

Youth & Militarism Conference

April 26—29, 2015

Peterborough, ONT

Youth & Militarism
A Cross Canada Conference
Nogojwanong and Shaanii'us
(Peterborough, Ontario, and Shawnigan Lake, BC)
April 24th-26th, 2015

A conference devoted to the issues surrounding youth and militarism in Canada

Participate in B.C. or Ontario but connect with Friends across the continent.

quaker.ca/youth

In partnership with:

Peterborough Monthly Meeting	OPIRG Peterborough	OUR Ecovillage	Food Not Bombs Peterborough	Christian Peace Maker Teams	Rotary World Peace Partners	PeaceQuest
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Resources

- 1) Christian Peacemaker Teams: <http://www.cpt.org/>
- 2) PeaceQuest: <http://peacequest.ca>
- 3) Ontario Public Interest Research Group Peterborough: <http://opirgptbo.ca>
- 4) Food Not Bombs Peterborough: <http://foodnotbombspeterborough.org>
- 5) War Resisters: <http://www.resisters.ca>
- 6) Novels by Jamie Swift available for purchase online
- 7) Youth 4 Global Change: <https://www.facebook.com/youth4globalchange>
- 8) End Immigration Detention Peterborough: <http://endimmigrationdetention.com/>

Christian Peacemaker Teams Workshop

Peace is Contagious.

“If only 3.5% of a population stands behind a non-violent movement, it succeeds every time.”

Sometimes, “peacekeeping” happens in the service of empire.

In Haiti, the UN is considered to be occupying the country in the service of Canada, USA, and France. The war in Afghanistan is officially called a “complex peace operation.” When dressed up as “peace enforcement,” peacekeeping can simply look like an aggressive war.

Peacekeeping need not be imperial, though. Peacekeeping doesn’t need to come from the barrel of a gun.

Unarmed civilian peacekeeping provides an alternate model. From the Pathans of India in the 1930s, who faced massacre at the hands of Britain’s imperial troops, to the Christian Peacekeepers in the Hebron Hills, who faced down Israeli Occupation Forces with only a smile, unarmed peacekeepers have a long history of thwarting conflict.

It works. And it’s cheap.

While capitalism thrives off of war, creating billions of dollars of profits for the rich who own the companies that build the bombs, guns, and tanks that maim the poor around the world, only four minutes of global arms spending could pay the full-time salary of 2000 unarmed peacekeepers.

Can you imagine a different way?

On 18 April 1946 from his jail cell during the Nuremberg War Trials, Hermann Goring gave this statement to Gustave Gilbert: “Naturally, the common people don’t want war. . . . But after all, it is the leaders of the country who determine the policy and it is always a simple matter to drag people along whether it is a democracy, or a fascist dictatorship. . . . The people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same way in any country.”

We have created this zine as a way of providing a comprehensive summary of the Youth and Militarism Conference of Spring 2015. Zines are independent publications that cover a wide variety of topics including social justice, anti-oppression, music, DIY culture, art, environmentalism and other themes usually underrepresented in popular media. They have traditionally been used in activist circles to unite a group of people with similar interests and to spread information among communities.

This booklet is meant to be a takeaway from the conference that will allow the reader to retain knowledge learned in the workshops, disseminate useful information, and have access to resources and tools for activism. Some of the topics covered in this booklet include peacebuilding skills, community action planning, the criminalization of dissent, the militarism of police, the media, and education, and the ties between food systems and war.

Ontario Public Interest Research Group (OPIRG) Peterborough and Demilitarize McGill Workshop

The workshop provided tools and resources for mapping a school's ties to or complicity with Canadian militarism and imperialism, and identified strategic issues to organize around. Although this workshop focused specifically on measures that can be taken to challenge a school's contribution to militarism, the information can be applied to any larger institution.

The first step is to gather information about institutions you are affiliated with to learn what ties to war they have. Many public institutions provide financial information online or upon request. Pension plan reports, balance sheets, statement of changes in financial position, notes to financial statements and statements of revenues and expenditures are all documents that can tell you where the money going into these institutions is invested. For example, McGill has two student research laboratories that have been used to develop weapons for the military in order to receive funding.

Next you should find out who is in charge of making financial decisions at the institution in question. Who makes the investments? Who is putting their money into the institution? What policies are in place when dealing with finances? At McGill, an ethics counsel meets regularly to determine whether the research labs are ethical; however the political climate of the institution and the individuals and groups that the ethics counsel reports to may impact the objectivity of well-meaning policies.

