

Aspects of publishing by the
Peace Committee of the
Religious Society of Friends
(London Yearly Meeting),
1888 - 1905.

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Abstract

Although Quakers were active in the British peace movement from the early nineteenth century, it was not until 1888 that the Religious Society of Friends, in Britain, had its own corporate Peace Committee. It was the increasing quantity of printed resource material - petitions, pamphlets, and posters - published by this committee which informed and propagated the peace approach of Friends, locally, nationally and internationally. The Peace Committee used Quaker printing firms and, being part of the Society of Friends, remained financially viable, although under constraints. The years 1888-1905 saw a growth in co-operation between peace organisations, and Peace Committee facilitated and participated in joint events at home and abroad. Foreign language publications were produced. The main thrust of campaigning work initially, apart from the Christian message against war, was for Arbitration of disputes between nations. The threat of national conscription and the Boer War inflected publications. By 1905, the growth in national expenditure on armaments was coming to the fore as an issue and was addressed by the first British corporate peace poster of the Society of Friends.

Keywords

Peace; Quaker; Publishing; Printers; Peace Committee; Posters.

Introduction

Individual Friends were active in the Society for the Promotion of Permanent and Universal Peace, generally recognised as the first British peace organisation, from its inception in 1816, but it was not until 1888 that Friends in Britain had their own Peace Committee. It was the increasing quantity of printed resource material - petitions, pamphlets, posters - published by Peace Committee and its successors, which both informed and propagated the peace approach of Friends.

The years from 1888 to 1905 were important in the history of the wider peace movement, marking as they did the growth of international networks of organisations, which included the inauguration of the International Peace Bureau in Berne. Peace Committee of the Society of Friends was actively involved both in the Bureau and in international peace congresses. The Nobel Committee (1), according to Peace Committee minutes of November 1908, wrote from Christiana, asking 'for specimens of such peace pamphlets, tracts or books, as have been published under our auspices', demonstrating that by that date the publications of the Peace Committee were seen as important on the continent.

In Britain, The Society of Friends had built good relationships with other Protestant churches, particularly the Non-conformists, and had already published Christian peace material. While the Christian message of peace was to remain well-represented, Peace Committee began to publish works which had no overtly religious content, such as its first peace poster in 1905. Through facilitating and guiding the establishment of the National Peace Council, 1904, and participating in it, Peace Committee increased the links which Friends had with secular as well as religious organisations in Britain. The establishment of clear channels between the central Peace Committee and Friends Meetings, particularly the provision of literature, strengthened the local peace role of Friends. Signature petitions for local use were an important part of Peace Committee publishing in the initial years. Arbitration of international disputes was a main campaigning theme, but the financial and social cost of militarisation, was to come to the fore at the end of the period

under discussion. The Boer War (1889 - 1901) was to give The Society of Friends, through its Peace Committee, practice in writing and publishing anti-conscription material, practice which was to prove useful later in the years leading up to national conscription in 1915.

The 1880s

On 7 January, 1887, Meeting for Sufferings of London Yearly Meeting minuted:

The subject of the state of Europe, especially in reference to the vast and increasing armaments maintained by the different Powers, and the consequent danger to the maintenance of Peace, has been weightily brought under the consideration of the Meeting (Hoyland 1887:86).

In February, a similar, printed statement was circulated within and outside the Society of Friends, to be followed shortly by 140,000 copies of *The Message of Peace*, which aimed to bring Christians into a broader coalition for peace. The Committee on Europe reported this work to Meeting for Sufferings and described the continental scene:

What is it but an armed camp, or rather a series of camps, bristling with millions of soldiers; its greatest nations stimulating each other to an ever-intensifying rivalry in preparation for mutual slaughter... and in which triumphs involving vast multitudes in fearful carnage are celebrated by *Te Deums* and *Hallelujahs*, amidst the roar of cannon and the shouts of armies. (Hoyland 1887:89-90)

Also in February, New England Yearly Meeting called for combined action by American and British Friends 'on the questions of Peace and Arbitration' and invited them to a special peace meeting during an international Quaker conference in Richmond, Indiana (2). This conference sent a letter (3) to

Friends in Britain and elsewhere, calling for efforts to urge 'on our Governments the general adoption of this substitute [i.e. arbitration] for the unchristian practice of War', and for 'more vigorous exertion within our Society itself to diffuse sound views on Peace, and also that we should use our influence with our fellow-Christians', indicating the need to self-educate as well as to propagandise. Apart from increasing the support for existing peace societies, Friends in each Yearly Meeting were asked to set up their own central and local peace committees.

