

## Talking Together



At this event, taking place in Manchester in July, more than 40 people came together to learn more about dialogue, each having the chance to be part of two different workshops. Much of the potential of dialogue in society has still to be realised, concluded a report from Lisa Cumming and Ute Kelly from Bradford's department for Peace Studies in 2010 .

A good range of initiatives have been developed over the last decade, some of which have contributed workshops at Northern Friends Peace Board events under the theme of Building Peace in Diverse Britain.

One of the organisations we invited on this occasion was *Talk for a Change* who have recently published findings that in some way take up the baton from the earlier report from Cummings and Kelly. In '*We need to talk about....*', they ask "Can discussing controversial issues strengthen community relations?" That dialogue is not just a superficial exercise in problem-solving can be usefully summarised by these couple of sentences from the report:

*"Perhaps our deeper purpose is to help people to open their hearts and minds to hearing different and oppositional ideas and beliefs, and to see things from*

*another's point of view. We aim to allow a little air and light into a discussion, to be prepared for confusion and strong feelings, and to give time for people to find their way towards change."*

Raj Bari and Jo Broadwood from *Talk for a Change* led a workshop that opened up discussion around some of these ideas, as well as facilitating a simple exercise in developing a better understanding of a situation causing someone difficulty.

Justine Huxley, of St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace , brought a workshop that

explored the power of narrative in dialogue, inviting us each to undertake an exercise that began to shed light on our own personal stories. St Ethelburga's works particularly in an interfaith context and has done a lot of work on creating safe spaces for dialogue. A way of approaching difficult dialogue that Justine shared with the group was that of '*Disagreement Success*'. In the accompanying hand-out, we read:

*"If our response on encountering a difference which disturbs us (i.e. a threat) is to start by taking a side, we have taken the first step to allowing polarisation to lead us into conflict. An alternative strategy is to develop curiosity about the nature of the disagreement and about our own and our opponents' positions".*

The day was enriched by live music during our tasty vegetarian lunch, by the comfortable and bright surroundings of Manchester's Cross Street Unitarian Chapel and by the eagerness to share and to learn from workshop leaders, NFPB project volunteers and participants. Thank you to everyone involved.

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For further information and resources linked to our work on Building Peace in Diverse Britain, visit our website at: <http://nfpb.org.uk/projects/building-peace-diverse-britain>

# Learning about nonviolence

A number of Northern Friend Peace Board members were participants in the recently-completed one-year course run by Turning the Tide. The programme, part of the work of Quaker Peace & Social Witness, works with Quakers and nonviolent activist groups to advance the understanding of active nonviolence and its use for positive social change.



The course – Nonviolence for a Change - took place in Huddersfield from September 2011, building on the experience of running two similar courses in London. There was a core group of 14 who were part of all the workshops, whilst 49 other people participated in one or more specific workshops rather than the whole course. Turning the Tide has had plenty of positive feedback and will be doing a more detailed evaluation of the model of working of the autumn.

Phoebe Spence, one of the NFPB members involved writes: “We were excited that Turning the Tide had come north; we could learn and develop our skills and activism together as well as make new friends and contacts. I particularly appreciated the opportunity to “grow” – to try things out in a supportive group, to have a chance to try working with others, to facilitate, plan and reflect together. The weekends were particularly beneficial to be able to develop the themes, enabling deep exploration together. The Huddersfield crew were marvellous hosts – wonderful food, they put a lot of effort in – thank you all!”

Huddersfield Friends also hosted George Lakey, visiting the UK from America over the summer. His work on developing training and practice for nonviolent activism from the 1960s prepared the ground for the kind of work that Turning the Tide currently undertakes. Phoebe Spence recalls as a young Friend, hearing George Lakey speak at Jordans Meeting House in Buckinghamshire in 1970, and believes that earlier encounter really did have an influence on her. Cathy Holman from York, reflecting on George’s 2012 contribution says;