In order to facilitate change, it is important to network with other individuals and organizations that also oppose the institution's contributions to militarism. Unions, PIRGS, peace groups, and other activist circles are good places to find allies. If writing letters to decision makers or presenting your case to the board of directors proves ineffective, direct action may be required to invoke change. As has been the case at McGill, attempts to reform policy have always fallen through at the last minute and have taken energy and resources away from other forms of disrupting military research. Protests, demonstrations, panels, awareness campaigns, and blockading may be more effective in sending a clear message to the institutional leaders: we refuse to be complicit in militarism.



The seven principles are:

- 1) Food is a basic human right
- 2) Agrarian reform is essential—we must restore the relationship between people and the land. This includes reinstating indigenous land for self-determination.
- 3) Protecting natural resources—this includes animal rights and the abolishment of invasive exploitation of female animals and the end of factory farming
- 4) Reorganizing the food trade—superstructures like FIPA that allow independent businesses to pollute the land and resources and sue the people who halt this process must be destroyed
- 5) Ending the globalization of hunger—relocalizing diets and eradicating monocultures
- 6) Social peace
- 7) Democratic control

Rachelle, the workshop facilitator, also added an eighth principle: that we must work together to defend the land. This includes helping indigenous people stop attempts from the government to take their land from them.

To combat the privatization of food and the use of food scarcity as a weapon, Food Not Bombs serves the community a free vegan meal usually derived from surplus food from grocery stores and farmers markets. It is a global grassroots movement with many different chapters in many different cities across the world, including Peterborough, Toronto, and Hamilton. It is also a consensus-based initiative that holds social justice and anti-oppression as its key tenants. Support your local Food Not Bombs!

Youth 4 Global Change and End Immigration Detention Workshop

This workshop explained immigration and the confusing bureaucracy immigrants must navigate through in order to obtain their status. (ex Family status, Worker Status and Refuge Status). In order to better understand these issues, we got into small, facilitated groups, were given fictional scenarios of families/individuals who faced difficult situations in their home countries and had to leave due to war/financial reasons. As a group we had to decide what actions to take; no decision was simple.

Almost all choices were risky and some led to possible imprisonment in immigration detention centers. This was an eye-opener to what life is like for individuals, especially since one scenario turned out to be a real life story of one of the facilitators of the group. Themes of imperialism, nationalism, immigration and immigration detention in Canada, micro level and macro levels (from personal stories, to facts and stats).

Canada's immigration and citizenship policies, practices, and immigration laws leave a lot of logic to be desired, and on a more macro level because we are imprisoning people who are fleeing conditions in the Global South caused directly by Western imperialism and neocolonialism.



The immigration detention workshop was an important reminder of how militarism is both a result of many other cultural/societal forces (colonialism + imperialism, both based in white supremacy) and a cause of social ills here as well as abroad (e.g. people displaced by military action in their home countries face harsh conditions in Canada as well.)

The islamophobia that justifies attacks in the middle east/north Africa is also what justifies laws & actions that hurt Muslims in Canada. The economic system that permits and encourages mining that displaces and poisons people, climate change, and dispossession also turns immigrants into an economic product and weapons development into a positive, profit-making venture. Without making these connections and tackling all of these factors together, can we effectively claim to be working for an end to war and militarism?

— Hana

WWI marked the first time that there was a global food system, a cohesive need for resources in the face of food scarcity. The United States realized that they could profit off of selling their food to European nations whose land had been destroyed by the war—WWI saw the price of wheat double. After the war, many of the war torn countries saw a need to better make sure that the nation was fed, and turned to communism to fulfil this need. The popularity of communism and shared benefits frightened capitalists who enforced the idea that the individual is more important than the collective—that anyone can thrive and succeed in a capitalist society if they work hard enough.

This led to the Green Revolution, which refers to the dedication of research, development, and technology transfer to greatly increase agriculture production worldwide. They dreamed up the great lie: 'there is not enough food to feed everyone on earth, but don't worry, we can help'. Nations began solidifying what their exports were—cornering the market in regards to a specific crop or product to capitalize profits. Some examples of this are banana crops in the South America, tobacco in the U.S. and sugar cane in the Caribbean. Capitalist nations "helped" developing nations by providing them with resources, in return for them growing a specific crop in demand. Monocultures thrived, destroying ecosystems and habitats and increasing profits. People with money, land, and resources hoard food and control exactly who gets it and who doesn't. This is how they hold their power.

