



Quaker Peace
& Social Witness

Peaceworker journal letter from London

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Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament Peace Education Programme

Dear Friends,

It's an exciting time to be a Peace Educator. In 2019 hundreds of thousands of young people walked out of their classrooms on strike, participating in a global youth uprising and asserting their right to a safe, secure and sustainable future. As Ellis Brooks, Quakers in Britain's Peace Education & Engagement Coordinator put it, young climate strikers 'have put climate breakdown on the agenda', and have 'taught us about our responsibility to challenge injustice'. Climate change activism is not, after all, particularly distant from peace education work. Two notable organisations, the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, and the Outrider Foundation, list both climate change and nuclear issues as the two most

pressing threats to humanity and peace. Given that my placement at CND Peace Education sees me tour the country helping young people think critically and realise their potential for change-making, it's significant that this year *I've* been learning from *them*.

Since last I wrote, I've gained a sense of ownership over the work I've been undertaking, and have been able to turn ambitious ideas and cautious questions into the draft pages of a new teaching pack. Featuring six lessons on gender, race, identity and nuclear weapons, the pack aims to provide teachers from subjects as disparate as Maths, English, History, Geography, Art and Drama with new, exciting ways to discuss nuclear weapons and social issues in the classroom. This is my main responsibility during my time as a Peaceworker with CND Peace Education, and the pack will continue to be useful

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once this placement has finished. The lessons will serve to get the students reflecting on:

- How ideas of masculinity affect how we think about strength, security, and nuclear deterrence.
- How anti-nuclear activism has troubled our gendered assumptions about the military, for example at Greenham Common.
- What the art of atomic bomb survivors can teach us about empathy, ethnicity, and peace.
- How colonial legacies still affect politics around traditional land rights and resource extraction, looking at a uranium mine in Northern Australia.

Whilst I've appreciated the freedom of designing my own teaching resources, this doesn't mean it hasn't been a challenging experience. However, I've found great support and respect for my work, whether from colleagues at CND, or from the opportunity to present my work-in-progress to fellow Peace Educators at the spring meeting of the Peace Education Network. Constructive criticism from those who have been involved in peace education (and anti-nuclear campaigning!) for longer than I have has helped me discern what it will take for my lessons to be effective, and how to 'make it happen' without forcing this or that learning outcome.

Reading around, researching and writing the pack is an ongoing project, and one

that is accompanied not just by a sense of ownership, but also development. It's the fulcrum around which I've been able to develop my skills professionally, and my spirit personally. I completed a Level 1 course in Philosophy for Children, Colleges and Communities (P4C) in February, and got to see just how much a facilitator can achieve in a workshop, armed only with a few materials and willing minds. I've also taken to archival work, perusing the CND collections at the London School of Economics' Women's Library. Some notable finds here led to me delivering an interactive workshop in Cambridge, which tested out some drama activities for a lesson on the Greenham Common Peace Camp. Additionally, my appreciation of the classroom as a space of learning has been expanded too, when I 'shadowed' several art teachers and observed their practice. This gave me the confidence to take my rather intellectualised learning objectives, and produce appropriately-pitched activities for a greater array of subjects – it's this that, I hope, will get these teaching resources used, and the students genuinely engaged.

Yet, for all these exciting developments in both my work and myself, I'm minded to reflect on the relationship I presently have with my work. Just as it affords me the opportunities to develop and grow, it challenges my understanding of peace and 'peacework'. A big factor in my application to become a Peacemaker was the idea of getting 'stuck in', and of working for peace

'here and now'. My work, in contrast, is necessarily slower. As a Peace Educator, I need to be concerned with laying the foundations for a culture of lasting peace, not just immediate conflict-resolution. I can get some of that satisfaction in the workshops I now confidently run – in prompting students to interrogate their own opinions, or to try and empathise with the opinions of others. But I can also get a sense of purpose in building the capacity of teachers to broach this issues themselves, by providing convenient, affordable and engaging teaching resources for them to utilise.

The aim of the game is to make peace seem attractive and attainable on a scale as intimate as the classroom. When this occurs, transformation needn't seem scary or radical, but pragmatic, sensible and, ideally, part of a broader culture of learning.

However, as I've been so wonderfully reminded during these months of fervent political demonstration in London and beyond, learning is not *only* cultivated in the classroom but in any aspect of our lives. In 2019, I've been both learning and educating in many different places: rallying to remember the Fukushima disaster, protesting outside NATO Headquarters, participating in a discussion panel at the University of Cambridge (alongside a former Defence Secretary!), exhibiting at the National Education Union Conference, marching in Lancashire dressed as a nuclear waste barrel, and most recently,

staging a die-in at Westminster Abbey in protest of a 'Service of Thanksgiving' for Britain's nuclear weapons. In truth, I've been 'getting stuck in' all along!

In Peace,

Joe Jukes