

WAR & PEACE



From memoirs about life in prison to photographs of women campaigning for disarmament, the archives of two peace organisations established during the first world war reveal a fascinating insight into pacifist activism of the time. **Carys Lewis** sheds light on some of the stories that have emerged through the Library's Swords into Ploughshares project.

Born out of war but steeped in pacifism, both the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and the Fellowship of Reconciliation: London Union (FoR) have a rich heritage of actively campaigning for world peace and disarmament and of supporting individuals affected by war.

For the past year, the Library has been busy cataloguing the collections of the British section of WILPF and FoR: London Union. The archives reveal a wealth of information about both influential organisations as they campaigned for peace.

WILPF formed in 1915 when the International Women's Congress met in The Hague, following a resolution to start an organisation to promote peace and to campaign for an end to the first world war. Although over a thousand women travelled from all over the world, representing both belligerent and neutral countries, only three British women attended the Congress, as the others were prevented from travelling by the British government.

Despite these obstacles, WILPF branches quickly formed in Britain, continuing to campaign for peace and disarmament after the war had ended. In 1930, the League launched a disarmament petition under the slogan "War is renounced – Let us renounce armaments".

British WILPF played an active role in promoting the petition, to be presented to the League of Nations World Disarmament Conference in Geneva in 1932, with members attracting signatures by wearing banners calling for disarmament. One had the slogan "Big guns and tanks are forbidden to Germany / Why not abolish all round?", while shop fronts were taken over by window displays encouraging people to "Sign up here against war".

By 1932, over two million signatures had been collected. A British delegation travelled to Geneva, with Margaret Bondfield, the first female cabinet minister, sending them off with a speech on the importance of disarmament. Once in Geneva the numerous crates containing British signatures were met by international

WILPF members, with the campaigners later marching through Geneva carrying posters stating: "Japanese bombs are falling on Chinese cities. What will you choose: war or disarmament?"

FoR formed in 1914 when British Quaker, Henry Hodgkin, and a German Lutheran, Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze, met at a Christian pacifist conference in Germany. Faced with the inevitability of war, they pledged: "We are one in Christ and can never be at war".

Back in Britain, Hodgkin established the Fellowship. Regular public meetings called for an end to the war – some resulting in ugly clashes with supporters of the conflict. In 1916, FoR's London branches merged to form the London Union.

For has a long history of supporting conscientious objectors in their decision not to undertake military service. During both world wars it provided advice and guidance to those conscripted into the army on how to prove they were genuine conscientious objectors.

DIETARY FOR MALE CONVICTS IN CONVICT PRISONS.