In response to this greatly unsustainable way of feeding the world, many groups united in an attempt to change the status quo. One of these groups is La Via Campesina, a group composed of fishers, farmers, gatherers, etc. who believe that food producers should be in control of the food system. They developed seven principles of food sovereignty, which is the concept that it is a right of the peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable means, and it is their right to define their own food and agriculture systems.

Food Not Bombs Peterborough Workshop

For thousands of year, humans had the same goals as any other creature on earth: to feed themselves and to survive. Humans were nomadic, travelling to find food, water, and shelter and moving whenever resources ran scarce. Bodies of water and other resources were shared among people. This is not to romanticize that era—of course there were interpersonal conflicts and fights over resources—but for the most part no person was any more important than another. Every person had the same career: to gather enough food to survive.

This all changed when the human race became sedentary. People began “owning” the land they inhabited, and quickly learned that owning desirable land could benefit you at the expense of others. Many good things came out of this settled period—agriculture, art, language—but the concept of property and its inherent inequality also arose from this lifestyle. People or societies with undesirable or unfertile land found themselves needing to acquire fertile land so that they could provide for themselves, but the desirable land was inhabited and owned by other communities with no desire to relinquish their property, leading to territorial wars.

Those who acquired desirable land on which they could produce food found themselves in a position of great power. Others without food resources needed to eat, and they would have to negotiate with those in power in order to survive. The concept of lineage and ownership was also borne out of this time, meaning that once someone had acquired land and power, their children and relatives would inherit that land, and a shift in the balance of powers was hard to achieve.

For a country like England, isolated from many fertile lands on an island with little to offer, colonization became a mode of survival, as did finding ways of producing goods quicker and cheaper, which contributed to the industrial revolution. Capitalists who realized that this work was most beneficial to them found ways of influencing the public to work in factories—mainly by purchasing farmland and preventing people from growing their own food to sustain themselves, forcing them to move to urban areas to earn money to purchase food.

Prisons
Prisons
Places we don't often think of
Locked away in the corner of our minds
Places we shun criminals
Who endanger us.
But whose faces do we find
Peering at us from behind bars?
A mother who fled to Canada
Desperate to escape fear and hatred.
A young man who fled for his life and
sanity
after living the horrors of war.
People with no other options.
Instead of dangerous criminals
We find souls struggling to stay alive
Souls trying to live a better life
Prisons.
Not necessary restraints
But a dumping ground for the lost
Whom we have failed

- Emily Munniger

War Resisters Panel

This panel detailed the experiences of three men who came to War Resisters through their relationship with different wars: World War II, the Vietnam War, and the War in Iraq. The panel speakers discussed their experiences in coming to Canada to oppose the wars and continued work with people to bring about peace.

Tom Riley: *Vietnam + Peace Corps*

It was not long before Riley saw the hatred around him and the maltreatment of civilians so he left for Canada; he spoke about how Canada is helping USA military in the development and navigation of drones that seek to deploy "enemies". They tend to succeed but at the risk of killing several civilians in the process. It is noteworthy that some drones are for delivering supplies (medicine, food).

Dean Walcot: *War in Iraq*

Walcot opposed the war in Iraq and suffered PTSD but he was still forced to continue to work in stressful conditions. Eventually he found a civilian doctor who prescribed him Zoloft but was denied access to a military psychiatrist/psychologist (denied counseling when he sought it out) and he was forced to continue to work in German hospital across from the morgue where he saw coffins being carried almost daily of civilians and many many small coffins..



An example of corporate war remembrance as seen in Peterborough on April 26, 2015

Canada's Story

Stories, Myth

Making sense of the world

Breathing meaning into life

Uniting us together.

How we tell stories,

What meaning we choose to pass on

What identity we portray

It's a choice.

What choice does Canada make?

What is the story of our identity?

The way we remember war

The stories we tell -

Our identity performed.

Let us tell stories of peace, of hope, of transformation

Remembering not the glory of war

But the tragedy, for tragedy begs not to be repeated

Sculpting our future with the clay of the past

Telling the story of the Canada we want to be.

-Emily Mimminger

Frank Showler: WWII resistor

Showler was a very open war resistor at a time when propaganda was extremely prominent in the media. He spoke to various working groups to extend a message of peace. There is a lot of stigma and fear for "draft-dodgers" and this term is problematic; these are people who fight for peace. American Military and Civilian Courts are tougher on individuals who leave their countries (or who stay..) and speak out to the media (interviews, writing, etc.) despite "freedom of speech".