London Yearly Meeting set up a Committee on Peace, answerable to Meeting for Sufferings, liaising with the Women's Yearly Meeting and with Quarterly Meetings (which were asked to put in place peace committees). In June, 1888, the Peace Committee met for the first time. It consisted at this stage of twelve Friends, meeting monthly. They immediately addressed the subject of possible literature to be published, including suitable material for France and Germany. A literature sub-committee was set up, consisting of Peace Committee Clerk George Gillett, A.W. Marsh, Rachel B. Braithwaite, and William Jones. At the second Peace Committee meeting it was agreed to place a printing order for 500 Memorials (signature petitions) on Arbitration, to be sent for signing to the Lambeth Conference of Bishops and the Pan-Presbyterian Conference, at that time both being in session. This indicates the speed at which peace material could be produced.

A year later, Peace Committee reported that, as well as publishing pamphlets, tracts and books, 120 peace meetings had been held around the country, 'with audiences widely differing in numbers and social position... in drawings-rooms, the numbers being comparatively small... in public halls and schoolrooms... and in chapels' (Hoyland 1889:80). It is clear that Quaker peace propaganda was not restricted to religious audiences, or to one class, although a certain priority was always given to influencing those with influence, because changing government policy was seen as of vital importance.

In 1889, Peace Committee wished to provide peace literature for the forthcoming Paris Exhibition, and co-operated closely with the Peace Society (as the Society for the Promotion of Permanent and Universal Peace was known), offering free literature, which the Peace Society agreed to distribute in Paris. In June, Peace Committee minuted that George Gillett had been requested 'to ascertain whether tracts can be distributed in Paris by hand or must be stamped with an official French stamp. Also if German and Italian can be printed in Paris'. *War and Christianity*, and *Appeal to Christianity* were to be printed for Paris and four illustrated peace tracts were printed in French. Meeting For Sufferings granted £50 towards peace printing for the Paris Exhibition, but it appears (the Minutes are unclear) that it was necessary to apply to a trust fund for £60 towards printing leaflets 'chiefly in French containing quotations from eminent public men of various countries in Europe on the subject of Peace and War'. This tendency to influence by quoting important personages was to continue, as evidenced by Quaker peace posters, throughout the following century. In addition to using Peace Society distribution, scripture peace literature was placed on the British and Foreign Bible Society stand at the Paris Exhibition.

A five-day International or Universal Peace Congress in Paris (4), was held during the Exhibition. This was the first of what became regular annual or biennial congresses held in a different country each year (though there had been international peace conferences earlier in the nineteenth century). The Peace Committee was to influence these congresses in a variety of ways; by suggesting proposals or modifying resolutions, helping with funding and publishing, and by individual members sitting on committees.

The Women's Yearly Meeting appointed twelve women Friends to act as delegates to the Paris Congress. One of its delegates to Paris was Priscilla Peckover (6), in her late fifties. In the 1870s, Peckover had added peace to her temperance and social work, and founded her Local Peace Association (over which she presided for the next half-century), setting up branches around the country. By the mid 1880s she had virtually single-handedly won ten thousand 'members'! Her declaration was translated into French, German,

Polish and Russian, and she even had twelve Armenian supporters in Constantinople. In 1882 Peckover began her own sixpenny paper, *Peace and Goodwill, A Sequel to the Olive Leaf*. It propagated her quiet Quaker approach to peace (Liddington 1989:29).

Membership of Peckover's Local Peace Association reached 40,000 and spread to 31 countries. Her regular attendance as a Peace Committee sponsored delegate abroad is an example of how local, national and international peace activity were becoming mutually supportive.

Peace Committee minutes of July, 1889 reported on the Paris Peace Congress that:

About 400 persons attended the opening session - representing about 100 Societies or Committees. The proceedings lasted for five days and the Resolutions that were adopted were satisfactory. It was decided to arrange for another Congress next year.

Sixteen Friends had attended, and London was to be the venue for the next Congress. Printing bills for tracts in French, and carriage, came in from France. One bill, for 2000 tracts, was 400 francs; another was double that amount.

Friends did not yet look to their small central Peace Committee for all peace materials. In 1889, Lancashire Friends Peace Committee published *Dymond's Essay on War*, distributing 40,000 copies, 10,000 of them to Australasian Friends (6), and sent duplicate stereotype plates to New York. Seven years later, Lancashire Friends published and distributed *Dymond on War* bound up with *Is there not a Better Way?*, 'presenting copies for sending by our various Quarterly Meetings for the Hotels and Hydros in their district' (Peace Committee minutes, July 1897).

The 1890s

Peace Committee sent out regular circulars to Friends' Meetings nation-wide, and continued to expand its publishing activities. All Peace Committee bills had to be cleared through Meeting for Sufferings, and estimates of projected expenditure presented annually. Part of Meeting for Sufferings was not convinced of the priority of peace over other work, peace being the concern of a small minority of Friends, social issues such as temperance taking precedence. Finance soon caused anxiety to Peace Committee as orders from local meetings led to re-printing costs. However, work was usually placed with Quaker printing firms (7), and Committee members were linked to and sometimes owned those firms, one being West, Newman & Co.

