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“ WE ARE NOT TO
SIMPLY BANDAGE THE
WOUNDS OF VICTIMS
BENEATH THE WHEELS
OF INJUSTICE, WE ARE
TO DRIVE A SPOKE INTO
THE WHEEL ITSELF. ”
DIETRICH BONHOEFFER

Illustration: Mirjam Johansson, live-in community member at Giuseppe Conlon House

In the face of evil

Nora Ziegler

‘We are not to simply bandage the wounds of victims beneath the wheels of injustice, we are to drive a spoke into the wheel itself’

Pastor and theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote these words in 1933, a few months after the Nazi party came to power in Germany. In 1945 he was executed for his involvement in plans to assassinate Hitler.

I am moved by Bonhoeffer’s courage to take action in the face of evil, making himself vulnerable to condemnation

by others and, in his view, by God. On 3 February this year I attended ‘Dietrich Bonhoeffer Day’ at a German church dedicated to Bonhoeffer in South London. One of the speakers talked about Bonhoeffer’s prophetic understanding of the evils he opposed. He recognized Nazism as not just a dangerous ideology but a spiritual disease with the power to undermine resistance and solidarity. At its core, I think of this spiritual disease as idolatrous belief in the power and necessity of violence and a lack of faith in the power of love and reconciliation. Where it is not recognized and resisted, this spiritual sickness leads us to deny and perpetuate oppression.

While preparing my trial for protesting the DSEI arms fair, I asked myself: in a society that views arms sales to Saudi Arabia and violence against migrants and refugees as reasonable, how can I know what is a ‘reasonable’ action to take in resistance? What gives me the right to act? And in what ways do I participate in and perpetuate violence while I claim to oppose it?

I look to the ideas and historic examples of creative nonviolence for guidance. But simply living by and advocating nonviolence or any ethical principle is not enough. It can too easily be used as an excuse not to take action and to condemn and silence the actions of others. Nonviolence seems to me a position that is impossible to practice and impossible to advocate. Yet I believe it is at the heart of the Christian calling.

My understanding of nonviolence in this Christian sense is a fundamental critique of violence based on faith in the transformative power of God’s love. It identifies the root of domination as people’s consent to the idea that violence is inescapable and necessary in order to achieve justice. The only way to overcome violence is to refuse consent to and participate in it.

However, this seems impossible. In capitalist societies everyone seems to participate in institutionalised violence despite their efforts, for example, to consume ethically, support industrial action, not contribute taxes to the

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Donations Welcome !

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who contributed articles,
photographs and drawings.



The Catholic Worker in the UK and just across the Channel

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Giuseppe Conlon House offers hospitality to destitute refugees. We also run the Urban Table soup kitchen on Sundays 2:30 — 4:30 pm at The Round Chapel, London E5 0PU. We organise acts of nonviolent resistance and produce this newsletter.

The Catholic Worker Farm

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The Farm offers hospitality to destitute women. We grow organic vegetables and have a poustina and hermitage retreat. Maryhouse also offers a home to four destitute women with children.

Glasgow Catholic Worker

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Glasgow CW offers a place of welcome for asylum seekers and destitute refugees in the centre of Glasgow at the Garnethill Multicultural Centre, open Saturday 9:00—1:00pm, and a soup kitchen on Friday nights. We keep a regular vigil at Faslane Nuclear Base and hold monthly meetings and prayers.

Maria Skobstova House

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Mother Maria Skobstova House is a residential community that serves people who have been pushed into the margins of society. We started working with refugees and migrants in the refugee camp called “the jungle” (February 2016) and as we discover homelessness in the city of Calais we are looking how to support homeless and poor people here and to build a community across the divide.

In the face of evil

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military, create safer spaces or learn to be better allies. On top of that, as Bonhoeffer put it, ‘silence in the face of evil is itself evil’ and ‘not to act is to act’. Where we fail to act against injustice we are also participating in it.

I think the point of this critique is not simply to try to follow non-violent principles or practice non-violent techniques, but much deeper: to learn to trust in God; to trust that God’s love has real power in the world. A power that is gentle, non-coercive, resilient, transformative and ultimately much stronger than the power of violence.

Such a faith never condones passivity. It has no need for defensiveness or ideological purity. It can challenge and enable a person to look for the less destructive option, to take on board criticism, to delegate and let go of control, to forgive and give reconciliation a chance. Sometimes it calls us to step back and sometimes to step up. It can give us the courage to take actions that the majority might not view as ‘reasonable’ and to let ourselves be held to account for those actions by the most oppressed members of our community.

Nonviolence is not about ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ kinds of resistance to injustice. It doesn’t give a clear code of conduct. I think it goes deeper and asks, ‘What is driving our actions? Are we motivated and strengthened by a need to be in control and enforce our own vision of justice, or by faith in the possibility of justice without domination?’

The obvious problem with this approach is that it is inherently subjective and potentially as dangerous as it is radical. And it is very uncomfortable. I often find myself thinking disappointedly, ‘Ugh, this actually requires faith in God!’ And when that faith falters, as it sometimes does, I am left disorientated at the edge of a terrifying abyss.

Through regular prayer in my community, I try to create more room for my faith to mobilise, challenge, guide and console me in my everyday life. In our everyday work of hospitality I try to learn compassion, humility and solidarity, hoping that in the right moment I will have the wisdom and courage to take action.

