

# THE Anglican PEACEMAKER

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We are living in disturbing times when all of us involved in peace activism and inspired to make a better world must be anxious about the future our children will inherit.

Universal moral and ethical principles tested over long periods of time in numerous cultures provide a compass for personal, national and international peace. They are now being thrown to the wind by two of the most powerful men in the world. The fabric of global relations is being torn.

Especially worrying is 'America first', Donald Trump's isolationist policy when Vladimir Putin is posing an increasing military threat to Western Europe. This begs a question: to what extent is Mr Putin (the enemy) and Trump (the ally) a bogus dichotomy?

The unfolding crisis forms the theme of this issue of TAP. How should APF and the wider anti-war movement respond to such disruption? Some parallels exist with the emergence of Nazi Germany in the 1930s, which continue to raise the challenge of an absolute evil. But there are dangers in looking too long at the rear-view mirror when the future is coming at us at ever increasing speed.

Our opening article sets out the main issues involved. Book Look and Film Look give some elaboration of the ideas. In Book Look we have tended to refer to American writers to provide a rather different perspective on what is happening in Europe. Special reference is given to theatre as imagination versus tyranny.

I cannot say that I know you well  
But you can't lie to me with all the books that you sell  
I'm not trying to follow you to the end of the world  
I'm just trying to leave something behind.

This whole world is a foreign land  
We swallow the moon but we don't know our own hand  
We're running with the case but we ain't got the gold  
And we're trying to leave something behind.

My friends I believe we are at the wrong fight  
And I cannot read what I did not write  
I've been to His house, but the master is gone  
But I'd like to leave something behind

Oh wisdom is lost in the trees somewhere  
You're not going to find it in some mental grey hair  
It's locked up from those who hurry ahead  
And its time to leave something behind.

Lyrics from the song 'To leave something behind' by Sean Rowe



Friedrich Nietzsche wrote in *Beyond good and evil* that 'Whoever fights with monsters should see to it that in the process he does not himself become a monster'.

'With what's going on politically, art and music have to express the sense of horror, sadness and angst.' Words of the singer-songwriter, Rufus Wainwright in an *Observer* article where he bemoans the state of much mainstream music.

'War is not an aberration, but deeply woven into our societies.' Margaret MacMillan, historian and this year's Reith lecturer.

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## WHAT TO DO ABOUT RUSSIA

This is an abridged version of an article by Tony Kempster which is given in full on the APF website

Two powerful world leaders are flouting the universal moral and ethical principles that provide a compass for peace. And they are doing so with a disregard to international stability and the possibility of war. This article focuses on the aims and ambitions of Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin, and considers the implications for the anti-war movement.

At the outset, we should remember that Mr Trump might well be a temporary aberration of US politics. David Runciman (section on page 11), for one, believes that American democracy is 'neither cowed nor inattentive enough to allow him to stay in office beyond 2025 and worm himself into its institutions. And he is very unlikely to last that long.'

## THE DOUBLE WHAMMY OF TRUMP AND PUTIN

Mr Putin or a Putin mk2, on the other hand, is likely to rule Russia for years to come. On the wider global stage, prophets are already referring to the 'politics of eternity', the establishment of authoritarian rule as a replacement for democracy, once pronounced the 'end of history'. Focusing then on Mr Putin, this article is a challenge to

those who believe that the kind of conflicts he might foster can be addressed effectively by non-violent means alone. As peacemakers well know, the dilemma causing most soul searching is the point at which real evil will prevail if armed force is not used. This begs a question about the nature of Mr Putin's aims and methods.

### A parallel with the rise of fascism in the 1930s?

We will go on to examine this but first a reflection on the shortcomings of hindsight.

In 1989 APF published *What to do about Hitler: a pacifist symposium*. The booklet was a compilation of articles by members most of whom held a pacifist conviction and had to face the challenge of compulsory military service in WW2.

As a statement of the belief that one should not personally participate in war, it is unquestionable. But some writers went on to assert that Hitler's evil ambitions would have been thwarted if Britain had adopted a more constructive nonviolent international policy in the 1920s and 30s. And further that the Holocaust was a product of war and would not have happened because Hitler's preferred policy was to expel the Jews. But then it is easy to vindicate an ideology by overlooking other feasible outcomes.

As a different outcome, we might consider *The plot against America* by Philip Roth. What if the celebrity aviator Charles Lindbergh (who urged his country to back Hitler) had been elected president? Roth goes back to the 1940s to imagine an America that never

entered WW2, signed a non-aggression pact with Germany and began persecuting Jews. This is not so improbable in the wake of 9/11 and even more resonant in the era of Donald Trump.

Then more realistically,

what if the war had been delayed and Germany had been first to build an

atomic bomb as it might easily have done (see Nucleus in Book Look). How then would non-Aryan humanity have fared?

And here is the rub. Those with evil intentions and nuclear weapons hold great power as we see, for example, in the current negotiations with Kim Jong-un. Absolute pacifism is a risky strategy and the consequences should be accounted in such circumstances.

Mr Putin boasts about his modernised nuclear arsenal and seems to have few qualms and speaks openly about using nuclear weapons as instruments of international policy. And we may recall that Mr Trump, as a presidential candidate in 2016, repeatedly asserted his unwillingness to take nuclear first-use threats 'off the table' in any conflict.

### The character and aims of Vladimir Putin

It is clear that Mr Putin wishes to remain in power supported by a cadre of colleagues who depend on him for their wealth and position. The tool for this is ultra-nationalism aimed at disrupting world order and providing a political climate at home that accedes to his rule. The policy has evolved during his terms of office and is no longer internationalist but retaliatory – effectively war by other means. Like the emergence of fascist Germany in the 1930s, it is a defining issue of the times.

Another worrying issue is the infatuation of leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church with nationalistic militarism. They are helping to construct a religious narrative that works in support of Mr Putin by telling the stories of powerful men who had changed Russia's destiny.

They have also been useful in spreading the ideas that the moral values in the West have become corrupted whereas the Russian can be seen as morally purer. Professor Cyril Hovorun remarked on these issues in March in a recent CCADD meeting and said such action is similar to the way France had been portrayed in Prussia before 1914.

In May, Andrew Parker, director-general of the British Security Service gave a strong condemnation of Russia's 'flagrant breaches' of international law in a rare public attack on a foreign power. His speech to European security chiefs referred to a series of alarming aggressive moves, from the annexation of Crimea to the hacking of the Democratic Party to influence the US election.

Further, the indiscriminate use of the novichok nerve agent has now provided the Western alliance with a momentary sense of purpose with Russian culpability resting more on intuition and precedent than non-incontestable facts.

### Donald Trump's election and second-order effects

Mr Putin's influence runs wide and deep and his cyber-support to Mr Trump's election campaign probably willed us a president with a high-handed attitude to international affairs.