The first indication of Peace Committee use of the Newman family printing firm was:

A bill has been presented by West, Newman & Co. for printing Circulars etc. re petitions in favour of Mr G. [illegible]'s motion in parliament - amount £1.14.1. (Minutes of Peace Committee of the Society of Friends, 4 May 1892).

The printer Thomas Prichard Newman (8) was a member of Peace Committee, its Clerk from 1893 for seven years, Treasurer for many more and a member until his death in 1915, when it was written of him:

As Clerk and Chairman of the Friends' [Peace] Committee, as one of the originators and active members of the National Peace Council, as representing Friends at International Peace Congresses, as a member of the Anglo-German Friendship Committee... he was constantly attempting to promote large ideals of international friendliness, disarmament and peace. In this work especially he had great faith in the power of the printing press, but he ever insisted on the high quality and execution of whatever matter was to be

issued, whether handbill, poster, or more ambitious pamphlet. *Testimony of Sussex, Surrey and Hants Quarterly Meeting, respecting the late Thomas Prichard Newman* (Hoyland 1916:263).

The attractive, simple appearance of Peace Committee publications in the years until World War One owes much to the presence of T. P. Newman on the committee. Jane Elizabeth Newman from 1890 co-signed, with T. P. Newman, the annual Peace Committee report, for the Women's Yearly Meeting, and the two Newmans thus enabled close co-operation between the male and female decision-making bodies of the Society of Friends, on peace issues.

Peace Committee helped to organise the second Universal Peace Congress, held in London, 1890, including assisting in printing and distribution of preliminary papers and post-Congress reports. Peace Committee was particularly concerned to facilitate a strong Christian input to the Congress, and information was sent to Monthly Meetings and local peace committees in time for Friends to offer papers. The Congress costs overall were expected to be £600, and Meeting for Sufferings agreed £50 towards this common fund, mainly for printing. The Congress was successful,

and through getting pretty well reported in the press - the impression on the public awakened a large amount of interest in the Peace movement which we trust will be permanent (Peace Committee minutes, July 1890).

The phrase 'Peace movement' was therefore in use by Friends by this time. Peace Committee continued to nominate and provide delegates for the annual international congresses: thirteen members of the Society of Friends were present at Rome 1891, and delegates were at Berne 1892, Chicago 1893, Antwerp 1894, and at later congresses. Priscilla Peckover and a Liverpool Friend, Ellen Robinson (9), were often among the delegates sent, both of them highly influential in the British and international peace movement apart from their official activity for Friends. Each year, Peace Committee asked

Meeting for Sufferings for £10 for what the Peace Committee minutes called 'the Berne Bureau', set up in 1891. This became the International Peace Bureau in 1892 and took over the organisation of the international congresses; it still exists today, in Geneva. Robinson was on the Berne committee, and kept Peace Committee informed of proposals to which it might object, and ideas which were gaining ground internationally. This was one of the ways in which Peace Committee was able to keep its publishing activities relevant to a wider audience than just a British Quaker market.

The 1892 Berne International Peace Congress resulted in a letter being sent from the Bureau at Berne urging 'a combination of peace societies in each country to promote a universal movement in favor [sic] of Peace by petitioning each European Government' (Peace Committee minute, 5 October 1892). Peace Committee immediately decided to invite various British peace organisations to a meeting to decide what best to do in England. The meeting was held in Devonshire House, London, the central offices of the Society of Friends, and chose the subject of a Treaty of Arbitration between Great Britain and the United States as a suitable one for a national petition to be presented to the House of Commons. A circular, advising Friends how to stay within the law and yet be effective in gaining signatures, was published by Peace Committee early in 1893, and sent throughout the country.

In 1894, Peace Committee facilitated both religious and secular British co-operation by organising one national conference and participating in another. The first was on International Arbitration, where the Nonconformist Churches agreed to associate with other churches in a Memorial to Lord Rosebery, published by the Peace Committee, which also sent a printed circular to a Friend in each principal town asking them to arrange a public meeting. The objectives given for these meetings were:

To memorialise Government in favour of An Arbitration Treaty between this country and the United States of America on the lines of that already concluded between U.S.A. and Switzerland.

A permanent tribunal of International Arbitration.
The restriction of growth and gradual simultaneous
reduction of armaments. (Peace Committee minutes, 3
October, 1894).

The second 1894 national conference was for peace organisations, including The Peace Society, The International, The Arbitration Alliance, and the Local Peace Association, and this occasion was a step which led eventually to the formation of the National Peace Council in 1904. T. P. Newman was actively involved from the beginning of negotiations between organisations to accomplish this, frequently chairing meetings.