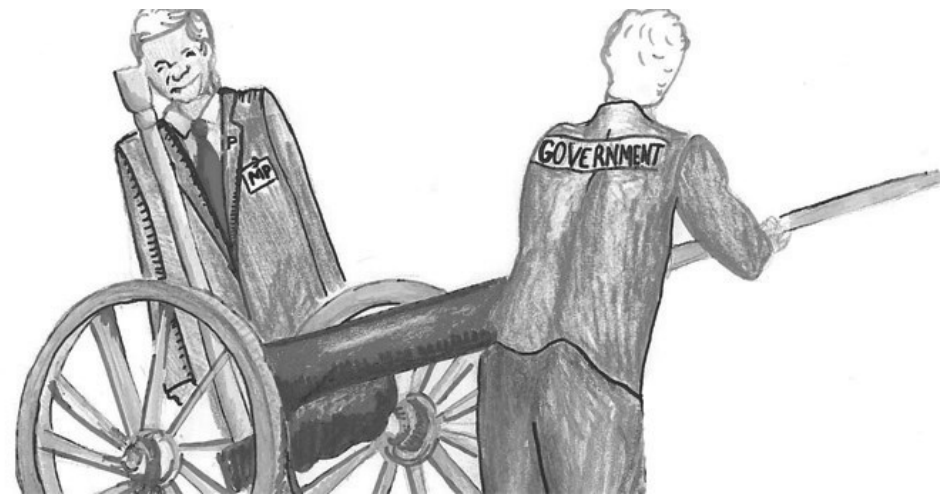


All three men are members of War Resisters which not only presents to conferences like this one but also supports about 20 war resisters who immigrate to avoid being drafted. They are looking to partner with Peterborough people/groups/affiliations and they are looking for people to lobby for peace to local MPs.



This is not to say we shouldn't remember – rather, we need to remember better. We need to be critical of national campaigns that erase the causes and casualties of war as well as disguise Canada's interest in waging more of them. We need to ask ourselves if there's anything odd – some would say completely fucked up – about commemorating the dead on the campus of a university actively developing weapons technology that will guarantee more dead to commemorate for centuries to come.

What we need to remember most of all is that remembrance is useless unless it remembers equally, and unless it actively seeks to dismantle the machinery of war by challenging the institutions that perpetuate it.



Yet every year the appeal to remember is made by the same state that ships those who are honoured by this act off to die, with utter disregard for those who will be affected on the other end of their violence. It erases the experiences of women who are raped during war, individually or as part of a larger system of sexual slavery; children who are murdered, orphaned, or forced to participate in conflicts; queers and trans* people who are raped and killed; indigenous populations who are obliterated in the name of expansion, God, freedom, or defense on the part of the invading country; war resisters or deserters who are persecuted for their beliefs; independent groups who form outside the army during times of conflict to commit acts of sabotage; racialized peoples who face discrimination or internment – and this is only an abbreviated list. These lives often equal or outnumber soldiers, yet on Remembrance Day, it’s only those “who sacrificed their lives in military service on behalf of their country” who are worthy of our solemn reflection.

When the state presents November 11 as a day of national mourning without acknowledging its own role in creating the events that necessitate this mourning in the first place, it’s a reminder that nationalist commemoration has never really been about remembering the full extent of what happens and who is affected during armed conflict. Remembrance Day can all too easily serve as a platform for militaristic nationalism, a means – like the Harper government’s \$28 million promotion of the War of 1812 – of garnering our pride in Canada’s armed forces even as we rattle sabres toward Iran.



PeaceQuest Workshop

“...PeaceQuest sees no glory in war. Wars are tragic failures in the conduct of human affairs. There are no winners.”

PeaceQuest is a public, open, and non-partisan organization that aims to decentralize and remove hierarchy involved in peace-building projects. PeaceQuest also aims to fight the glorification of war. This workshop, hosted by Jolene Simko, encouraged people to take the PeaceQuest logo and ideology and use it to create community events that will encourage peace. Furthermore, it acted as an “Event Planning 101” workshop that could be applied to a wide range of events, such as potlucks, conferences, concerts, artcrawls, parties, and any other event you could think of. Included in the end of the presentation was a great diagram for event planning, which is included in this article.