The most serious issue is the US withdrawal from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal and the imposition of 'the highest level of economic sanctions' against Tehran. This is a high-stakes move that broke from his European allies, something in which Mr Putin, of course, has a particular interest. Mr Trump has, thus, caused the US to violate its commitment to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). This will have consequences beyond Iran resuming its quest for the bomb. Perceptions that the US may not honour agreements could tempt more countries to go nuclear and jeopardise other arms control deals – notably the last surviving nuclear treaties between the US and Russia. More worryingly, US allies that haven't yet developed nuclear weapons because of promised protection under the US nuclear umbrella may reconsider.

It is, thus, possible that the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty may become past history and we find ourselves back in the 1930s, this time with several regional races to gain nuclear supremacy.

### Mr Putin and the politics of the British far left

There is evidence that Russian computer trolls put out a mass of messages supporting Jeremy Corbyn during the 2017 General Election. Whether this had any significant impact is uncertain, but it does raise the question why Mr Putin would like to see a Corbyn-led government in power. It also rebuts the lie of those in the West who want to divert others on the matter of Russian culpability for aggressive interference in other countries' politics.

It may be that Mr Putin sees the far left as a potential ally because it provides tacit approval and uncritical support for his policies. This is certainly the line of Stop the War Coalition, which has remained



# LAY DOWN OUR SWORDS AND SHIELDS

FROM THE CHAIRPERSON – SUE CLAYDON

The first part of 2018 has seen many things happening – both positive and just plain scary.

In February, Archbishop Justin told a fringe meeting at Synod that he wanted a debate on nuclear weapons at the next Synod. He went on to tell us that ‘Just because an archbishop requests something does not mean it happens.’

**See page 5 for the latest developments.**

The Archbishop did say the issue was ‘crucial’ and hopes a Synod debate might start a national debate, which is currently lacking. When the nuclear weapons – debate takes place, APF will work with CCND to provide information for an informed debate. If anyone has particular interest in this area, please contact me. The UK, Australian and other governments continue to ignore the recent UN Treaty to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons so there is much work to be done. The recent reneging by the United States on the Iran agreement and talk from the Korean peninsula of a ‘nuclear showdown’ reminds us of how fragile the situation is.

The APF ‘Faith and Peace’ exhibition was in Ely Cathedral for all of February. During this time we asked visitors to tell us what they thought of it. Some of their comments included: ‘Thanks to all who worked to produce this simple but excellent exhibit. The issue of Peace is of profound importance.’ ‘Very thought provoking with beautiful, meaningful art and needlework.’ ‘Thank you for sharing these thoughts and exhibits. Gives hope for the future.’ and ‘Thank you for a marvelous exhibition explaining peace perspectives from three monotheistic faiths. May we all work together for peace.’

We are now looking for venues to exhibit the exhibition in 2019. If your cathedral

Tilly Martin has been appointed APF Co-ordinator. She works on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Contact details are on page 8.

or similar place could host it, please contact the APF Office.

APF is now a full Partner in the Community of the Cross of Nails (CCN), Coventry Cathedral. Each Partner receives a ‘Cross of Nails’ and the APF one was blessed by the Dean in the Cathedral on the 8 April and then presented during a service at the joint conference later in April. Alice Farnhill, Project Officer at CCN and member of the Reconciliation Team, explained the history of the Community and how it now has over 200 members based in 45 countries. There are also over 40 International Cross of Nails Schools (ICONS). All members adhere to the three guiding principles of CCN: Healing the wounds of history; Learning to live with difference and celebrate diversity; and Building a culture of peace. We are guided by the words ‘Father Forgive’.

The service at the joint conference was conducted by The Revd Dr Clive Barrett and included prayers written by APF members. Alice presented The APF Cross to our Trustee, Dr. Meriel Pipkin,



Alice Farnhill (left) presents the cross to Meriel Pipkin.

on behalf of the Fellowship. The service ended with the Litany of Reconciliation. This was written by Canon Joseph Poole in 1958 but sixty years on is still so relevant. Today the Litany is prayed regularly by CCN members around the world, and by many others on an occasional basis. While framed around the seven deadly sins, it serves as a reminder that when we pray about the problems of the world around us, we need to begin by acknowledging the roots of

those problems in our own hearts.

I include it here for your use:

*All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.*

The hatred which divides nation from nation, race from race, class from class,  
FATHER FORGIVE

The covetous desires of people and nations to possess what is not their own,  
FATHER FORGIVE

The greed which exploits the work of human hands and lays waste the earth,  
FATHER FORGIVE

Our envy of the welfare and happiness of others,  
FATHER FORGIVE

Our indifference to the plight of the imprisoned, the homeless, the refugee,  
FATHER FORGIVE

The lust which dishonours the bodies of men, women and children,  
FATHER FORGIVE

The pride which leads us to trust in ourselves and not in God,  
FATHER FORGIVE

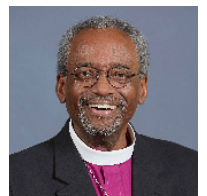
*Be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you*

In May, the media seemed very taken with the preaching style of Bishop Michael Curry. In his talk, he mentioned the ‘Balm in Gilead’ but also that if the world had ‘love’ we would be able to ‘Lay down our swords and shields by the riverside and study war no more’. It is noticeable that this point is not emphasised in any report I have read. We should share his enthusiasm in our work for that day of ‘no more war’.

While I am writing, APF is still looking for a young person to sponsor for the Community of the Cross of Nails Youth Gathering. If you know someone who could attend, the details are pasted here.

The CCN International Youth Gathering, for around 40 young people aged 18–25 from around the world, will take place from Sunday 29th July to Friday 3rd August 2018.

<http://www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/ccn/gatherings2018/>





## REPORTS AND ACTIVITIES

### EDITOR'S NOTE OPENING

This will be my last TAP as editor, compiler and sometime writer. Everything ends and it is time for others to become more closely involved, especially with the direction of the publication. I will continue to write articles and assist as appropriate.

I have enjoyed the job particularly the keeping abreast and researching war and peace topics. It is a fascinating field that has also fed my interest in the related arts, music and film.

I am grateful to all the readers who have written and phoned me about copy and specially those who have taken issue with what I have written, mostly in a very generous way. It is good for the soul to be challenged especially on personal views.

The newsletter aims to ask questions – to create a dialogue and debate. Over the course of time, as conditions and priorities change, strategies which once seemed appropriate become obsolete and even problematic. APF needs an intuitive understanding of religious faith in the world to allow the organisation to develop and grow. This is particularly so because, like the hedgehog, we tend to be constrained in what we say by knowing 'just one thing'. The fox flourishes because he knows many things and can adjust better to circumstances.

I have also tended to promote a particular view about the future of the organisation – shared now, I must say, by most of APF's officers and younger members. I do not believe the fellowship can survive unless it distances itself from the word 'pacifist', which carries a lot of historical baggage and is easily misunderstood. A questionnaire survey is currently underway to examine the public perception of our pacifist name and objectives as part of the development of a strategic plan. I hope all readers will contribute to this. (See page 8 and the insert with this issue of TAP.)