Nora Ziegler is a community member at Giuseppe Conlon House

from Easy Essays Peter Maurin

Right or Wrong

1. Some people say:
“My country
is always right.”

2. Some people say:
“My country
is always wrong.”

3. Some people say:
“My country
is sometimes right
and sometimes wrong,
but my country
right or wrong.”

4. To stick up for one’s
country
when one’s country is wrong
does not make
the country right.

5. To stick up for the right
even when the world is wrong
is the only way we know
to make everything right.



Nora Ziegler protests outside the DSEI arms fair photo credit: Mirjam Johansson

Praying in context

Katrina Alton CSJP

'Did you really need to pray in the road? And did your prayer space need to involve concrete?'

I don't know about you, but these are not the usual questions I hear asked when Christians gather to pray. But then this is rather an unusual context.

Seated in the public gallery of Stratford Magistrates Court, I am listening to the Crown Prosecution ask four Christian defendants, Nora Ziegler, Henrietta Cullinan, Jo Frew and Chris Cole, all on trial for blocking the road into the ExCel centre where the biannual fair, Defence & Security Equipment International (DSEI) is held, why they needed to 'lock-on' to prayer boxes and cause 'willful obstruction of the highway' in order to pray and express their opposition to the arms fair. They were arrested within minutes of locking-on, but it took hours to remove them from the road because the lock-on tubes were wrapped in layers of material, including concrete.

'Prayer', is defined as, 'a solemn request for help, or expression of thanks to God'. But during the trial the question of what prayer is, or isn't, never arose. Yet for these, and many other Christian activists, prayer is central not only to what they do, but why they do it. Prayer is protest.

'Is not prayer the intensely personal struggle within each disciple, and among us collectively, to resist the despair and distractions that cause us to practice unbelief, to abandon or avoid the way of Jesus?' (Myers, C. *Binding the Strongman*, Orbis Books 1988)

Faced with the power and enormity of the arms trade it is easy to feel 'despair', and 'practice unbelief'. How can we be the 'spoke in the wheel'? How can the cycle of violence be broken? Yet why the 'despair' when we know that nonviolence works: it is a proven and legitimate tool in our democratic tool box, it changes the narrative, and it strives to defeat injustice (never people). From the stand of First World War conscientious objectors who won the legal right 'not to kill', to the residents of Whyll, Germany, who occupied the proposed site of a nuclear power station for a year and stopped its construction,

history is littered with actions, big and small, that broke the cycle of violence and changed the narrative.

As proceedings ended on the second day of the trial I overheard someone say, 'I just heard four of the best sermons on Jesus' way of nonviolence.' Here is a taste of those witness statements:

'I wanted to question the legitimacy of the arms fair, as well as to try and disrupt it...We also wanted the police and truck drivers to think about what they were doing. The police have a choice either to violently disrupt a protest or to allow it to take place... The reason I took part in blocking the arms fair was to publicly witness to my faith in God's love and my refusal to put faith in the institutions of war and oppression. I want to challenge the myth that the arms trade and war are inevitable or necessary and do what I can, in the spirit of nonviolence, to resist these evils.' (Nora)

'The aim was to create a place of prayer and peace on the road and stop lorries heading into the arms fair. To transform the road even for a short time...That seems reasonable given the enormity of the impact of the arms fair.' (Henrietta)

'I live with refugees and forced migrants in a house of hospitality. When I listen to the stories of those I live with, I see the profound impact war has had on them, especially their mental health... In our Christian tradition we call following Jesus 'discipleship'. This isn't just in personal prayer and worshiping in church, but it effects our whole life, it is about how we practice Jesus' way of nonviolence.' (Jo)

'Over the last 30 years I've had meetings with MPs, taken part in public meetings, met with directors of arms companies, and written 1000's of words. Yet the arms fair still goes on. Civil disobedience has to be at the heart of the democratic tool box to disrupt the business of war. We weren't blocking Stratford High Street, we were blocking the entrance to the arms fair.' (Chris)

The Crown Prosecution didn't dispute that since 2015 no neutral observers have been allowed into DSEI, or that exhibitors at DSEI have previously been found to be promoting unlawful weapons. Thus, District Judge Hamilton acquitted all four defendants, describing their actions as, 'reasonable', concluding that their rights to 'freedom of expression' and 'freedom of assembly' under Articles 10 & 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights must be upheld.

At the end of the trial there was much celebration, and rightly so. But I was deeply moved by Chris's response: 'The work goes on!'

So, the question I am left asking myself is, 'How can I not pray in the road? How can I not use every nonviolent means possible, even concrete, to stop DSEI 2019?'

To find out more and get involved: visit stopthearmsfair.org.uk
www.caat.org.uk
faithandresistance.org

Katrina Alton is a peace activist, writer, and counsellor. A member of the Sisters of St Joseph of Peace, she lives in Nottingham.



Illustration: Nichola Hildebrand, a live in volunteer at Giuseppe Conlon House

Radical Reading

Mark Palframan

We've just finished reading *Christian Anarchism: A political commentary on the Gospel* by Alexandre Christoyannopoulos. Reading a chapter a month, we concluded this in January 2018.