Jolene first introduced the idea of linking events with issues, where almost any idea you could think of could be framed around a certain issue, such as an anti-poverty potluck, or Youth and Militarism Conference. The simpler an idea is, the easier it will be to plan, so stick to K.I.S.S. (Keep it Simple, Silly) She also mentioned that sometimes the issue at hand should be more of an indirect approach. This is particularly highlighted in her example of hosting a family story telling event, where parents and children share stories from their cultures. This achieves cultural tolerance in the community, even though it is not explicitly the goal of the event.

After the activity has been decided on, the next step is to find people. Think of networking in cafés, restaurants, through friends of friends, etc. You can casually find people who are interested in the issue and event just by asking! Everyone you meet has a potential skill or resource that can help in hosting an event.

Finding Venues to hold events can be tough, but there are places that are usually cheap/free, especially with events based on activism. Think about approaching faith groups, local cafes/bars, and friends with large houses.

Amnesia in Wartime

An article written by Sheehan Moore and Flora Dunster that ties into Jamie Swift’s talk

When we remember, what do we forget?

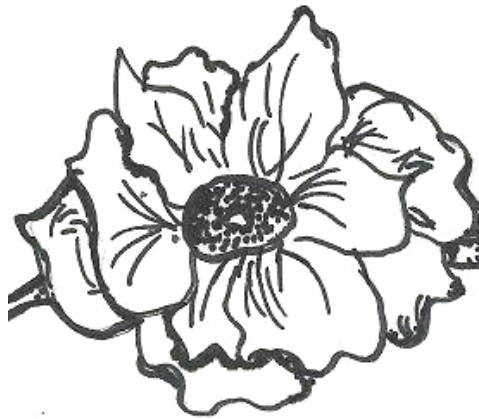
Every November, we are called on to reflect. We pause, writes Associate Vice Principal of University Services Jim Nicell in a recent MRO email, “to remember the thousands of men and women who sacrificed their lives in military service on behalf of their country.” Remembrance Day is framed – by ceremonies like the one this coming Sunday at McGill, and by the rhetoric of the Canadian state – as commemorating the suffering endured by Canadian troops, fighting abroad and dying or returning home. But the way this remembrance takes place does a disservice not only to those troops, but also to everyone who is affected by war, whose lives were and continue to be torn apart by death, displacement, and sexual violence in the course of armed conflict.

When we remember on November 11, it is generally with great sadness for lives destroyed and with horror at the power of war. But these feelings are useless — or worse, can perpetuate more violence — when they are directed only historically and uncritically. What we should remember this Sunday, and always, is that little has changed since 1918 when it comes to war. Soldiers are still working-class people sent to die *en masse* for imperialist interests on behalf of the wealthy. Civilians are still disposable.

For the time being, having these discussions with as many people as possible is the best way to get the public questioning the glory of war. Including the effects of war, the role of peace, and the motives behind war into memorials will help avoid romanticising the military. Avoiding empirical perspectives of remembrance— i.e.: “for king, for country” —and embracing a form of remembrance that highlights the true nature of war can give a population that largely lacks experience in war a sense of what it is like for the thousands of people who have lived through it.

We must be mindful of how the media portrays war. There is a tendency for the government to praise all soldiers (on “our side”, at least) as heroes; for example, Nathan Cirillo, the soldier who was murdered while standing guard the Ottawa War Monument in 2014. But fighting in a war is not inherently heroic; many soldiers were conscripted, or enlisted because they had no other career path, or enlisted for less than noble reasons. Heroism is helping other beings selflessly and in the face of great sacrifice.

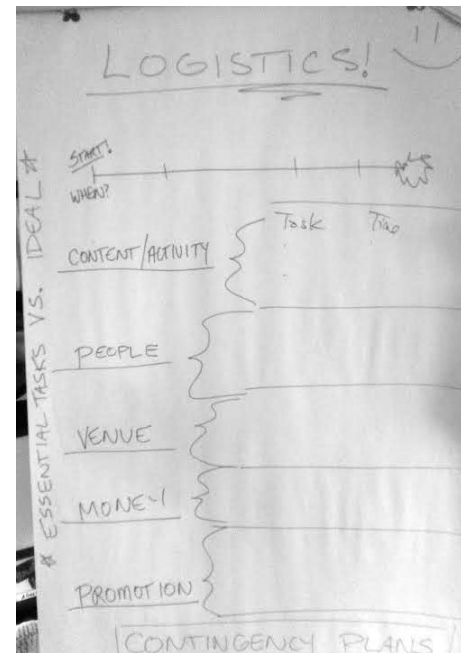
Lastly, we must remember that we do, in some cases, have a responsibility to protect individuals and nations who are threatened by violence. But before that, we have a responsibility to prevent violence and conflict and avoid war as best we can.