May I also take this opportunity to say how impressed I am with the stalwarts who run the organisation, with its burdens of history and the limitations they create.

I tend to be a political pessimist. I think our world is in very scary times and we

have to find ways of looking squarely at it. Some people don't care, some don't know and some don't care because they do not know what is going on. APF's role is to draw out the key issues and encourage Christians to 'take up their cross' (in the true meaning of this phrase) to make the world a better place.

I have a background in agriculture and livestock breeding and I think more these days about my roots in farming. May I recommend a book by **Philip Britts** entitled 'Water at the roots: poems and insights of a visionary farmer' 2018, Plough Publishing (edited by Jennifer Harries).

Tony Kempster

An activist, pastor, and mystic, **Philip Britts** (1917-1949) has been called the British Wendell Berry. Born in 1917 in Devon, he became a pacifist and joined the Bruderhof soon after being given unconditional exemption as a conscientious objection status in WW2. The Bruderhof had been expelled from Germany. He then went with Bruderhof to Paraguay to root himself in faith, to dedicate himself to building community to restore the land he farmed, and to use his gift with words to turn people from their madness – aims speaking forcibly into our time. In an age still wracked by racism, nationalism, materialism and ecological devastation, the life he chose and the poetry he composed remain a prophetic challenge. He died of a tropical illness at the age of thirty-one.

### ANNUAL CONFERENCE

#### LETTING IN THE LIGHT

Members of APF along with those from the Methodist Peace Fellowship, Baptist Peace Fellowship, URC Peace Fellowship and the Fellowship of Reconciliation took part in the second joint annual conference in April. The conference focused on equipping attendees with positive steps to take for peace in our communities – local, national and international.

Held at Hinsley Hall, Leeds, the keynote speaker, Kim Leadbeater, really let in a great beam of light sharing what has been done in memory of her sister, Jo Cox, MP. Jo was murdered in 2016. The foundation set up in her name keeps her ideals going. It supports Women in Public Life, Protecting Civilians in conflict areas (White Hats in Syria) and works on Loneliness in communities in the UK.

Kim was joined by the local Anglican priest in Batley, The Revd. Mark Upleby and Iman Irfan Soni. They have all been working together to promote community cohesion, especially with young people.

The previous evening, The Revd Barbara Calvert shared her recent visit to Northern Ireland. Some of her photos were a reminder that while 'peace' has prevailed in NI for a while, the scars of division remain and that reconciliation continues daily. Barbara mentioned a number of places that continue the healing process for communities, including the East Belfast Mission, Glanarth Monastery, the Corrymeela Community and The Junction in Derry.

A number of workshops offered opportunities to look at aspects of peace activities, as follows.

Stu Thompson from Oasis Youthwork, looked at violence in communities. This violence, such as knife crime, has a number of causes and takes a big toll on families, communities and public services (NHS, Police, prisons, schools).

Power and Privilege was the title of a workshop presented by Marvina Newton, CEO Angel of Youths. Marvina's focus was on using what we already have to change the world around us. She started



Marvina Newton: Power and Privilege

by introducing ideas surrounding power and privilege. Firstly, privilege is nothing to do with what anyone has or hasn't done. However, privilege can be used to give power to others. This means that those with privilege can invite someone with less influence to come alongside them. Then those whose voices are rarely heard are now in a position to speak to power, thanks to someone else using their privilege to invite them forwards.



Iman Irfan Soni, Kim Leadbeater and The Revd Mark Upleby

'The transforming power of apology' was a workshop by John Bond, Initiatives of Change. He spoke about the Lebanese peacemaker Assaad Chaftari who, during Lebanon's 15-year civil war, was a senior commander with the Christian militias, responsible for hundreds of deaths. Then his eyes were opened to the true meaning of his Christian faith, and he became ashamed of what he had done in the name of Christ. He wrote a public apology in the Lebanese media, and since then has devoted himself to healing the wounds of war. Gradually others, Muslim and Christian, have joined him, and they have formed an organisation, Fighters for Peace.

John went on to speak about the Sorry Day campaign in Australia. This enlisted a million Australians in 1998, despite Government hostility, in apologising to the Aboriginal community for cruel past policies, particularly the policy of removing Aboriginal children from their families and putting them into white institutions in order to assimilate them into white Australia. The campaign launched a Journey of Healing, which offered the Australian community opportunities to help heal the wounds resulting from the policies. Gradually official attitudes and in 2007 led to an agreed apology that was unanimous across the Parliament,

A creative workshop lead by Hilary Topp and Barbara Calvert focussed on the 'Collateral Damage' project, which is to honour the victims of wars during and since World War One. The project involves making unique textile white poppies, each honouring a particular victim or victims of war. For more information go to <http://ppu.org.uk/collateral-damage/index.html>

During 'Finding a meeting place for reconciliation', Alice Farnhill, Community of the Cross of Nails, used

the words of John Paul Lederach, a Mennonite preacher, to get us to think about what needs to be in place for reconciliation to take place. Each of the words Truth, Mercy, Justice and Peace from Psalm 85 (depending on translation) were given to small groups who were asked to say why this word was the most important in conflict for things to move forward.

The workshop on Nonviolent

Communication drew on themes relating to how we respond to people if they are saying things that are hard to hear or we are in conflict with them.

### THE NUCLEAR WEAPONS BAN TREATY AND MOTION ON 7 JULY AT THE GENERAL SYNOD

APF, Christian CND and other organisations have been using various channels to encourage the Church of England to call on the Government to take part in UN discussions on the nuclear weapons ban. The Synod has decided to debate this topic at its York meeting, and a fringe meeting with interested parties including APF will be held beforehand on that day (see Diary on page 8 for times).

The CofE has produced a detailed document on the history of the issue for the debate (available on the APF website). The motion, proposed by Bishop Stephen Cottrell is as follows.

That this Synod, mindful that a faithful commemoration of the centenary of the 1918 Armistice must commit the Church afresh to peace building; and conscious that nuclear weapons, through their indiscriminate and destructive potential, present a distinct category of weaponry that requires Christians to work tirelessly for their elimination across the world:

(a) Welcome the 2017 UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the clear signal it sends by a majority of UN Member States that nuclear weapons are both dangerous and unnecessary;

(b) Call on Her Majesty's Government to respond positively to the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons by reiterating publicly its obligations under Article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and its strategy for meeting them; and

### CELEBRATING ARMISTICE

APF's Remembrance Resources for 2018 will be available on the website from July onwards or contact Tilly at the APF office.

(c) Commit the Church of England to work with its Anglican Communion and ecumenical partners in addressing the regional and international security concerns which drive nations to possess and seek nuclear weapons and to work towards achieving a genuine peace through their elimination.

APF Secretary, The Revd David Mumford has written a response to this (also available on the APF website). The key point is as follows.