I didn't particularly like the book when I first read it a few years ago as I felt that it was too restrictive in the understanding of what Christian Anarchism was about. The writers who are considered in this book are indeed interesting and important but I disliked the fact that it didn't include enough alternative perspectives. There are other people, myself included, who identify as both Christian and Anarchist but don't fit with these writers' ideas. It's a good read though. And I would recommend it. Essentially it's an accessible version of Alexandre's PhD. He looks at all these writers who are considered to be both 'Christian' and 'Anarchist' and presents quite a coherent radical pacifist position drawn from their collective writings.

For myself I always thought that it was self-evident that justice and peace were not to be found in the state or in capitalist structures. And that an anarchist rejection of worldly powers was probably the most logical outworking of the Christian faith. Consequently I've spent most of the past thirty years engaged in activity (prayerfully) fighting for justice and helping homeless people – with little time for reflection! So I was pleased to join the radical reading group to look at Alexandre's book and come back to look at these themes and ideas again.

We were quite a diverse group of people, with differing theologies, including Baptists, Quakers, Atheists and Catholics and bringing perspectives born out of our experiences of anti-fascism, trade union struggles, animal rights, opposition to the arms fair, environmental actions, housing and migrants rights issues. It was encouraging and inspiring to sit with these folks to reflect on our faith and activities as we read through this book.

The book particularly examines the ideas of Tolstoy, Ellul, Vernard Eller and Dave Andrews as well as a number of writers from the Catholic Worker tradition. The Sermon on the Mount and some other teachings in the gospels are considered in detail. There is also



Homelessness activists protest in central London, 2018 Photo: Mark Palframan

a careful examination of the writers' understanding of, and reaction to, the state, as well as a reflection on our role as prophetic witnesses.

We were absolutely delighted that Alexandre came to join us for our final session. He had a lot of his own reflections on the book. Interestingly one of these was that, as the book was written some years ago, he had since discovered other writers who could have been included. And as the book was essentially a project of weaving together the various thinkers into a coherent Christian Anarchist position there was little personal input. One of his other observations which particularly struck me, was how much things have moved on so since the book was written and that the traditional anarchist focus on the state has been superseded by our concerns over global capitalism.

There is not the space to reflect upon all the issues which arose from our discussions - needless to say that it provoked a lot of questions! Not least about where we stood on the rejection of normal political action and whether God's Kingdom would really come - and what that meant.

For me personally it was helpful to identify where and why I felt at odds with a lot of the writers mentioned. There is something there – about submission to the authorities – which doesn't agree with me. I guess this is why I've always tried to avoid getting arrested! I'm more than happy to try to blockade arms fairs, disrupt hunts, oppose fascists or whatever else but personally I'm not going to meekly surrender to the police. I accept that there is inherently something more

Christ-like about that kind of submission. But somehow I just know that if I'd have been in the garden at Gethsemane I'd have been hopping over the wall at the back and making good my escape when they came to arrest! Not that I don't have massive respect to our brothers and sisters who are pledged to take non-violent direct action and accept the consequences. I'm just not there myself.

There's also a question about how we work towards the Kingdom of God. I have always been very keen on direct action, not just registering our disagreement in dignified protest, but trying to actually change things directly. This is something else I'm still thinking about. I'm not talking about violence here but just the principle of forcing change. Physically stopping things from happening – through blockades, occupations, damaging property and resistance. Such actions might seem appropriate and reasonable but how Christ-like are they? I'm not sure - but then we read that he made a whip, overturned the tables and drove out the money changers from the temple! So maybe there's a place for this kind of thing.

We're going to read Donald B Kraybill's book, *The Upside Down Kingdom* next. I'm sure this will provoke further reflections and questions - come and join us!

Mark Palframan is a housing activist who lives in Hackney. He is a long time friend of the London Catholic Worker

Alexandre Christoyannopoulos, *Christian Anarchism, A political commentary on the Gospel*, Imprint Academic, Exeter 2011

Reflections of a live-in volunteer

Ghazal Tipu

'We have all known the long loneliness and we have found that the answer is community' Dorothy Day

An intentional community is not a utopia. You see and experience people's flaws. You see each other's vulnerabilities and what makes them tick. There is no farewell at 5:00pm, no escape from irksome colleagues that you can put off seeing at least till the following day. You are in each other's faces and there is no getting away.

When you live in a community, it's hard to wear a façade for too long. There are days when you are tired, irritable and would rather have a duvet day. Like when someone is trying to engage you in conversation at 9:45pm but you have already mentally shut down for the night. On those days you have to dig deep and try to project the best version of yourself.

On Wednesday mornings, we have community meetings in which we discuss the activities of the week. We start with a group 'check in', in which volunteers state how their week is going and what is on their mind. Unlike a British professional office, where discretion is the order of the day, volunteers share candid reflections. The effect of these divulgements is that you get to understand what a person is truly about; their aspirations, inner conflicts, and anxieties.

One of the epiphanies I've experienced here is that every human being is fragile and vulnerable, guest and volunteer alike. We are all trying to put up a façade of strength. But scratch the surface and everyone will have some tale to tell. Some will express their anxieties and frailties. Others will put up walls and pretend there is nothing wrong. That is their survival strategy. The purpose of a community is to be truly seen by others though, including those anxieties and frailties. Sometimes you cannot solve another person's problem but it is comforting that another soul can see you and your troubles, and that you are not just another faceless person in a crowd.