1895 Peace Committee minutes tell of 1800 people present at a Sunderland peace meeting, chaired by the Bishop of Durham. Perhaps in the light of this, the Committee sent a printed leaflet to local Correspondents and Clerks, stirring up Friends, for 'many of them write that little has been done, and they hope to do better next year.' The leaflet became an annual event, later entitled *Winter Work* and sent out in October. It generally gave suggestions for activity, lists of literature (and, later, posters and cards) and examples of good practice by Monthly Meetings. The 1895 four-page leaflet, printed in black on cream, had been 'prepared and issued' by S. J. Capper and T. P. Newman (Minute of 3 October 1895). It was signed by T. P. Newman and J. E. Newman in November, and included suggestions for how to set up a successful public peace meeting, using posters:

It has been found effective to apply first to the leading inhabitants and ministers of all denominations personally, and obtain their promises to attend, even though they are not supporters; and to secure a well-known man for Chairman, if a Peace man so much the better. Bills bearing the chairman's and lecturer's names should state that so-and-so have promised to be present. A striking title may be chosen for the subject, such as 'Huge Armaments: a Danger to, not a Safeguard of peace'; 'Can Nations Settle their Disputes only by

Violence?' (Peace Committee of the Society of Friends leaflet, copy inserted in Peace Committee minutes of 3 October 1895).

The wording suggested shows a traditional Quakerly use of questions, inviting each reader to think for themselves. Question marks were to become akin to a Quaker signature on peace posters, and still appeared at the end of the next century. The importance of bringing peace principles into schools and influencing teachers was stressed. Literature for adults and children was listed in the 1895 circular, including an excerpt from Baroness von Suttner's *Lay Down Your Arms* (10), works by Charles Dickens, Priscilla Peckover, the Bishop of Durham and others. It was stated that 'we are able to offer a moderate quantity for distribution, without charge, with the sole condition that they are properly distributed, and not allowed to lie idle.'

The history of peace publication is littered with indications that literature is freely available, as few people could, or would willingly, pay for it. Peace Committee frequently gave 'grants' of literature for particular purposes, including for sending abroad. This put a burden on committee finances. In February 1896, bills for Adult School tracts were settled. Adult and First Day Schools were an obvious outlet for peace publications. Samples of a 1d. edition of *Lay Down Your Arms* and other materials were sent to Adult Schools, 'calling attention of scholars to these publications & suggesting their sale in the school.' Therefore it appears there were purchasers among the working-classes, at least among that part of the working-classes participating in the burgeoning self-education movement then prevalent in Britain (11). The Peace Committee Report to 1896 Yearly Meeting claimed 'About 7,000 pamphlets and tracts have been sent out... for distribution in Adult Schools and generally.' The 1895 circular also listed literature 'for presentation to village and other Libraries', among which literature there was the complete version of *Lay Down Your Arms*.

Peace Sunday, the last Sunday before Christmas each year, was an opportunity for local peace activity which Peace Committee supported in its annual *Winter*

Work circulars, often giving lists of particularly suitable material, published by various organisations, as well as by Friends.

The growing interest of socialists in peace, and of some Quakers in socialism, is reflected in a Peace Committee minute of 2 July 1896:

This Committee is thankful to hear that the International Socialist Workers and Trade Union Congress 1896 have arranged for an Open Air Demonstration in Hyde Park on Sunday afternoon July 1896. The Committee being in full sympathy with the Peace Demonstration appoints S. J. Capper to represent it on the occasion.

This decision was reversed later, 'information having been received from the International Socialist Workers that the Resolution at the Peace Demonstration would be of a strongly Socialist character, laying the cause of all wars on landlordism and capitalism and calling for their overthrow.' This is an example of Quakerly care to avoid inflammatory language or enemy images; methods which, through the attention to detail of Friends on non-Quaker peace committees such as the National Peace Council, the International Peace Bureau and later the No-Conscription Fellowship, were to influence the language of the wider peace movement.

A statement printed in English and French on one sheet, 'a cordial brotherly greeting to the International Peace Congress of 1896', was sent by Peace Committee to Budapest, and described Friends' work for arbitration between Britain and America, including a Memorial to Lord Salisbury asking for a permanent Arbitration Treaty (12). While stressing co-operation with other bodies, the statement claimed that, 'The greater part of the signatures, many thousands in number, have been obtained through our organisation.' After the Congress, a letter from Budapest asked Peace Committee to affirm the principle of the Brotherhood of Man (13).

An Arbitration Treaty between America and Britain was signed. Peace Committee had spent much effort publishing and lobbying on this subject for several years, and minuted prayers of thankfulness in January 1897. It continued to urge general arbitration.