Whilst welcoming the resolution, APF considers that it does not go far enough. In the short term, the Church should call on the UK government to urgently develop and publish a transition plan so that the UK is ready to sign and ratify the treaty at the earliest opportunity. It should do this because nuclear war is wrong, because such a step would implement the commitments made under the non-proliferation treaty and because it would be a witness to kingdom values. In the longer term the church should promote gospel nonviolence and put time and resources into promoting nonviolent conflict resolution and alternatives to war. We pledge to continue to do our part to realise a world without nuclear weapons.

APF members are encouraged to write to their bishop and contact Synod members to apprise them of David's response. See Diary of events on page 8 for details of the Synod.

### THE WILSON/HINKES PEACE AWARD 2018

This Award was established by the Week of Prayer for World Peace (WPWP) to recognise significant contributions by individuals, organisations or projects in furthering peace, justice and reconciliation. The Award focuses on grassroots initiatives. It enables otherwise often untold stories to be told and honoured and seeks to inspire others. It is open to all, irrespective of nationality, ethnicity or faith.

Named in honour of The Revd Gordon Wilson and The Revd Sidney Hinkes, both former Chairs of the WPWP and APF, the Award is made annually. The Award, valued at £500, is this



# INTERNATIONAL PAGE

## 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF UN PEACEKEEPING

A report by APF chair, Sue Claydon

*On 25 May, UK armed forces and United Nations experts gathered to commemorate UN Peacekeeping Day. Taking place at the Cenotaph in London, wreaths were laid for the 3,471 peacekeepers that have lost their lives while deployed with the UN.*

*The annual event of remembrance, organised by the United Nations Association, accompanied by a day-long conference where UN practitioners, and military and government officials, met to discuss the content of peace operations reform, its political and bureaucratic prospects, and the role the UK can play in driving the process forward.*



Irish UN veterans – some of whom served in the Congo in 1960-61 – march to the Cenotaph.

How do you carry out ‘peacekeeping’ in places where there is no peace? This question was asked a number of times at the conference which looked back on how the work has evolved and the complexity it presents in 2018.

It was on 29 May 1948, that Count Folke Bernadotte, UN mediator, was assassinated in

Jerusalem. Since that time, 3,733 UN peacekeepers from 119 nations have lost their lives. UN peacekeeper fatalities in 2017 (129) were at their highest level since 1994. In that context the conference looked at what is being done to address ‘peacekeeping’ now.

The Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (HIPPO) was submitted to the Secretary General in 2015. This noted that, ‘there is evidence of a worrisome reversal of some of this trend [to successful resolution of conflicts] and a widely shared concern that changes in conflict may be outpacing the ability of UN peace operations to respond.’

There is a growing gap between what UN peace operations are being asked to do and what it is possible to deliver. This comes back to the question that is the title of this article.

The Canadian Deputy High Commissioner, Sarah Fountain Smith, speaking at the conference, raised the challenges to policy of children in armed conflict. She argued that the Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Recruitment of Child Soldiers should be applied in all UN Missions.

Ian Martin, former UN Special Representative gave the Folke Bernadotte Memorial Lecture. As a basis to avoid ‘overambitious missions’ he suggested that UN missions should be in two stages: a provisional mandate followed by a second detailed mandate once the situation had been evaluated on the ground. Further, non-military approaches must be fully utilised. The extent of protection of civilians, including often from their own government, must have top priority.

The issue of sexual exploitation is one that action has been taken on and criminal acts face criminal justice. There must be a refusal to see such exploitation as ‘collateral damage’.

Other points raised by panel speakers included: the need for more cooperation with regional organisations, such as the African Union; a better mix of contingencies is needed as the ‘Global South’ is the main provider; if a contingency is not up to standard then the offer should be refused; and only 5.5% of the UN budget is allocated to Peacekeeping.

The following summary from the HIPPO Report gives an outline of what needs to be done:

The Panel recommends that four essential shifts should underpin changes in mind-set and action to define UN peace operations for the future: These are listed in the full report available on [https://peaceoperationsreview.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/HIPPO\\_Report\\_1\\_June\\_2015.pdf](https://peaceoperationsreview.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/HIPPO_Report_1_June_2015.pdf)

I return to the question – How do you carry out ‘peacekeeping’ in places where there is no peace? This question and how to effectively answer it should be part of our work for a peaceful world.

## MAKING THE MURDER OF INTERNATIONAL JOURNALISTS A UN WAR CRIME

Based on *The Times* editorial, 4 May 2018

Journalists have become easy targets for killers across the globe. They are jailed for doing their job in Turkey, Egypt and Burma; they are muzzled by increasingly restrictive laws, held hostage by terror groups and monitored by nervous states. It is their cold-blooded murder, however, that is most chilling. According to media rights groups, 2,500 journalists have been killed since 1990.

This requires action and we should call for the UN to explicitly spell out that the deliberate killing of journalists in a conflict zone amounts to a war crime. Evidence should be gathered and the case should be presented as evidence for the prosecution at the International Criminal Court.

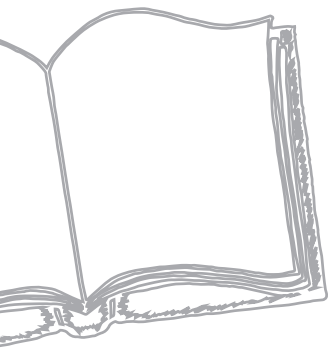


The family of the murdered *Sunday Times* correspondent Marie Colvin has shown one way of answering this threat. Documents presented to a US court by Colvin’s sister, Cathleen, made a powerful case that the reporter was targeted in an extrajudicial killing methodically planned by the regime of President Assad of Syria in 2012. Such information can yield the kind of gritty detail about the chain of command that would be needed to make a successful prosecution case.

Under international law the targeting of civilians is already a war crime. The same should apply to reporters. There is a reason that they are in the crosshairs of ugly dictators; they are feared. The law must reflect this special duty to record their brutalities. It should put regimes on notice that journalists cannot simply be eliminated.

See ‘Girls of the sun’ inspired by Marie Colvin in our Film Look (page 9).

# BOOK LOOK



**TIMOTHY SNYDER**  
(2018)

***The road to unfreedom: Russia, Europe, America***

Bodley Head

This is a new chronicle of the rise of authoritarianism.

With the end of the Cold War, the victory of liberal democracy seemed final. Observers declared the end of history, confident in a peaceful, globalized future. This faith was misplaced. Authoritarianism returned to Russia, as Putin found fascist ideas that could be used to justify rule by the wealthy. In the 2010s, it has spread from east to west, aided by Russian warfare in Ukraine and cyber war in Europe and the United States.

Russia found allies among nationalists, oligarchs, and radicals everywhere, and its drive to dissolve Western institutions, states, and values found resonance within the West itself. The rise of populism, the British vote against the EU, and the election of Donald Trump were all Russian goals, but their achievement reveals the vulnerability of Western societies. Snyder goes beyond the headlines to expose the true nature of the threat to democracy and law. To understand the challenge is to see, and perhaps renew, the fundamental political virtues offered by tradition and demanded by the future. By revealing the stark choices before us – between equality or oligarchy, individuality or totality, truth and falsehood – Snyder restores our understanding of the basis of our way of life, offering a way forward in a time of terrible uncertainty.