Before I started this role, I had the vague idea that joining as a live-in

volunteer would be like participating in a cross between a Student's Union and halls-of-residence. That is not so. As a new student you're young and vivacious and share the common goal of a university education. You all join at the same time. Conversely, Giuseppe Conlon House is made up of volunteers and guests from different nationalities, religions, cultures and philosophies, who join this community at different times. Crucially, most live here out of difficult life circumstances. This group of disparate guests and volunteers sometimes gives rise to minor skirmishes.

Community is nevertheless an antidote to the times we are living in. Capitalism's noxious belief is that we can brave the squall of life alone, that we are a self-contained ship unto ourselves. Capitalism has taught us that expressing we need each other or are lonely is a sign of weakness. But we each need to acknowledge our frailties. Too many people suffer in silence. It is common knowledge that loneliness is endemic and rising.

Community is also the place to fashion character. It is the place to exercise virtues; to foster the Christian values of patience, forgiveness, and most importantly, love. Like being married or in a long-term relationship, community helps us to hold up a mirror to ourselves and see our own flaws. Seeing others blow up in anger, procrastinate or shirk responsibilities, reminds us of when we do those things ourselves. As Jesus said, 'Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?'

With these challenges, would I recommend being a volunteer? Absolutely. The flaws I spoke of earlier are the flaws of the inspirational and dedicated people I have met here. I may have seen people at their worst, but I have also seen them at their best. And I have eaten with them, prayed with them, and struggled against injustice with them. I have joined in peace vigils and demonstrations in the bitter cold with them, something I would never have felt motivated enough to do on my own.

The benefit of living in community is that the inspiration of the work of others is a compelling call to action.

Ghazal Tipu is a writer, communications professional and live in volunteer at Giuseppe Conlon House

The quiet joy of simple volunteering

Marigold Bentley

What first drew me to volunteer at Giuseppe Conlon House was the desire to be a small part of the radical discipleship which the Catholic Worker seeks to demonstrate. Fortunately, I have long standing friends in Valerie Flessatti and Bruce Kent, each of whom has been an inspiration to me. Valerie suggested I help on the occasional Wednesday evening. Thus, for many years my name has appeared in a long electronic list of St Mellitus volunteers who share the responsibility of cooking food, delivering it to Giuseppe Conlon House and serving it twice a month.

The task I undertake is not onerous at all. In fact, surely it is one of life's joys to provide and serve food. As a Quaker, we do not have rituals or liturgy in our worship and the given understanding is that the whole of life is sacramental which means that our religious life is not compartmentalised and slotted into a Sunday or a particular ceremony.

'So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God' [1 Corinthians 10.31]

Therefore, for me, serving food is a small religious act. It is an act of one human to another with a shared understanding of food being a way of establishing common ground. I do very little. However, what I become part of in a small way, is the lived expression of love and compassion through the intentional community of the London Catholic Worker at Giuseppe Conlon House. Community living is a much greater and more risky example of faith in action than that which I personally undertake.

When I first served food in the kitchen, there were mattresses all over the floor; the eating area was restricted to a table immediately next to the kitchen. Volunteers had to leave immediately after serving food so that the residents could go to bed in privacy. Now, the room I enter is comfortable. It has sofas, book shelves, a table with space for everyone to eat together and a home-like atmosphere. A series of volunteers have worked hard to set up rotas for cleaning, routines for picking up food,

Giuseppe Conlon House update *in pictures*

photography: Ghazal Tipu and Skye Tenorio



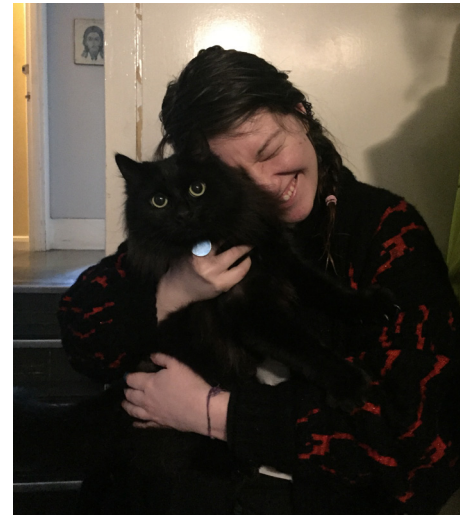
Nora builds new parts for the kitchen



Pruning fruit trees on a visit to the Catholic Worker Farm



An art therapy session for guests and volunteers, from Art Refuge



Olivia cuddles house cat Harakat



A volunteer makes cupcakes



Claire chops vegetables for Urban Table

Empowering the homeless

a personal perspective

Edwin M. Kalerwa

As a guest at the Giuseppe Conlon House, I find homelessness depressingly damaging. The population of refugees, asylum seekers with the right of an appeal, the homeless rural population and those not eligible for housing benefits seems to be missing from the official government figures and data used to determine the overall number of those who are really homeless.

When I found myself admitted into Giuseppe Conlon House, it was clear that, as a homeless person who is type 2 diabetic, it was not just a lack of decent housing that was the problem. There remained the responsibility of family, physical and mental wellbeing, relationship breakdown, immigration, leaving my family, and the bereavement that followed.

I was in the situation of not knowing what to do, who to turn to and how to deal with these serious stressors. My feelings of depression, unhappiness, and disappointment were so severe, I became a perpetual seeker of help. The question remained what kind of help.