*‘The thing that stands out for me from George’s talk was the humour and positive attitude about a belief in the power of nonviolent action. When asked how he keeps so upbeat he shared that he does not “show in negativity” and keeps away from people who can only complain, as complaining is a symptom of disempowerment. He talked about feeling sad about what is happening to the planet and its people but reminded us that we are not powerless; “we can all shine light on evil”. I left to go back to work feeling inspired and refreshed.’*

## Contact details for Turning the Tide:

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Some of George Lakey’s current writing can be found at:  
<http://wagingnonviolence.org/author/georgelakey>

## Quakers in York - Talking of Peace

### Tuesday Evening Peace Talks

followed by questions and discussion

#### October 2nd: “Iran: problems and possibilities”

Haleh Afshar, politics professor, Muslim feminist, life peer

#### October 16th: “The United Nations: its relevance today”

Bruce Kent, political activist, vice president of CND

#### October 30th: “Rebuilding societies after wars” Claire Smith,

lecturer in Post-War Recovery Studies, University of York

#### **Bootham School, York, Main Hall 7.30 – 9.00pm**

Entrance to school car park via Portland Street (off Gillygate)

For more details: Joyce Pickard, 01904 621179

or e-mail: [york.friargate.quakers@gmail.com](mailto:york.friargate.quakers@gmail.com)

## NFPB at Menwith Hill

NFPB Co-ordinator, Philip Austin, was amongst the people invited to speak at the annual demonstration for ‘Independence from America’, at Menwith Hill on 4 July, organised by the Campaign for the Accountability of American Bases. He described US Ballistic Missile Defence – with which Menwith Hill and Fylingdales bases in North Yorkshire are both linked - as dangerous and offensive; we should be addressing climate change, economic injustice and human rights and diverting intellectual and economic resources to those ends if we want real security.

## Drones - unmanned aerial vehicles

Earlier this year, NFPB wrote to Defence Secretary Philip Hammond on this issue. Here is part of the text of that letter:

*We have grave concerns about the justification for and legality of UAV use against people in Pakistan in particular. The apparent ease with which they can be deployed across borders over countries where this country is not engaged in armed conflict on the ground makes it seem more likely that conflict spreads.*

*The fact that the aircraft can be deployed and used for attacks with no risk to the lives of the military body deploying them, and at lower financial cost than conventional aircraft, inevitably lowers the threshold for considering strikes against suspected enemy targets.*

*We feel that there has been insufficient public awareness of and debate about this new form of warfare. We know that there are concerns amongst other Members of Parliament and hope that fuller information about the use to which the UK has already made of UAVs be made available to them and to the wider public. With so much of how these systems operate being inevitably out of view of even many in the military, it seems particularly important that our democratic structures be used to provide some element of accountability and scrutiny.*

### Further Information:

**For comment, analysis and news about drones:**

<http://dronewarsuk.wordpress.com/>

**Drones campaigning information:**

<http://dronecampaignnetwork.wordpress.com/>  
(including details of week of action, 6-13 October)

**For information and campaigning news about US bases in the UK**

<http://www.caab.org.uk> (Campaign for the Accountability of American Bases). Visit the CAAB website for further details of .... **Demonstration** at Menwith Hill: FACELESS FACE OF MILITARY DRONES - 9 October at NSA Menwith Hill

**Forthcoming Meetings for Worship at bases**

- ◆ At Menwith Hill, 6 October and 1 December, 2.00-3.00pm
- ◆ At Fylingdales, 3 November, 6 January, 12.00-1.00pm
- ◆ At Faslane, 14 October, 11 November

## Meeting for Worship Outside RAF Waddington\*

Don Sutherland, former Lincolnshire representative on Northern Friends Peace Board, organized a Meeting for Worship outside the gates at RAF Waddington on Sunday 5 August 2012.

The previous week Don and two other Lincoln Friends met with Squadron Leader Hayton. This was a positive meeting and resulted in an email from the Squadron Leader saying: '...I feel that we both got something productive from the meeting. I hope you feel the same way and accept the RAF's extended hand of friendship & assistance despite our many differing views.'