**MADELEINE ALBRIGHT** (2018)

***Fascism: a warning***

William Collins

Madeleine Albright draws on her own experiences as a child in war-

torn Europe and her distinguished career as a diplomat to show how fascism not only endured through the course of that century, but now presents a more virulent threat to international peace and justice than at any time since 1945.

The momentum towards democracy that swept the world when the Berlin Wall fell has gone into reverse. The US, which has historically championed the free world, is led by a president who exacerbates popular divisions and heaps scorn on democratic institutions. In many countries, economic, technological and cultural factors are weakening the political centre and empowering extremes of right and left.

Contemporary leaders such as Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong-un are employing many of the same tactics used by fascists in the 1920s.

Surprisingly, it was only in the late 1990s that the Episcopalian, Albright learnt she was Jewish, so thoroughly was she so insulated from the Holocaust that claimed her grandmother's life. Perhaps this is why she is so determined to spot the shoots of fascism, or at least authoritarianism that are sprouting again under Vladimir Putin, Viktor Orban, Recep Erdogan and, of course, the Donald.

**RORY CLEMENTS**  
(2018)

***Nucleus***

Zaffre

1939. England is partying like there is no tomorrow, gas masks are ready ... but the good times won't last. In Europe, the Nazis have invaded Czechoslovakia, and in Germany Jewish persecution is rife. Closer to home the IRA has embarked on a bombing campaign throughout Britain.

But the most far-reaching event of all goes largely unreported: in Germany, Otto Hahn has made the atomic bomb possible. German High Command fears

that Cambridge's Cavendish Laboratory could be close behind; they must discover its secrets before it is safe to go to war.

When one of the Cavendish's finer brains is murdered, Professor Tom Wilde is drawn into the investigation. He unveils a conspiracy in which the fate of the world rests on the discovery of a kidnapped child. Can Wilde discover the truth before it is too late?

**STEPHAN GREENBLATT** (2018)

***Tyrant: Shakespeare on power***

Bodley Head

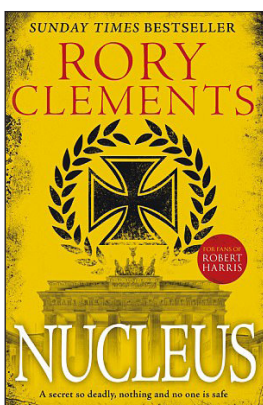
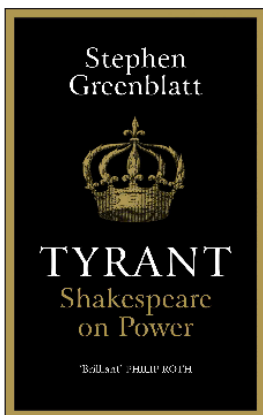
Tyrant is a kind of reverse new historicism. We see the lethal politics of Shakespeare's age through his plays, but we also see the politics of our own.

Although he does not mention Trump directly, Greenblatt comes clean in the acknowledgements that the book was inspired by his horror at the result of the 2016 US election. Is the US in the grip of a Shakespearian tyrant?

However, he does not want the book to be seen as just about Trump because, first, 'strongman' authoritarians are becoming alarmingly commonplace – Putin, Erdogan, Xi Jinping et al.

Once you have grown accustomed to the double vision demanded by the book, it becomes pure fun.

All would be tyrants need enablers, an entourage of yes-men ready to tell the necessary tale. So, in Richard III, he sees enablers who believe the liar, those who don't think he is as bad as he seems, those who know he is that bad, but thinks things will somehow carry on, those who collude while feeling frightened and impotent, those who cynically think they can gain advantage from the monster, and those who just tag along, picking up scraps for themselves. Survey the Trump cabinet and you can see them all.



# DIARY OF EVENTS, AND NOTICES

## LOCAL AND NATIONAL EVENTS 2018

**7 July** Event at the York General Synod. 12.45 CCND Fringe meeting on the Nuclear Weapon's debate (room D/L/036).

**8 July** 5.45 General Synod debate on the Ethics of Nuclear Weapons.

**29 July - 3 August** Community of Cross of Nails International Youth Gathering.

**6 August** Hiroshima Commemoration Day. 12.00, Tavistock Square.  
londonregioncnd@gmail.com, 0207 607 2302.

**15 September** International Peace Rally at Faslane Nuclear Weapons Base.

**23 September** Peace Sunday. <http://www.for.org.uk/peacesunday/>

**26 - 30 September** Community of Cross of Nails International Gathering.

**14 - 21 October** Week of Prayer for World Peace. National service: 14<sup>th</sup> October 2.30, Quaker Meeting House, High Wycombe.  
weekofprayerforworldpeace.com.

**27 October** APF AGM and Members' Day, Oxford. Details to be notified.

**3 November** Movement for the Abolition of War lecture at 2.00 and then the NCPO service at the Memorial to the Innocent Victims of War at the West Door of Westminster Abbey at 16:30

**11 November** 12.30 Act of Remembrance in Tavistock Square. 2.00 - 5.00 Peace Festival in Friends House, Euston Road. The slogan or motto for the whole day is: No more war - let's make peace happen.

## APF ONLINE

Website: [www.anglicanpeacemaker.org.uk](http://www.anglicanpeacemaker.org.uk)  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/anglicanpeacemaker](https://www.facebook.com/anglicanpeacemaker)  
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Blog: [www.anglicanpeacemaker.org.uk/peacemaker-posts/](http://www.anglicanpeacemaker.org.uk/peacemaker-posts/)

### HAVE YOUR SAY IN THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF APF

If you have not done so already, **please take a few minutes to complete our survey.**

You can do this by completing the survey included with your copy of TAP, or by visiting our website [www.apf.org.uk](http://www.apf.org.uk) and clicking on 'COMPLETE OUR SURVEY'. The survey closes on 15 July.

## WE HAVE UPDATED OUR PRIVACY POLICY

We are taking this opportunity to let you know that we have updated our Privacy Policy in order to comply with GDPR requirements. **You don't have to do anything. We will continue to send you TAP, the APF newsletter, unless we hear from you.**

If you would like to find out what personal information APF holds; or you would like to amend what APF holds, you can contact Tilly Martin at the APF office (as below).

You can read our updated Privacy Policy on the website: <http://www.anglicanpeacemaker.org.uk/legal/#pp>.

Or you can request a hard copy of the Policy by contacting the APF Office at the address above.

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*Disclaimer: This newsletter does not necessarily express the official views of APF but provides a place for people associated with APF to express their own personal views and opinions on issues relating to peacemaking and pacifism.*

If you would like to join the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship and are in agreement with the pledge:

**'We believe that as Christians we are called to follow the way of Jesus in loving our enemies and becoming peacemakers. We work to transform our Anglican Communion and the world to overcome those factors that lead to war within and between nations.'**

Members must be 18 or over and members of the Anglican Communion or Christians in communion with it. Then please (✓) box **one** in the form below.