The clinical depression I was going through contributed to low moods with difficulty sleeping, change in appetite, hopelessness, pessimism, and even thoughts of suicide. The disorders and anxieties I have mentioned above are and have been a limiting factor for me in achieving my full potential. Being homeless, without a decent roof over my head, is a serious contributing matter in all this anxious neurosis.

My GP was helpful in one respect: how to feel less lonely. She explained to me that being unwanted is the worst disease that any human being can experience. And that loneliness does not come from having no people about one, but from being unable to communicate the things that seem important. She suggested I tackle my lonely lifestyle first. She suggested examples like having time for voluntary work: ever since she introduced me to Groundswell, a national charity that supports homeless people, I've tried to take more control of my life. I have greater

influence on the services I use and aim to play a full role within the community.

I have tried most of the therapies and suggestions put forward by the surgery, such as massage and aromatherapy, attending a theology group, and therapeutic sessions for those who have been victims of persecution and domestic violence. Not to forget chess, puzzles, crosswords or scrabble that I enjoy playing as well. I tried all the above to deal with loneliness.

But I realised that loneliness doesn't mean social isolation. This was the first lesson that I learnt. As I believe I'm generally a nice and kind person. This is based on the feedback I have received, from people of all walks of life with whom I've happened to interact. I have to admit it is not just easy or simple to get on with everyone. Not because I don't want to get on with people but sometimes due to issues and things beyond my reasoning, I try to avoid fellows who invade my privacy that can cause despair. This is not to say intrusions are unwelcome. I like intrusions that are necessary for health.

It was through focusing on these activities, that I found empowerment and self awareness, and therefore the ability to treat my mental health issues and also address the serious barriers to finding a home. Giuseppe Conlon House is for me an emergency solution. It has alleviated the problem of not knowing where to turn. Here, I'm no longer facing the diseases and symptoms that come with homelessness. For instance diarrhoea, which may pass as a minor inconvenience to the well-housed, can present a major hurdle for a homeless person.

There remains the task of uplifting my soul, establishing a hopeful future. And getting out of homelessness. At the moment my situation is: firstly continuing with what works for me, and secondly continuing at Giuseppe Conlon House. Both these require a process of adapting to changing environments, to growing up and ageing, to healing when damaged, to suffering. Lastly, tackling my homelessness embraces the future and so includes anguish and the inner resources needed to live with it. This aloneness is an aspect of the human condition, and out of it grows my creativity.

Edwin M. Kalerwa is a guest at Giuseppe Conlon House.

The quiet joy of simple volunteering

[continued from p5]

a bicycle workshop and other activities.

Volunteering brings unusual insights and opportunities and whilst at one level it is possible to be visionary and romantic about the efforts of Giuseppe Conlon House, none of us should be blind to the challenges of intentional community living. The building itself is old and badly heated. The kitchen is not modern. The individuals who live together have their ups and downs just like everyone else. Guest residents have very big life challenges both in their past and most likely in their future. On top of all those practical and emotional demands, many of the volunteers are dedicated nonviolent peace activists who take their commitment as far as they can, including to court.

Through my service I have witnessed a community both in constant semi-permanent upheaval internally through its changing volunteers and guests, but also of lived transformation. Giuseppe Conlon House seeks to both transform itself but also transform and challenge the world in which it inhabits. It sets an example of hope by demonstrating the possibility of community and service. Its very existence is a defiance against the apparent order of things in which greed, selfishness and consumerism dominate. It shows that it is possible to create relationships with local traders and to use food which otherwise would be wasted. It is possible to feed, clothe and care for groups of people who might otherwise be destitute. It is possible to be content and satisfied without material gain. It is also possible to have a good laugh at the madness of the world outside in the kitchen at the end of a hard day with a group of people who are simply great. It warms my heart and I give thanks for my opportunity to serve.

Marigold Bentley is Head of Peace Programmes and Faith Relations for Quakers in Britain.

She has worked in peace and international relations since the early 1980's. She is married to Christopher and they have two daughters.

Marigold has volunteered by serving food on the St Mellitus night in LCW for about 5 years.

Resistance is futile

Br Aidan

I am small, and of no reputation; yet do I not forget thy commandments' – Ps. 119

Published in 1947, only a few months after his death, Hans Fallada's *Every Man Dies Alone (Jeder stirbt für sich allein)* tells the story of an ordinary, working-class couple in Berlin who, early in the Second World War, find themselves engaged in a novel and seemingly quixotic exercise in German resistance. Each Sunday the factory foreman, Otto Quangel, painstakingly writes out subversive, anti-Nazi messages onto postcards which he and his wife carefully place in office blocks around the city. They are eventually caught out after a prolonged game of cat and mouse with the Gestapo. Arrested and tortured, they are condemned to death for high treason.

The book is based on the true case of Otto and Elise Hampel, whose police file Fallada was able to get a hold of after the war. At first glance he found their efforts 'uninspiring'. In the novel Otto is dismayed to learn that all but eighteen of the over two hundred cards he wrote were handed straight to the police. For those who discovered them, living under the terror of universal espionage, they generated nothing but panic. But Fallada reassessed his initial judgement, and around their story he crafted a sprawling, gripping tale that offers a convincingly nuanced portrayal of the nature of resistance, and a redemptive story of often compromised attempts to stay 'decent' (*anständig*) under the overwhelming pressure of 'hatred, blood and tears'.