Remember, the more access to money you have, the fewer hours you will have to put into event planning. This means you could rent a venue, print more posters, pay speakers or bands, and generally make the event larger. Depending on your timeline, you may choose to crowd source, apply for grants/sponsorships, or maybe accept donations/admission at the door of the event. The more people who donate, the less money you need from them, so don't be afraid to ask a lot of people for a little bit of money.

Promotion of an event can be done by a variety of ways, including social media, e-mail, poster campaigns, word of mouth, press releases, and even by personal invitations. The more personal an approach, the more likely the person is to be interested in attending. In terms of press releases, you can take initiative to do a write up of an event, and include pictures, and send it into radio/news organizations, and they will be more likely to publish about the event and give you “free advertising”.

By keeping these things in mind, you are well on your way to driving positive change and culture into your own communities, and creating peace.



SEVEN KEY ASPECTS OF EVENT PLANNING:

- 1) Purpose
- 2) Content/Activity
- 3) People (audience, organizers)
- 4) Venue
- 5) Money/Resources
- 6) Promotion
- 7) Logistics

Jamie Swift: Contested Terrain Workshop

This workshop focused on how commemoration can be politicized and what the motives and effects related to different forms of remembering war. Swift argued that there has been a shift in the way remembrance has been marketed in recent years; the “never again” attitude of the 50s, 60s and 70s has changed to a story about freedom fighting and war in the name of democracy. Often this attitude can be connected to political tactics: connecting a nation, justifying wars, justifying tough “anti-terror” legislation that infringes upon the rights of a country’s own citizens. At the beginning of the war in Iraq, there were many antiwar demonstrations questioning the motives of the United States. There were also vehement supporters of the war, including a group called “Canadians for Bush”: comprised of two now well known politicians, Tim Hudak and Jim Flaherty.

Remembrance Day ceremonies now include such elaborate events such as jet flypasts, speeches, songs; things that invoke awe in the population and highlight the righteousness of war. What do jets have to do with the War of 1812? Ask the government officials who thought it was necessary to spend \$28 million on the War of 1812 “celebrations”. How are November 11th and the events of WWI connected to the war in Afghanistan? If Canada’s military has always been employed to fight for freedom and civil rights, as we are told by politicians who assure us that we are a peaceful nation, then how come we sent troops to the Boer War, which was fought to control the gold mines of South Africa and where some of the first concentration camps were built by the English to intern mainly women and children? For that matter, what was noble about the British in Canada enlisting indigenous people to fight against the Americans in the War of 1812 only to strip them of their land after the war had finished?

War museums and memorials have their fair share of artwork that demonstrate the tragedy of war. “Grieving Parents”, “2000 Yard Stare” and “Canada Bereft” are good examples of this form of remembrance. But there are also many pieces that glorify war: men standing triumphantly and unafraid of dying for a noble cause. However, a number of these romanticized pieces tend to be created by artists who never saw battle, or who were commissioned to create a piece showing an event that the artist did not personally observe; for example “Death of General Wolfe” by Ben West or “2nd Battle of Ypres” by Richard Jack.

However, the way that remembrance has become almost synonymous with nationalism and unitedness has made it difficult to criticize war remembrance without appearing insensitive and “anti-Canadian”. Of course it is inappropriate to criticize those who enlisted in the military to serve their country and who lost their lives in battle. What we can criticize are the motives behind war, the way “freedom-fighting” has become a talking point for any politician who wishes to justify military spending and the occupation of foreign lands.

You don’t have to look further than the extraordinary backlash derived from the white poppy campaign to see how the nation views criticisms of war. At best, an advocate for peace can be called insensitive; at worst they can be viewed as a sympathizer to the “enemy”, an anti-patriotic moral-less heathen. When governments commemorate wars, what is the role of the antiwar demonstrator? How often do we remember and honour antiwar activists who advocated for peace? How often are they called draft dodgers and traitors to their country? What about the wartime death of Ginger Goodwin, an antiwar protestor and trade union activist who was murdered in 1918 by the Dominion Police after evading military service—how do we commemorate his freedom fighting for the right to abstain from war?