If you are sympathetic to the view expressed in the pledge but feel unable to commit yourself to it, you may like to become an associate of the APF and receive the Fellowship's newsletter and notice of our various open events, then please (✓) box **two**.

Send your completed form to the Membership Secretary:- **Sue Gilmurray, 13 Danesway, Pinhoe, Exeter EX4 9ES.**

- ☐ **I am in agreement with the pledge and wish to become a member of the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship.**  
☐ **I wish to become an Associate of the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship.**

**Name and designation (Revd, Dr, Mr, Mrs etc):**

*please print clearly and give your Christian name first.*

**Address** .....

**Year of birth** ..... **Diocese** .....

I enclose a cheque for ..... as my first subscription (*makes cheque payable to the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship*)

Please ✓ if you are a UK-income tax payer and want your donation to be treated as a Gift Aid donation.  
APF can then reclaim income tax paid on the donation. ☐

Please ✓ if you want to make a regular monthly or annual subscription using a Standing Order ☐

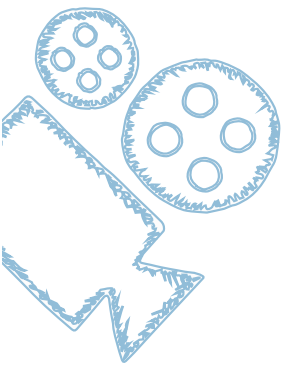
I heard of APF through ..... **Signed** ..... **Date** .....

APPLICATION FOR  
MEMBERSHIP



# FILM LOOK

## RECENT FILMS REVIEWED



### GIRLS OF THE SUN (2018)

Directed by Eva Hussan

The award-winning war correspondent Marie Colvin inspired this film which is one of the favourites to win the top prize at the Cannes Film Festival.

'Girls of the sun' tells the story of the female Kurdish fighters who took up arms against IS in Kurdistan. Its director, Eva Hussan describe the Sunday Times journalist who died on assignment in Homs in 2012 at the age of 56 as bigger than nature.

Hussan said that she had drawn inspiration for Ms Colvin's desire to 'give testimony' of human tragedy despite the risks to herself. (See the war correspondents article on our International page).

One of the main characters, Mathilde, a French journalist who embeds herself with a female battalion, is based on Colvin. Hussan said that it had been important to show how crucial journalism was in highlighting the truth.

Many of the battalion's members have seen members killed and have been kidnapped by IS soldiers and sold into sex slavery before escaping and taking up arms.

'Girls of the sun' is due to be followed later this year by 'A private war' which focuses on Colvin's reporting in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and Syria.



*after refusing German demands to abdicate), banned the entry of Jews fleeing Nazi terror, and fruitlessly committed Norwegian soldiers to the Eastern Front.*

'Okkupert' wrestles with a modern version of Quisling's devastating legacy. It is set in the near future, where a Green party government comes to power in Oslo on the heels of a hugely damaging global warming-related hurricane. Promising to unveil a revolutionary new form of nuclear energy powered by the chemical element thorium, Prime Minister Jesper Berg announces that Norway will lead by example and immediately shut down its considerable gas and oil production.

This upsets the EU, of which Norway is not a member. In cahoots with Moscow, Brussels secretly threatens Berg with a full-scale Russian invasion unless he commits to maintaining Norway's fossil fuel extraction under Moscow's supervision. (The United States, having recently achieved energy independence, has withdrawn from Nato and sits disinterestedly aside.) Berg reluctantly agrees to this scheme, promising his people that the insertion of Russian worker crews to restart Norway's energy industry will be temporary.

'Occupied' is disturbingly relevant in light of the Ukraine crisis. When the Russians come to Norway, there are no tanks or fighter jets or "little green men." The diminution of Norwegian sovereignty and the assertion of Russian control is much more subtle and visible only to those who care to notice. In the absence of a defensive alliance like Nato to deter the Russian threat, the mere

mention of war leaves Berg with little choice but to go along with the 'temporary' occupation. But what does 'temporary' mean?

Predictably, the Russian government is none too pleased with 'Occupied.' 'Although the creators of the TV series were at pains to stress that the plot is fictitious and allegedly has nothing to do with reality, the film shows quite specific countries, and Russia, unfortunately, was given the role of an aggressor,' read a statement released by the Russian embassy in Oslo.

### JOURNEY'S END (2018)

Directed by Saul Dibb

One of the best-known descriptions of war is 'months of boredom punctuated by moments of terror'. Yet boredom has to travel to terror somehow, and 'Journey's end' – Saul Dibb's film of the WW1 play by RC Sherriff – spends the bulk of its time in a prolonged state somewhere in between: that of nauseous, coagulating anticipation.

The film is set over four days in March 1918, in the trenches in northern France: C-company is bracing itself for an expected German offensive. Captain Stanhope, a volatile, saturnine soldier who is hitting the whisky increasingly hard as the pressures of war intensify, leads the company. His emotions grow more complex when a rookie officer whom he knows from civilian life joins them.

This is a war film that conveys the pained tenderness of comrades and the insidious creep of fear. It is very disturbing to watch because of the pointlessness of the operation and the loss of life.

### OKKUPERT ('OCCUPIED')

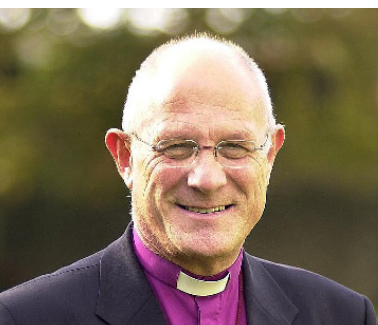
Creators: Karianne Lund, Jo Nesbø, Erik Skjoldbjærg

*Between 1942 and 1945, Quisling's puppet regime revoked the authority of the Norwegian King (exiled to Great Britain*

## THINGS THAT MAKE FOR PEACE: A CHRISTIAN PEACEMAKER IN A WORLD OF WAR.

A BOOK BY PETER B PRICE (2018) WITH A FOREWORD BY MAJOR GENERAL (RETD) TIM CROSS

The Rt Revd Peter Price, a former Bishop Protector of APF, has written a memoir that tells a series of extraordinary stories, recalling a life well lived.



Peter's insights are rooted in his engagement in conflict resolution from the terrorism in Northern Ireland and the seemingly never-ending conflicts in Africa and

the Middle East – and closing with such issues and nuclear disarmament. Honest about his own anguish and struggles, he doesn't avoid the ambiguities but stays deeply rooted in Christian Scripture and the great Christian writers.

The book sets out to explore what it means to respond to the biblical call 'to seek peace ... and pursue it'. Over forty years working in reconciliation, he discusses some of the main questions with which he has grappled: What is required of Christians today in the light of the increasing number of wars, insurgencies, holocausts and genocide? Is a deeper understanding of the true cost of peacemaking possible? Can Christianity continue to sanction war?