MEALS.	DIET C. For MALE Convicts undergoing separate confinement.		DIET D. For MALE Convicts after period of separate confinement when engaged in ordinary In- dustrial Employment. Convicts engaged on certain Forms of Industrial Employment may, on the recommendation of the Medical Officer, receive in addition $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. of butter or margarine daily for breakfast and 2 oz. cheese on Wednesday and Friday for supper.		DIET E. For MALE Convicts after period of separate confinement when employed at specially prescribed forms of Labour.	
	Daily:—		Daily:—		Daily:—	
Breakfast..	Bread	8 oz.	Bread	8 oz.	Bread	8 oz.
	Porridge	1 pint	Gruel, sweetened with $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. sugar	1 pint	Butter or Margarine [§] Porridge	$\frac{1}{2}$ " 1 pint
	Sunday:—		Sunday:—		Sunday:—	
	Bread	6 oz.	Bread	8 oz.	Bread	8 oz.
	Potatoes	12 "	Potatoes	12 "	Potatoes	16 "
	Cooked meat preser- ved by heat.....	5 "	Cooked meat preser- ved by heat.....	5 "	Cooked meat preser- ved by heat.....	6 "
	Monday:—		Monday:—		Monday:—	
	Bread	6 oz.	Bread	8 oz.	Bread	8 oz.
	Potatoes	12 "	Potatoes	12 "	Potatoes	16 "
	Beans	12 "	Beans	12 "	Beans	12 "
	Fat Bacon.....	2 "	Fat Bacon.....	2 "	Fat Bacon.....	2 "
	Tuesday:—		Tuesday:—		Tuesday:—	
	Bread	6 oz.	Bread	8 oz.	Bread	8 oz.
	Potatoes	12 "	Potatoes	12 "	Potatoes	16 "
	Soup	1 pint	Cooked Mutton,) without bone ..)	5 "	Cooked Mutton,) without bone ..)	6 "
	Wednesday:—		Wednesday:—		Wednesday:—	
	Bread	6 oz.	Bread	8 oz.	Bread	8 oz.
	Potatoes	12 "	Potatoes	12 "	Potatoes	16 "
	Suet Pudding	12 "	Pea Soup (Pork)....	1 pint	Pea Soup (Pork)....	1 pint
	Thursday:—		Thursday:—		Thursday:—	
	Bread	6 oz.	Bread	8 oz.	Bread	8 oz.
	Potatoes	12 "	Potatoes	12 "	Potatoes	16 "
	Cooked Beef, with- out bone	5 "	Cooked Beef, with- out bone	5 "	Cooked Beef, with- out bone	6 "
	Friday:—		Friday:—		Friday:—	
	Bread	6 oz.	Bread	8 oz.	Bread	8 oz.
	Potatoes	12 "	Potatoes	12 "	Potatoes	16 "
	Soup	1 pint	Vegetable Soup (Beef)	1 pint	Vegetable Soup (Beef)	1 pint
	Saturday:—		Saturday:—		Saturday:—	
	Bread	6 oz.	Bread	8 oz.	Bread	8 oz.
	Potatoes	12 "	Potatoes	12 "	Potatoes	16 "
	Suet Pudding	12 "	Suet Pudding	12 "	Suet Pudding	16 "
	Sunday:—		Sunday:—		Sunday:—	
	Bread	6 oz.	Bread	8 oz.	Bread	8 oz.
	Potatoes	12 "	Potatoes	12 "	Potatoes	16 "
	Suet Pudding	12 "	Suet Pudding	12 "	Suet Pudding	16 "
Dinner..	Daily:—		Daily:—		Daily:—	
	Bread	8 oz.	Bread	8 oz.	Bread	12 oz.
	Cocoa	1 pint	Cocoa	1 pint	Cocoa	1 pint
	Wednesday and Friday:—		Wednesday and Friday:—		Cheese	2 oz.
Supper	Daily:—		Daily:—		Daily:—	
	Bread	8 oz.	Bread	8 oz.	Bread	12 oz.
	Cocoa	1 pint	Cocoa	1 pint	Cocoa	1 pint
	Wednesday and Friday:—		Wednesday and Friday:—		Cheese	2 oz.

A convict on attaining the third stage may have one pint of tea and 2 oz. additional bread in lieu of gruel or porridge for breakfast.

[§] Butter or margarine to be given for six months in the year, October to March (inclusive). During the remaining months, April to September (inclusive), milk, $\frac{1}{2}$ pint for each convict, to be substituted for butter or margarine, and to be given in the form of milk porridge.

Following the introduction of conscription in 1916, men appeared before Military Service Tribunals when requesting exemption. First world war conscientious objector Frederick Bradley, whose scrapbook is held in the archive, was initially granted exemptions to run the family business. At the fourth tribunal, he stated that he absolutely refused to take life and was eventually sent to Dartmoor prison work camp, where a dietary chart reveals that prisoners received fewer rations than the civilian population.

The LSE archives also hold documents for For employee Stella St John, who was imprisoned in

Holloway in 1943 for her opposition to the war. On her release she wrote a fascinating account of her experience, revealing that prisoners were generally tolerant about her beliefs. Stella comments on all aspects of prison life, including details such as the length of soap given to her on admission to prison and the way incarcerated women dealt with their beauty regimes. She is particularly scathing when describing food, writing the following about porridge: "I had it the first day but never again, it tasted of mould and decay!"

These are a few examples of the fascinating archives catalogued in the Swords into Ploughshares

Project archive, which can be found using Library Search at lse.ac.uk/Library. The project was made possible by funding from the National Cataloguing Grants Programme for Archives. ■



Carys Lewis is Project Archivist for the Swords into Ploughshares archive at LSE.