Schools continued to be an important outlet for publications:

Report is made that 20,000 copies of the Address to Adult Schools have been printed and distributed mainly to Schools of Friends 1st day School Assembly. The schools of the Midland Adult School Union and of the London Adult School Union have yet to be supplied and will probably require another 20,000. (Peace Committee minutes, 7 October 1897).

In 1898 Peace Committee published *Arbitration or War?*, and asked Meeting for Sufferings in September to 'grant 50,000 copies... to the Peace Society for sending to Ministers of Religion in connection with Peace Sunday'. This implies that funds were being requested by Peace Committee for the printing. Many requests for literature for Peace Sunday were received that year from Adult School Secretaries. A minute of January 1899 records that 'the literature sent was chiefly *Manifesto in Plain English, Arbitration or War?, Lay Down Your Arms, Always Arbitrate Before You Fight.*'

War tensions on the European mainland between the Great Powers increased. The Tsar of Russia urged an international peace conference between nations. In 1898 a further memorial to the Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, supporting the Tsar's initiative, was published by the Peace Committee and sent:

to a Friend in each particular meeting throughout the country; to Peace Correspondents; to Clerks of Monthly Meetings; and to the Editor of the Friend, British Friend, Herald of Peace, Concord, Arbitrator and to the English Peace Societies. M.E. Philips gives information that the

British Womens Temperance Association will be willing to distribute copies to their branches (Peace Committee minutes: September, 1898).

It was also sent to the Adult Schools and elsewhere. Memorials containing 17,600 signatures were sent back to T. P. Newman for forwarding to the Prime Minister in batches. A page of this Memorial, with text, signatures and addresses, is inserted in Peace Committee minutes; as far as this researcher is aware, this is the earliest example of a signed printed peace petition. The first signature is from the Manse at Rosecrea.

Peace Committee was asked by other organisations to call a conference of all denominations to consider the Tsar's Manifesto and possible church action, and it suggested to local Friends that they organise similar town meetings (14). Later in the year, Tsar Nicholas convened the first Hague Conference (15). Ellen Robinson, who represented Christian organisations, on the International Peace Bureau committee, would be living at Amsterdam and visiting the Hague. J. G. Alexander, who frequently represented Peace Committee abroad, would also attend.

Meanwhile, Quaker Members of Parliament (16) were opposing finances for Lord Kitchener's army and anxiously watching legislation which could re-introduce national conscription by ballot. Suddenly, it seems, in 1899, Peace Committee realised the danger of war in South Africa. Meeting for Sufferings 'did not see its way to take action at the present time' on various Peace Committee proposals, but asked for an historic statement on conscription. Friends, like others, had been concentrating on Europe and relying on arbitration. Little had been done by Friends to sway British public opinion on South Africa, probably because some Friends, according to M. E. Hirst:

while deploring the war considered that the Government were justified in undertaking it, and even that the prospect of better government in South Africa and better treatment of the natives should induce the Society [of

Friends] to consider this war an exception (1923:482).

In October the Boer War commenced. Many Liberals and the Labour Party were to urge settlement for less than unconditional surrender, and in this Friends concurred.

The New Century

Individual Peace Committee members, and other Friends, were to start the twentieth century by receiving insults from press and the public, sometimes accompanied by violence, as they spoke from platforms at meetings during the war. Ellen Robinson was a platform speaker with Lloyd George and Lady Hobhouse in Cornwall, where, before the speeches, the two women took the opportunity of distributing 'Conciliation' leaflets among the people in front. Many of these were at once torn up and pieces tossed contemptuously in the air, while 'Britons Never Shall be Slaves' was sung by the storm[ing] party... (Fisher 1971, quoted in Liddington, 1989:47-48).

In 1900, *A Christian Appeal*, published by the Society of Friends at the time of the Crimean War, was deemed, by Meeting For Sufferings, to be applicable to the Boer War. By the end of February, Peace Committee had published and distributed 35,000 *Appeals* and eventually at least 80,000 copies were distributed. At the same time Peace Committee published *A Protest against Compulsory Military Service*, in two forms, as 'an attractive booklet' and as a foolscap folio version. *Protest* was sent to the religious press, to London and provincial newspapers, to churches and Friends' Meetings, to magistrates and local councillors 'and to the public generally'. 10,000 of each version of *Protest* and 5,000 Militia Ballot Bill documents were printed and distributed also in February.

London Yearly Meeting 1900 produced a statement *Christianity and War*, of which 181,000 copies were published by Peace Committee and sent by post to religious organisations, including the YMCA and YWCA. A Welsh clergyman asked if it was possible to get a Welsh version, so 2000 were

printed. Foreign language printing, including in Dutch and in Danish, remained on the Peace Committee agenda.