Peter explains that his is not the work of a natural peacemaker, and acknowledges how easily we become complicit in violence and conflict. The book seeks to address the ambiguities involved in making peace. It recognises that real peace demands the eradication of poverty, disease, lack of education, discrimination and unemployment. Here are two salient quotes.

'Peacemaking is not simply about ending wars and conflicts on the macro-scale. It is recognising those places in our common life where fear becomes the dominant emotion. Moments and places where we risk excluding, dominating or otherwise violating the 'other', and reducing our common humanity. Peace making is a moral commitment. We seek peace because the most fundamental human right is to life, and it is our moral duty as Ghandi insisted 'to struggle against injustice...through the weapon of non-violence.'

'Ultimately peacemaking had be an activity that has integrity. This is not a question of seeking to be right, nor of being a prophet of God nor as Thomas Merton reminded me forcibly, isolating myself from mankind as if I were a different kind of being.'

This is a book that all those interested in peacemaking should read because of the scope of Peter's activities and the wisdom he brings peace and reconciliation.

### COMMUNITY-BASED TRAUMA HEALING AND RECONCILIATION WORKSHOP IN SOUTH SUDAN

APF provided financial support for a five-day workshop organised by the South Sudan Community Change Agency (SOSUCCA) from 19-23 March in Yei. The objective of the workshop was to empower participants with knowledge and skills on basic trauma healing, conflict resolution, peace building and reconciliation that can help them to support members of their communities who are affected and are faced with different forms of violence in their daily lives. The workshop was attended by 26 people from the local area.

A report on the events and key topics are on APF's website.

### 'THE MARK OF CAIN'

The eminent historian Professor Margaret MacMillan will be the BBC Reith Lecturer in the 70th year of the series. 'The Mark of Cain' – will explore the tangled history of war and society and our complicated feelings towards it and towards those who fight. It will address the nature of war and its depiction.

Across five lectures this Summer Margaret will ask why groups, whether nations or religions or gangs, get into wars and why individual men and women fight. She will also explore the ways in which changes in society have affected the nature of war and how in turn wars have brought great change, for better and worse, to the societies that fight them. Finally she will examine how we think and feel about war. Writers, artists, filmmakers, playwrights, composers, have taken war as their theme, whether to condemn, exalt or simply puzzle about it

Margaret will record her five lectures in

London, York, Beirut, Belfast, and in her home country of Canada throughout June 2018; they will then broadcast on BBC Radio 4 and BBC World Service over the summer.



year sponsored by the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship and will be presented on Sunday 14 October at the Friends Meeting House, High Wycombe at the start of WPWP.

Nominations in the form of a letter describing the nominee's contribution to peace and justice issues should be sent to Sue Gale [billandsuegale@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:billandsuegale@blueyonder.co.uk) and Sue Claydon [chair@anglicanpeacemaker.org.uk](mailto:chair@anglicanpeacemaker.org.uk) by 15 August 2018.

### BLOGGING

In the past months APF's Blog, The Peacemaker, has featured a number of new and interesting subjects and writers. Here are some of the latest additions; **Lessons from the Cross** – A reflection for Easter, looking at what South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. **Reflection on visiting a launch site for ICBMs in South Dakota** – Rev'd Arthur Champion shares his thoughts following a visit to the command centre for launching Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs).

**"Neither shall they learn war anymore"** – Essex University Student explains how a group of young campaigners committed to non-violence are challenging arms manufacturers recruiting on campus. You can reach the blog via our website at: [www.anglicanpeacemaker.org.uk/peacemaker-posts/](http://www.anglicanpeacemaker.org.uk/peacemaker-posts/) We are always looking for new contributors, so if you have any interesting story or reflection please get in touch with Lucy Barbour on [lucy@barbour.com](mailto:lucy@barbour.com)

CONTINUED FROM PAGE FIVE



silent about Russia's involvement in the bombing of hospitals, civil areas and even aid convoys in Syria, but protests against any and all military action by the West. This general pro-Russian tendency appears to be consistent with Mr Corbyn's worldview: not pacifism exactly, but a particular opposition to the exercise of military power by the UK and US. Like his far left compatriots he regards the West (and therefore Nato) as the bad guys in any given conflict.

## Fascism

But is Mr Putin potentially as evil as Hitler. In her recent book, *Fascism* (see Book Look), Madeleine Albright lists a series of questions we should be asking about prospective leader's beliefs to determine their fascist tendencies. Anti-fascist leaders are those who invite their people to join with them in building and maintaining a healthy centre for their societies, a place where rights and duties are apportioned fairly, the social contract is honoured, and all have room to dream and grow.

Then there is the issue of Mr Putin's personal culpability. The number of prominent political figures, journalists and dissidents murdered by Putin's

Russia raises a fundamental question whether these crimes occurred because Putin has created an environment for the violence or does the political motives of Mr Putin's government and the vast amount of circumstantial evidence suggest Putin's direct participation? It is a hard call, but Amy Knight in her 2017 book, *Orders to kill: the Putin regime and political murder* –

which is a detailed examination of cases back to 1998 comes down on the side of the more sinister explanation.

Nevertheless, by Mrs Albright's criteria Mr Putin is not a full-blown fascist because he hasn't felt the need – so far at least – to operate in such an extreme way. Instead, he has used such totalitarian methods carefully and to a limited degree. Throughout his time in office, he has mostly stockpiled power at the expense of provincial governments, the legislature, the courts, the private sector and the press but not used it blatantly. So we are left to wait and see what happens as he continues towards the 'politics of eternity' chipping away at Western interests.

## The end of democracy as we know it?

All this raises questions about the future of democracy. Should the rise of demagogues and 'strongmen' like Mr Putin cause the democracies to take strong measures if all is ultimately at stake rather than the limited breakdown in certain states?

David Runciman in his book, *How democracy ends* accepts that some of the symptoms of today's decay may seem familiar, but the disease is different. He says: 'We make a fatal mistake if we think that history is just repeating itself. Gaze obsessively into the rear-view mirror and we won't see the true threats on the road ahead.' 'For all its manifest and manifold imperfections, democracy has a better record than any rival form of government at sustaining free, innovative, peaceful and prosperous societies.'

## Some thoughts for peacemakers

Against this background, we can make some general points about strategy and the do's and don'ts for the peace movement. At the forefront of our thinking, we have to understand that we are dealing with the crisis of our times and the survival of democracy. The West is defending itself against a potentially ruthless adversary and a unified response is essential, whatever the nature of the defence used. In this broad context, the peace movement should have no delusions and unwittingly become a dupe for Mr Putin.

So, proceeding with caution, the peace movement should assist in the pre-emption of possible escalation by speaking the truth forcibly and drawing attention to all infringements of international and national law, seeking public investigations and appropriate punishment of the wrongdoers.