The culture of resistance that Fallada explores is staged by deeply flawed, morally ambiguous human beings. Otto, a cold, flinty and seemingly loveless character who lives for his work and who all his life has jealously guarded his peace and quiet, is roused to action only by the death of his son. There is the otherwise apolitical pet shop keeper, Hetty, who harbours an ungrateful, thieving rogue on the run from the Gestapo. Her chief motivation is hatred of the agency

that liquidated her husband. There is the overworked, harrassed and lonely postwoman who is broken by the anti-Jewish atrocities committed by her beloved son, her last thread of hope. Round about them is a cast of layabouts, drunks and petty criminals who, in their own unintentional way, throw sand into the machine that would have willingly exterminated them as 'unfit' for life.

They are martyrs to the truth by force of circumstance, and their resistance is an uneven affair, hampered by self-interest, cowardice and doubt. If there was any impetus, any power driving it forward, it was suffering in the flesh. As Geoff Wilkes notes in his Afterword, 'Among the German people, collaboration was not necessarily prompt, uncoerced or unconditional, and resistance was not always immediate, impassioned or uncompromising'.

Contrasting Fallada's own somewhat inglorious record of resistance with Arendt's portrait of the pen-pushing mass murderer Adolf Eichmann, Wilkes

marked chiefly by their humanity. To remain human: this is the great task. To our surprise it is misfortune, loss and sorrow, and even our sins of weakness, that emerge as the most effective help-mates.

In a scene shortly before Otto's execution he is visited by the prison chaplain, a man who despises all that is weak and 'flabby', and who rejects compromise of any kind: 'the man of God must be a fighter in these times'. We are to understand that he is an enthusiastic collaborator, and he serves his God as he serves his Fuhrer: blindly and to the letter. In the exchange that follows we can hear a faint echo of Jesus' trial before Pilate. ('What is truth?'):

'I would ask you not to tell my wife that I've been executed before her..'

'But that would be a lie, Quangel, and as a man of God I cannot violate His eighth commandment'

'So you never lie, Reverend?..'

'I would hope I've always done my utmost to keep God's commandments'



Elise and Otto Hampel, the original postcard writers. Photo credit: open commons

In this meeting it is Quangel, an atheist to the last, who emerges as the more Christ-like figure: the man of sorrows, bearing the sins of the world. With him Fallada leads us to the cross, but no further in understanding the ethical significance of his resistance. Like the other characters, his efforts have been a failure; they have achieved nothing but shame and suffering. But as Otto's wife reflects on her doubts about the efficacy of so 'small' an act as dropping seditious postcards, she

realises,

'whether their act was big or small, no one could risk more than his life. Each according to his strength and abilities, but the main thing was, you fought back.'

'To feel' as Otto later explains to his cellmate, 'that we behaved decently till the end'.

Holocaust Memorial Day 2018

Br Aidan is an Anglican Benedictine monk of Mucknell Abbey in Worcestershire. He was formerly a volunteer at Giuseppe Conlon House.

Fallada, H. *Alone in Berlin*, translated by Michael Hofmann, Penguin, London, 2009

This Evil Thing

a play by Michael Mears

Valerie Flessati

Prime Minister Asquith, Methodist teacher Bert Brocklesby and his fiancé Annie Wainwright, Bertrand Russell and Catherine Marshall of the No-Conscription Fellowship, military officers, Sunderland footballer Norman Gaudie, and fellow conscientious objectors from the First World War, all crowded into the church next to Giuseppe Conlon House on 22 February. These and many other characters were brilliantly created before 140 spellbound spectators by Michael Mears in his one-man show *This Evil Thing*.

The 'evil thing' in question was conscription, as described by Clifford Allen, chairman of the No-Conscription Fellowship and an 'absolutist' whose health was broken by prison conditions and solitary confinement. The play includes an exhilarating 1916 NCF meeting held in Bishopsgate while a hostile crowd gathered outside. To reduce provocation, Fenner Brockway, a founder of the NCF, proposed that rather than clap and cheer, members should wave their handkerchiefs by way of applause. Michael Mears had us repeat this gesture to show what it must have looked like.

This Evil Thing is a very clever piece of writing in that it conveys so vividly and accurately the experience of First World War conscientious objectors, taking us through the dilemma of decision-making - whether or not to fight - and the unfairness of the tribunal system. At least Bert Brocklesby had a chance to state his objection based on his Christian beliefs. 18-year-old Harold Bing was immediately dismissed because the tribunal judged him too young to have a conscience. Socialists and atheists were similarly told they didn't have consciences.

But dilemmas were not over with the Tribunal. Forced into the Non-Combatant Corps, Brocklesby, Gaudie, and other absolutists faced a daily struggle to determine what they should, or should not, comply with in conscience. Peeling potatoes? For officers they would not peel; for fellow COs they would. Our anti-war heroes had to make it up as they went along: there was no blueprint any more than there is today. There were

deep divisions between COs about how far to take their stand, and what could be expected of others, when the punishment was so severe. Mears showed us what Field Punishment No 1 meant - a torture known as 'Crucifixion'. The drama is most tense when Brocklesby's group is sent to France. They knew that they were deemed to be 'on active service' across the Channel, and disobeying orders carried the death penalty. Thanks to the intervention of Catherine Marshall, who engineered a meeting with Asquith, their death sentences were commuted to ten years' penal servitude. The military officer who read out their sentences acknowledged that the COs were extremely brave. Norman Gaudie's Boulogne diary reveals how calmly they accepted their fate:

Tuesday: adult school at night. Subject, prejudice. Opened by J.H. Brocklesby - good time.