With a change in Peace Committee structure in 1900 (there had been other changes previously also), Isaac Sharp and W. C. Braithwaite became Co-Clerks, the Newmans resigning from that position. Sharp was Recording Clerk to the Religious Society of Friends and was to remain so until his death seventeen years later. The Recording Clerk's office at Devonshire House became encumbered rapidly by quantities of printed peace material awaiting distribution to other churches, peace organisations, Adult Schools, and to Friends Meetings. As Recording Clerk, Sharp was already responsible for arranging the printing of much Quaker documentation. A step towards professionalism where the Peace Committee was concerned was marked by the decision to use a Press cutting agency, to obtain '500 cuttings [illegible] the Christian standpoint on War taken by the Society of Friends, not including reports of Meetings' (Peace Committee minutes, 6 September, 1900).

Despite the horrors of South Africa, Friends rejoiced that the Hague Convention had succeeded in setting up an International Court of Arbitration at last. At least a dozen Friends, including T. P. Newman, Priscilla Peckover and Ellen Robinson, attended the Peace Congress held in Paris in 1900 in parallel to the Paris Exhibition.

Winter Work 1900-01 urged that:

In order to meet the reactionary military spirit of the time, we should be active in organising Local Peace Associations, which serve to focus and strengthen the Peace feeling of a district, and to supply volunteers for aggressive work.

The tradition of Friends working locally was to remain strong, individuals serving as personal links from one generation of peace activists to the next. A *Plea for a Peaceable Spirit*, from the 1901 Yearly Meeting statement of that

title was printed as 70,000 Large Post Quarto, 100,000 Foolscap Quarto, and as 100,000 leaflets.

Devonshire House Monthly Meeting sent a copy to each member [of MM] over fifteen years of age, including those in foreign parts... superintendents of Sunday Schools... about 221 ministers of various denominations.... In all about 32,000 copies... have been carefully distributed. A Friend distributed 1,850 in Clerkenwell. Another Friend reports distributing 3,000 from house to house which, with very little exception, were very cordially received...The Amalgamated Society of General Labourers and Gasworkers asked for 5000 copies (*The Friend*, 41 (1901):840).

Intensive local activity by Friends was occurring elsewhere in the country too. In 1901 Meeting for Sufferings suggested Prayer Meetings for South Africa and 11"x 8" advertising posters-cum-leaflets were published, of which there are surviving examples. Military instruction in schools was also commanding attention.

The printing firm Headley Brothers, which produced *The Friend*, had its offices next door to Devonshire House. In 1901 it printed a collection of peace tracts bound as *War and Brotherhood* for Peace Committee which, that year, was very active in helping to facilitate the Glasgow Congress, including a Conference for Churches day for which the Peace Committee found speakers. It also provided a peace literature stall for the conference.

In June, 1902, Peace Committee minuted, 'It is with a feeling of thankfulness that in meeting this evening we are able, after two years and a half of war, to record the termination of the war in South Africa and the declaration of Peace.'

The approval of Meeting for Sufferings was obtained for Peace Committee to promote and take a large part in the organisation of a National Peace Congress in Britain in 1904. The motivation was:

The desirability of more closely uniting those interested in the promotion of Peace in the United Kingdom, with the object of a national growth of the Peace movement, and of enabling united public action to be taken in time of need (Peace Committee minutes, 3 December 1903).

Such united action had been sorely lacking prior to and during the Boer War. All Monthly Meetings were encouraged to send delegates to the Congress, which was held in Manchester. It was at this 1904 National Peace Congress that the decision was finally taken to set up a permanent council of British peace organisations. The National Peace Council was formed. T. P. Newman's work for and on the National Peace Council ensured Quakerly aims and methods were part of the first British umbrella body for peace organisations.