The Meeting for Worship went ahead and 30 of us gathered under a tree near the gates for shelter (it rained!). There was a police presence both inside and outside the gates, but they remained discreetly in the background. Don set up a small table with a vase of flowers and Quaker Faith & Practice and a Bible. People had travelled from as far as Huddersfield and Wakefield for the Meeting, and a third of the attendees were from Lincolnshire. We stood or sat in a circle on folding chairs and plastic bags. People were asked to respect the simplicity of the event as a Meeting for Worship and not to unfurl banners.

We acknowledged the actions taken at the base that we cannot condone, but also the humanity and that of God in all those working at the base and their families. We held a normal, silent, hour-long Meeting for Worship with ministry, followed by nearly-ministry and an appreciation of worshipping outdoors. We agreed we would hold other meetings in the future. After the meeting a member of the chaplaincy team at RAF Waddington introduced himself – he had joined our worship and wished to come again. We went away slowly, after flasks of tea and biscuits were shared standing by cars, feeling a sense of God working in us, and light and peace.

*Anne de Gruchy*

**\* This base in Lincolnshire is to be the site for the remote control of military drones.**

## 'Defence Alternatives: Human Security and the Small Nation Contribution'

*Cathy Holman attended this 'Scotland's For Peace' event on behalf of NFPB. It was held in the Scottish parliament building in March. She reports:*

The meeting was organised to "rethink what 'Defence' policy should be about and to shift from aggressive expeditionary military action and nuclear weapons to a Human Security policy" and then to consider what this would mean for Scotland if they were an independent nation.

Speakers included academics, political representatives and activists. The discussion focused around defence issues being stuck in a time warp. It became clear that there needs to be a public debate around this traditional conception of protection against a state attacking a state. Cyber attack and terrorism are the top threats. To see where the battles are in the contemporary world we need to look at big corporate power; it is about status and politics rather than defence. In order to move forward there was a belief that we need to change the nature of the debate to "human security" and look at what non-aggressive defence in Scotland

might look like? Trident was identified as a real threat to Scottish security; it is illegal, and an environmental disaster waiting to happen. The legality of Trident needs to be debated.

The discussion looked at how Scotland is proud of its military and it needs to develop a strategy which allows Scotland to be proud of the military as peace-keepers and peace makers. The idea of Scotland having an International peace-making college was explored where non violent resistance can be nurtured and the creative passion of the Scottish people can be utilised. Most of all it was clear that the debates had in this room at the Scottish parliament need to be public and Scotland's for Peace need a strategy to get it into the public domain.

*- A longer paper detailing speaker's contributions is available by contacting Cathy Holman at [cathyholman@talktalk.net](mailto:cathyholman@talktalk.net) or from our website at [http://nfpb.org.uk/def\\_alt](http://nfpb.org.uk/def_alt)*

*- Resources linked to the wide issues of Sustainable Security are on our website at: <http://nfpb.org.uk/projects/promoting-sustainable-security>*

## Website redesign

Northern Friends Peace Board's website up until recently has evolved gradually, since the first basic website was created for the organisation in the late 1990s. This year we have launched a new website, with design work from Lois Iredale in Huddersfield and expertise from Mark Neilsen in Sheffield. We hope this website will meet our needs and the needs of our supporters and visitors. View it at:

**<http://nfpb.org.uk>**. (NB: this is new web address.)

If you have links from your website to ours, please update this. Thank you.

## Email list - Peace Link North

We have a simple Yahoo email and Attenders to share news and information on peace-related concerns. If you would like to be added to this, send your details to NFPB's Co-ordinator, Philip Austin, at: [nfpb@gn.apc.org](mailto:nfpb@gn.apc.org).



## Peace History conference

In 2013 NFPB marks its centenary with a range of resources and activities. In the meantime there will be a conference this November looking at peace history from a distinctive Northern perspective. It is organised by the Movement for the Abolition of War with a range of Northern peace organisations, including NFPB. Details as follows:

### **From Local to Global - the north's role in peace and co-operation**

*9 November at Manchester Meeting House, Mount Street  
& Saturday 10 November, People's History Museum*

Download a flyer and booking form from here: <http://goo.gl/lGyKu>

Or ask for a copy from the NFPB office

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Is published by  
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Charity SC 024632