Unity is also important for organisations in the British peace movement and we should bewail the loss of the National Peace Council. APF and similar organisations ought to be focusing on present circumstances and a little less on the history of their movement – WW1 took place a century ago and should be left to museums. Together with other parties, including the Churches, business companies, financial organisations and the judiciary the peace movement should be seeking issues that can give Mr Putin reason to stop and think. The Russian embassy is not out of bounds for

demonstrations, and neither are Russian companies and sports events.

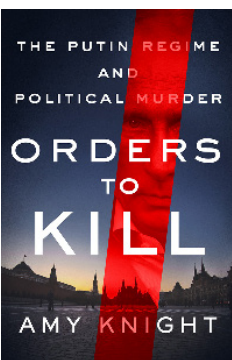
Christian peace organisations should surely profess a belief but they should not use it to argue policy decisions that are irrational and may lead to the loss of many innocent lives. This means being strict and not giving Mr Putin the benefit of the doubt, seeking 100% confirmation for every violent act when all evidence points to Russian involvement. How many wake up calls do we ignore? For APF there is also a strong case for a campaign to encourage the Church of England to extend its dialogue with the Russian Orthodox Church at all levels to question its support for nationalism.

Now as in the 1980s we should argue for engagement with Moscow on all fronts – diplomacy, trade, contacts, culture. Despite all its outward changes, in essence our adversary is the same country as before: somewhat richer, somewhat freer, but a country whose people remain in thrall to a corrupt, repressive power. History shows that internal change only seems to come when Russia has exhausted the alternatives. If there is any scope for optimism it is there. The worst way to counter is for the West to indulge in new forms of nationalism itself. The effect can only weaken solidarity, as we are unfortunately discovering.

But, what then will happen if Mr Putin's 'war by other means' turns hot as his armed forces attack other countries? Then perhaps we have to heed Henry Kissinger's view that survival of Western civilisation cannot be guaranteed solely by politics based on peace, democracy and human rights. It requires a politics that entails a balance of military power between nation states.

This implies that a liberal conception of peace at any price must be complemented – and at times supplanted – by a conservative one that regards the use of military force as occasionally justified and even necessary? In short, he argues that we cannot trust the righteous to inherit the earth on our behalf, or is 'the limitation of righteousness' a necessary condition of 'the control of wickedness'?

But heaven forbid that we read a leaflet entitled: *What to do about Putin* in ten-years time which relates that Mr Putin has bullied his way to become the repressive overlord of Europe using a nuclear attack as a threat. This leaflet would carry the message that none of this would have happened if we had acceded to his demands and negotiated to avoid war.





# THE ART OF PEACE



## GREENHAM'S NEW STAR ROLE

For the thousands of women fighting to stop nuclear war, in the 1980s, it was a symbol of evil. So the news that the control tower at the former US airbase at Greenham Common has been awarded a Heritage Lottery Fund grant, would not seem likely to gladden their hearts. But it turns out to be good news. In September, a theatrical spotlight will be trained on this emblem of the cold war as never before.

Now Greenham Common is to become the stage for a new work written by the playwright, Beth Flintoff and to be performed by a professional at three locations including the tower. The show, 'The Greenham Common Cold War Experience', aims to recreate life on the airbase during its most contentious period, portraying both the campaigners, in a reconstructed section of the peace camp, and the American military residents and British officers who were stationed at the base. The play incorporates scenes inside the control tower and in the site's more sinister decontaminated suite, as well as a guided military-history walk across the common itself.

## LIFE AND FATE

*Theatre Royal, Haymarket  
Directed by Lev Dodin*

St Petersburg's Maly Drama Theatre presents an adaptation of Vasily Grossman's epic novel which some people have likened to War and Peace. Written in the 1950s, the book is set during WW2 and draws comparisons between the totalitarian states of Germany and Russia. Spanning the lives of those in a concentration camp, a gulag, a ghetto and the Soviet army, as well as the travails of a Jewish scientist, Shtrum working on nuclear energy, the story almost defies dramatisation.

But Lev Dodin's disturbing production, often bleached of colour, succeeds in visually meshing all these strands together.

A net divides the stage, through which the prisoners can be seen. Shtrum and his family wrestle with the authorities. The acting is sometimes overwhelming: Sergey Kuryshev's Shtrum celebrating a phone call from Stalin: a scientist's cheek twitching with terror when confronted by a Soviet apparatchik. Russo-British relations are currently dreadful. All the more reason to welcome a piece of work that transcends frontiers.



Central to the story is the tortured conscience of the Jewish nuclear physicist, Victor Shtrum who in 1943 finds himself at odds with his scientific masters. This yields two unforgettable scenes. In the first we see the exultation of the suddenly indispensable Shtrum when he receives an approving phone call from Stalin. In the second, with its potent echoes of Brecht's Galileo, Shtrum agonises over whether to continue his research, he should sign a letter effectively condoning the death of Soviet citizens.

All this is framed by a heartrending farewell letter from Viktor's captive mother and intercut with episodes from the battlefield and depictions of life in Nazi and Soviet labour camps.

## OBITUARY OF ELENA GREMINA

*Founder of a theatre that stood up to the Russian Government died of heart failure in May.*

Russian playwright and screenwriter, Elena was one of the founders of Teatr.doc, the Moscow theatre that acted as a powerhouse of new writing. Elena and her husband, Mikhail Ugarov were at the centre of a rallying force of artistic opposition to the Russian regime, staging openly critical works that challenged rules imposed by the state, and giving space to others to do the same.

Gremina pioneered the 'documentary' movement in Russia in the 2000s and

encouraged a whole generation when many of the country's state theatres wanted nothing to do with young playwrights. They rapidly set up groups of writers to travel the country and record interviews with people at the front line: mothers of conscripts lost in Chechnya, Murmansk after the Kursk submarine tragedy, immigrant workers and so on.

However, as the Putin regime began tightening the screws, the theatre's work became increasingly politically dissident, and Gremina became more outspoken in her resistance to power. She became a public voice to be reckoned with, a sane and measured advocate for freedom of speech and compassion for the oppressed.

A series of verbatim works on the Bolotnaya Square protests of 2012 and death of the whistleblowing lawyer, Sergei Magnitsky and the showing of a film about the Maiden square riots in Kiev clearly upset the regime and the Teatr.doc's lease was suspended and it was forced to move on. All this took a toll on Gremina and her husband: the visits from the police, the confiscated equipment, being made to present papers at the prosecutor's office.

Even, when the reaction of her more radical work brought its trials, Gremina remained resplendent in her intelligence, her steadfastness and irrepressible joy of theatre. As she wrote of 150 Reasons: Theatre is a cure ... it can relieve even unbearable pain for a time.'

Wary of the perils of patriotism, Gremina once said 'she cautioned herself against becoming a good citizen' saying she would rather be a good person. But that preference never implied a disengagement from public life. 'You see, we cannot just live and agree.' 'We must participate, try to change things – to testify.'



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