Wednesday: Talk on materialism by A. Martlew

Friday: heavy rain.

Saturday: Sentenced to be shot. Commuted to ten years' penal servitude.

Michael Mears' acting is astonishing and athletic. At one point he was crouching on the floor, peering through an imaginary hole to conduct a conversation between Brocklesby and Gaudie, adjacent cell-mates in Richmond Castle. Each line meant switching between a Yorkshire and a Geordie accent. The 75-minute play is a tour de force.

The Mattison Road church space was perfect for this event and the GCH community did a great job of making everyone welcome. Not

only was the subject matter of *This Evil Thing* so much in keeping with Catholic Worker principles, but it was an opportunity for many local people who made up the audience to discover a 'house of hospitality'. They responded warmly when they heard that the tinned food under the benches wasn't there in case they got peckish during the performance but was for homeless refugees. Someone wrote on the evaluation card: "Fantastic performance in a wonderful location / added poignancy of the church's current use. Thank you for putting on such a moving piece".

I'm a member of the small group that brought *This Evil Thing* to GCH. Haringey First World War Peace Forum is uncovering the hidden history of local First World War resistance. We have researched the biographies of the 350 COs in Haringey and you can read them on our website.

With a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund we will be running some community and school workshops about a CO sculpture we're installing in Bruce Castle museum in early May. Later in 2018 we will publish a local CO walk, and our project will conclude on 15 May 2019 with the unveiling of a plaque honouring the COs - outside the Salisbury hotel on Green Lanes where anti-war meetings took place.

If you'd like to know more please visit: conscientiousobjectionremembered.wordpress.com

Valerie Flessati is a vice-president of Pax Christi and has a special interest in peace history. She is one of the volunteer cooks from St Mellitus parish, Tollington Park N4, which has supported GCH since it opened.



Michael Mears performs at Giuseppe Conlon House photography: Al Johnson



Scott and Claire Schaeffer-Duffy speak in London

Monday 14th May

Friends House, Euston Road, London

Scott and Claire will be speaking on their life and experience as life long Catholic Workers.

They first joined the Catholic Worker movement in 1982, founding their house, St Theresa and St Francis Catholic Worker House with two others in Worcester, Massachusetts. They raised their family there, offered hospitality to the poor, engaged in peace activism, and many other campaigns. They have spent time in jail for the sake of their beliefs.

Scott has recently published a book, *Nothing is Impossible*. They are both keen long distance runners

New! Catholic Workers in Kent

The Kent Catholic Worker meets weekly for prayer, discussion, sharing and planning. Presently we grow vegetables on an organic system on two plots. We produce a quarterly newspaper. In response to an expressed need from the homeless folk we work with, we provide Sunday lunch, a range of activities and personal care. We keep a monthly prayer vigil at Dover Docks, for the many refugees seeking asylum. Lastly we are working towards launching our own house of hospitality in East Kent in the near future.

email- infokentcatholicworker@yahoo.com

Twitter @kCatholicWorker

Phone +44 (0) 7519 956531

Address c/o- St Marys Vicarage, Taswell Street, Dover CT16 1SE

Kurdish chicken and eggs

Azad learnt this simple but popular recipe from his mother. It is a favourite at lunchtime in Kurdistan.

Ingredients

- 1 whole chicken in pieces
- 3 tins of chickpeas
- 3 potatoes
- 3 diced onions
- 3 cloves of garlic
- 1 tablespoon of oil
- 1 tube of tomato puree
- 1 tablespoon of garlic powder
- 1 tablespoon of paprika
- 1 tablespoon of cumin
- 1 tablespoon of coriander powder
- 6 hardboiled eggs

For rice

- 1 kg Kurdish rice
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 2 tablespoons oil
- 1 teaspoon cardamom
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 teaspoon cumin seeds
- 1 teaspoon cloves

Method

Wash chicken and leave aside. Peel potatoes and cut into cubes
Add oil into saucepan and fry diced onion and then garlic. Add three glasses of water and salt to taste
Add chicken, potatoes and spices
Cook for 10 minutes
Add chickpeas and cook for 10 minutes. In a separate saucepan, hard boil 6 eggs.
Directions for rice: Add oil and spices to new saucepan and fry until fragrant. Add water and salt. Add rice. Cook on high flame for 10 minutes. Simmer until cooked. Add the hard boiled eggs to the rice

Upcoming Events

20 April: Hackney's Street Ceilidh, in aid of Urban Table, LCW, Grow Heathrow. Music from Grow Heathrow, at The Round Chapel, 2 Powerscroft Road, E5 0PU, 7pm

www.facebook.com/urban.table.10

24 April: The Climate Emergency: Building a Direct Action Movement, talk with Roger Hallam of Rising Up, 6-8pm, Giuseppe Conlon House

9-13 May: Catholic Worker Eurogathering, yearly meeting, Dulmen, Germany, (contact us for more info)

