Friends use that, this alternative may be of interest. **If you would like to be added to our new Peace Round-up email list, please contact us at [nfpb@gn.apc.org](mailto:nfpb@gn.apc.org)**

## NFPB meeting in Liverpool



Friends gathered in Liverpool at the beginning of March. With some new members joining us for the first time, space was given on the agenda for discussion about the role of Area Meeting Representatives and about the nature of NFPB and how that might be strengthened. Friends who have been involved for a number of years talked about the value of Board meetings as places for exchanging information and ideas on a range of peace concerns and activities. On top of this, the inspiration and encouragement gained from meeting and worshipping with others with similar concerns was appreciated.

With each Area Meeting operating slightly differently, there is no single approach to the rep's role that will work for all, in terms of being a channel of communication. Speaking with and to Friends directly, reporting in local and Area newsletters and passing on specific information were all mentioned. Friends shared ideas for how we might do things differently to further improve the way in which NFPB can meet Friends' needs.

The meeting closed with worship-sharing in response to a discussion paper on what it means to be a Quaker in turbulent times such as those we are living through currently. A fuller report of the meeting, together with the discussion paper, are available at <http://www.nfpb.org.uk/news/2019-03-7/positive-peace-action-turbulent-times>

NFPB next meets in Carlisle, on 15 June and in Edinburgh on 28 September.

## Security – alternative approaches

A number of our readers will have come across the Rethinking Security initiative, which in its early days published the 'Ammerdown Invitation'. NFPB is now contributing to promoting the engagement of Rethinking Security, through its outreach group. A new leaflet asks

*'Given the urgency of current challenges, it is clear that a radically different approach is needed, in which security is seen as a common good, the basic needs of all people are met and planetary limits respected. It*

*would require a major shift in the UK's current approach to economics and international relations.'*

and goes on to identify a framework of just and sustainable economics, cooperative international relationships, and a number of positive steps to these ends.

NFPB is able to offer workshops for groups to explore these issues further. One such invitation came from one of our Scottish members, who was convening a seminar on 'Secure Scotland'. The Scottish political context has both limitations (the Scottish government is - not able to act on foreign and defence issues - but also opportunities – with a parliament and government that is more receptive to some of the alternative practical approaches to building security in society. The seminar, held at the Allanton Peace Sanctuary in mid-April, will be followed up by participants to take forward Secure Scotland as a new initiative and network.

Contact us (see above) if you would like a workshop on these issues. See also

<https://rethinkingsecurity.org.uk/resources>

## War School / Peace in Schools

A number of NFPB members are involved in arranging the showing of the film 'War School' in Meeting Houses and other venues. The film is "about the battle for the hearts and minds of Britain's children." and "War School's mosaic of sound and imagery evokes the story of the child soldier who becomes a peace campaigner, challenging the myth of Britain's benign role in world affairs and asking if perpetual war is really what we want for future generations?" See <https://www.war.school>

At the same time, concern about the need for peace education is growing. One of the newer initiatives is Cheshire Quakers' *Peace Pathways* project. See <http://peace-education.org.uk/peace-pathways>

## Banner Kits

We continue to put together these kits for Friends to assemble one-person banners. If you would like to order one, see our contact details overleaf.

## NFPB Workshops

Please get in touch if you would like us to run a workshop for your Meeting or other group, on themes such as 'Building Peace Together' and 'Engaging with the Media'.