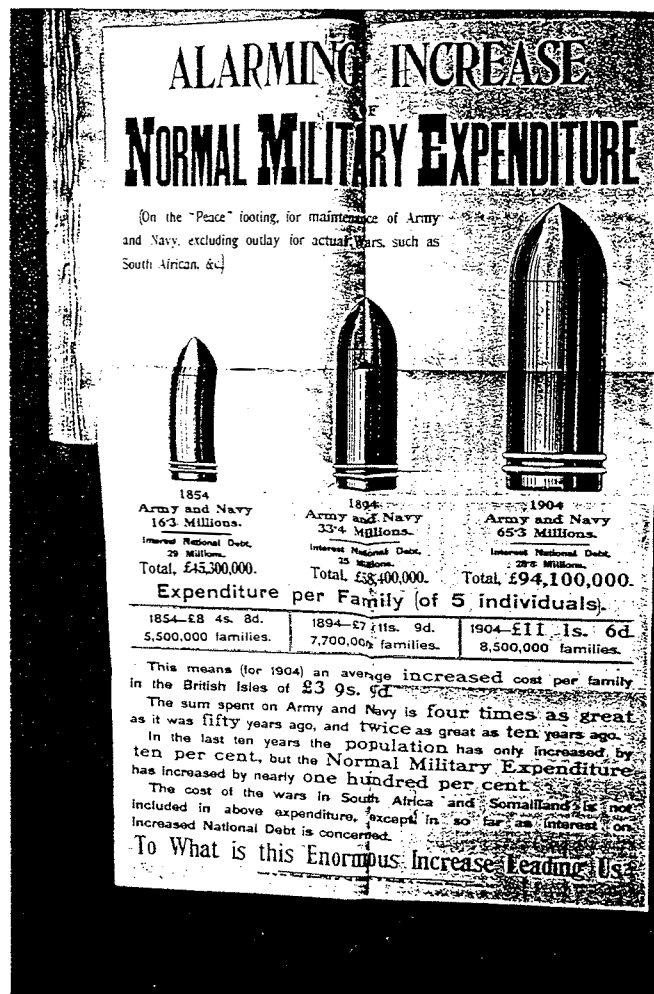
By 1904, eight Arbitration Treaties had been signed between European nations, but military production was still increasing. The campaigning focus turned to national military expenditure. 10,000 cards, similar to postcards, were published by Peace Committee, giving facts and figures on expenditure in Britain for the years 1854, 1894, and 1904. These proved to be useful peace propaganda, and many orders came in. It was pointed out, perhaps by a Quaker MP, that the figures given were erroneous. The same month, Peace Committee received a bequest from Augustus Reeve Thomas of £714.11.11, with no conditions attached. This would have helped mollify Meeting for Sufferings for the £6.10.6 charged by West, Newman & Co. for 10,000 erroneous cards. The card was reprinted, with figures based on those given in the statistical Abstract of the United Kingdom, no. 2192 (Table 5). It was this card, enlarged, which was to become the peace poster which the Peace Committee minuted as its first, calling it *Military Expenditure*.

'The question of providing posters for display at our Meeting Houses and Adult Schools has been before the Committee', stated the minutes, and in February, 1905, Arthur Guy Enock and Mary E. Phillips were appointed 'to have the card on Military Expenditure printed as a poster, after obtaining estimates for 1000 & larger quantities.' The approximately 30" x 20" poster *Military Expenditure* (also known as *The Shell* poster) has no overtly religious or Christian message, although one was to be attached to an updated 1909 version. Printed in dark blue and red on white paper, it presents facts and asks a question: 'To What is this Enormous Increase Leading Us?' Only by looking very closely can one read the small words at the bottom: 'Issued by the Peace Committee of the Society of Friends, 12, Bishopsgate Without, London, E.C.'

Methods of storage and distribution of posters had to be considered, a somewhat challenging task, and for a time the Recording Clerk's office was used, until the printers, Headley Brothers, whose shop was next door to Devonshire House, agreed to take over distribution. Peace Committee considered further posters, even before the first one was printed, and two months later recorded, 'Since our last meeting a great many posters re Military Expenditure have been purchased.' 2000 further posters and 10,000 cards were authorised, and a second poster was approved, called *International Brotherhood*, 'prepared by Ellen Robinson and now revised'. Enock was asked to get '2,000 printed of the same size as No:1 :- type to be kept up, and copies to be sent out as previously.'

The first poster had started as a card, and the second poster became a card. The two different sizes, of identical content, fulfilled many needs. The posters were large public displays of information or beliefs, whereas the small cards could be put through letter boxes, or placed on seats at meetings, or given away easily. The cards were blank on one side, and local groups could thus put their own information on the reverse.

Meeting as it did in Devonshire House, the Committee asked 'the Premises committee to post the first two posters at the street entrance of this Meeting



House' (Peace Committee minutes, April 1905). A box was placed at the entrance to Devonshire House containing copies of all peace cards issued, where passers-by could take them, perhaps attracted first by the poster on display. So started the tradition of displaying corporate peace posters outside Friends Meeting Houses, though some Friends proved reluctant to display them facing the street. In the years leading up to World War One, Peace Committee was to experiment further with posters (17), by placing them on public hoardings, using professional bill-posters.

The first printed cash accounts for Peace Committee, or Friends' Peace Committee as it was by then known, were for the period April 1905 to 31 March 1906. They show that in that period the firm of Fraser and Co. were paid a total of £17.2 shillings for printing posters. West, Newman and Co. was paid £3.17.9 for printing cards, and another £43.7.4 for printing which remains unspecified. De Little was paid £6.9.6 for printing *War and Christianity*; the firm of Lowe was paid £4.7.6 for printing an *Address to Teachers*; Orphans Printing Press was paid £16.4.10, Headley Brothers £17.4.7, both for unspecified printing.

Yearly Meeting 1904 minuted:

We realise afresh that the influence of our Society should not be limited to the work of a central committee however energetic, and we suggest to our Quarterly and Monthly Meetings that it would be desirable for each Preparative Meeting, to appoint a Correspondent with the Peace Committee... and also, if possible, to organise a Peace Committee for their localities.