14 May: Scott and Claire Schaeffer-Duffy, Catholic Workers from Worcester, MA, London visit

2 June: Catholic Worker Farm Open Day, 3pm, Lynsters Farm, Rickmansworth, WD3 9XJ

29 June - 1 July: Farm Fest Music Weekend, The Catholic Worker Farm

20 - 22 July, European Christian Anarchist Conference, The Catholic Worker Farm

Regular events

Daily Prayers Mon – Sat 9:00 am
Bible Sharing Second Thursday of the month, 7:00 pm

Radical Reading Group, Fourth Thursday of the month, 7:00 pm

Vigil for Refugees

Third Tuesday, Home Office, Marsham St. 12:30pm

All welcome. Call 020 8348 8212 for more details

All events at Giuseppe Conlon House, 49 Mattison Road, N4 1BG - unless otherwise stated

Unfortunately, our house is not accessible for wheelchair users as there are a lot of steps throughout the building.

Write in

We warmly invite You, the reader, to comment on what is written here. Please keep your letters topical and brief. We will include interesting letters in our next issue. We also welcome drawings and poems.



GIUSEPPE

CONLON

HOUSE

IS LOOKING FOR LIVE-IN VOLUNTEERS & COMMUNITY MEMBERS!

Giuseppe Conlon House is a house of hospitality of the London Catholic Worker and part of the international Catholic Worker movement.

We are a young Christian ecumenical community based in North London where we live together with 18 male destitute asylum seekers and forced migrants. We also help run a weekly soup kitchen, organise public talks and events, publish a newsletter, and take non-violent action against arms-trade, militarism, nuclear weapons, and in solidarity with refugees and migrants.

Community members and volunteers live and work full-time at Giuseppe Conlon House, sometimes sharing rooms. Tasks are diverse and include housekeeping, repairs, gardening, administration, support work, organising events, taking part in meetings, creative projects and simply befriending and spending time with guests.

Wish List for our House of Hospitality

Food

easy-cook rice
peanut butter
chickpeas
coconut milk
lentils
kidney beans
tinned tomatoes
cooking oil
brown rice
mayonnaise
cheese
low fat spread
tahini
spices & herbs

muesli
cereal
fruit juice and squash
herbal teabags
chilli sauce
nuts & seeds

Toiletries

toilet paper
toothpaste
toothbrushes
deodorant
shampoo
liquid soap
tissues

Eco-friendly cleaning products, :

anti-bacterial spray
multi-purpose cleaner
toilet cleaner
laundry detergent
floor cleaner

Miscellaneous

NEW Men's underwear
size M-XL
sturdy men's shoes in good
condition
tealights
paint

Find our ethical shopping tips at www.londoncatholicworker.org/ethicalwishlist.pdf
Many of our guests do not eat pork for religious reasons so please do not donate pork products.
Also, please do not donate soup, tinned spaghetti, baked beans, christmas puddings and mince pies as we already have enough.

Support our work

We are a part of the radical, Christian, pacifist Catholic Worker movement started in 1933 in New York by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin. There are now over 150 houses and communities in the United States and in other countries. Catholic Worker houses are financially independent. There are no headquarters, nor is there a central organization. More information is available on the U.S website www.catholicworker.com.

At Giuseppe Conlon House we run a house of hospitality for around twenty homeless and destitute asylum seekers who are not allowed to work or claim benefits. In collaboration with two local churches we also serve a meal for up to fifty people in Hackney on Sunday afternoons.

Cash donations

We are not paid for this work. We receive nothing from the government. For reasons to do with our political witness, we are not a registered charity.

We are all volunteers, so we are able to make the best possible use of what we are given, for the benefit of those in need.

Bills! We rely on our readers' donations to pay all utility bills, building repairs, volunteer and guest expenses, printing and household supplies.

If you would like to support our work at the house please consider sending us a donation or setting up a standing order.

- £20 will pay for one day of heating at Giuseppe Conlon House
- £30 covers the costs of one Urban Table meal for 60 guests
- £50 covers one week's housekeeping including items like milk, sugar, margarine, toilet paper and cleaning products
- £150 will pay for a volunteer's monthly expenses including transport

Ways to donate

Cheque: payable to 'London Catholic Worker', to Giuseppe Conlon House, 49 Mattison Road, London N4 1 BG

Online: London Catholic Worker, Triodos Bank, Account No. 20066996 Sort Code: 16 58 10

Paypal: a 'donate button' is on the front page of our website www.londoncatholicworker.org

Please consider setting up a regular donation. You can use the Standing Order Form provided below

We would be very grateful for any help you can give us.

Our accounts are available on request

<h1 style="margin: 0;">Standing Order Form</h1> Please use block letters	
I wish to pay the London Catholic Worker £10/ £20/£40/other amount per month/ other	
Payments to be made monthly/ other First Payment to be made on: / / 18 and monthly thereafter	
Name of your bank	
Address of your bank	
Your account name	
Your account number	
Your bank sort code	
Please pay: Triodos Bank Deanery Road Bristol BS1 5AS	For the Credit of: London Catholic Worker Account Number 20066996 Sort Code: 16 58 10 Until further notice the sum of the value indicated above
Signed	Date
Please return to : London Catholic Worker 49 Mattison Road London N4 1BG	Your Name and Address
	Email