This decision established a system which has remained in place largely unchanged. With Peace Committee members in place on the International Peace Bureau, and on the National Peace Council formed that year, and with the knowledge gained by Quaker MPs, local Friends now had access to

The 'Shell Poster' 1905
(copyright Library of the Society of Friends, photograph by Margaret Glover)

sound printed information on a wide range of peace issues, to share with the rest of society both within and outside the peace movement.

The formation in 1888 of a central Peace Committee for the Religious Society of Friends had proved to have many advantages. By ensuring strong Quaker delegations to international congresses, by facilitating national co-operation between both religious and secular bodies, it had strengthened the international and national reputation of the Society of Friends. These experiences also informed the writing and publishing activities of the Peace Committee. The problems of printing, publishing and distributing large amounts of peace literature had been solved, and soon the Nobel Committee was to request a list of peace materials published.

Peace Committee had attempted to ensure that local Friends were serviced with useful ideas and literature, and publications were to become requested more frequently by other organisations in the next ten years. However, the Peace Committee's pioneering national and international work, some of it confidential, may not have been generally appreciated by Friends in the provinces. There began a groundswell of discontent, particularly in the north, which was to lead to the formation of The Northern Peace Board, with its own publishing methods, in 1913.

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Notes

- (1). Alfred Nobel (1833-96), the Swedish inventor of dynamite, left money for annual prizes, including a peace prize, thanks to Baroness von Suttner (see note 10).
- (2). The invitation was dated 2nd Month 28th, 1887. Meeting for Sufferings appointed delegates in June. The Richmond Conference was in September.
- (3). Inserted in Peace Committee minutes, 1888. Also in Hoyland 1888:81.
- (4). The Universal Peace Congress in Paris commenced 23rd June, 1889.
- (5). Priscilla Peckover, 1833-1931. See *The Friend* 71 (1931):870, 851 (portrait). Among her many other achievements, she was instrumental in having the Bible translated into Esperanto.
- (6). London Yearly Meeting at this time was responsible for Friends in Australasia, there being no Yearly Meetings there yet.
- (7). Peace Committee records mention six printing firms in the years to 1906: Fraser, Lowe, De Little, West, Newman and Co., Headley Brothers, The Orphan's Printing Press. Also appearing in minutes is printer John Bellows.
- (8). Thomas Prichard Newman 1846-1915. On the board of the Friends Foreign Missionary Association, Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society and active for Anglo-German Friendship. Son of printer Edward Newman, he took over his father's business at the age of 24. He was also trained by John Bellows.
- (9). Ellen Robinson 1840-1912. Secretary of Priscilla Peckover's Local Peace Association, and of the Peace Union. In 1886 she began speaking and writing on peace, at one point giving 116 speeches in three years.
- (10). Baroness Bertha von Suttner 1843-1914. First female Nobel Peace Laureate, 1905. Her anti-war novel *Die Waffen Nieder! (Lay Down your Arms)*, 1889, became quickly highly influential throughout Europe, as did the author. Vice-President of the Commission of the International Peace Bureau, from its commencement, 1892, and involved with interparliamentary groups as well as peace organisations. See Pauling, Laszlo and Yoo, 1986, Volume 3:201-204.
- (11). By 1884 there were 16,472 adults and 11,819 children in 150 First Day Schools organised by Quakers (Yearly Meeting records). There were many other such schools, run by non-Quakers. Literacy in Britain by 1900 was similar to 1950.
- (12). America and Britain were in dispute over the Venezuelan issue.
- (13). A printed copy of 1896 Yearly Meeting minute was sent in reply,

which in part read, 'We pray that the leaders of the nations may ever keep in mind the brotherhood of mankind, and the fact that God has "made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth." '

(14). There exists, in the Library of the Society of Friends, a very large 1898 poster advertising a public meeting in Harrogate, Yorkshire on the Tsar's Peace Manifesto.

(15). 'In previous centuries governments had negotiated over treaties to end wars, but the Hague Conferences of 1899 and 1907 were the first international conferences between governments which were convened to discuss how to preserve peace.' (Owen Greene, in Pauling, Laszlo and Yoo, 1986, Volume 1:60)

(16). In 1899 there were eleven Quaker MPs, of whom John Edward Ellis was the most active on peace issues.

(17). Peace Committee posters, published before 1914, were titled: *Military Expenditure, 1905 and 1909 versions**, *International Brotherhood, Military Training in Schools, Patriotism**, *Native Races* (also called *The Penn poster*)* and *Anglo-German Understanding*. By cross-checking Peace Committee minutes with the unlisted posters in the Library of the Society of Friends, it has been possible to identify copies of those starred.

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