



Quaker Peace
& Social Witness

Journal Letter from London

Rhianna Louise, September 2016, Journal Letter No 3

Medact

Dear Friends

As summer comes to an end, it's time to write my final peacemaker journal letter and reflect on all that's happened over the last year and where it's taken me.

I'm thrilled to say that I'm now working at ForcesWatch, where my role is to challenge the militarisation of education and civil society in the UK. I'm also continuing to work at Medact part-time, on the Peace and Security programme.

At Medact I'm organising the launch of the report on child recruitment into the UK armed forces, which will be on the evening 18 October at Brighton Sussex and Medical school. It looks to be a fascinating panel discussion – please do take a look at the events page on the Medact website, www.medact.org, to find out more.

I'm also continuing to work with the groups of health through peace campaigners, managing and supporting their projects for the coming year. It was great to see them present and share their work at the Medact Annual General meeting.



The Refugee Solidarity Group present their training on access to healthcare rights for refugees, which they will be delivering across the UK this year.

Rhianna Louise is working for Medact as a UK peacemaker.

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Andrew Feinstein introduces the arms, militarisation and health workshop

This week, the militarisation and arms group will hand in their letter from the health community calling for an end to UK arms sales to Saudi Arabia, to the Department of Business, Education and Industrial Strategy, who are responsible for licensing arms sales. The Refugee

Solidarity Group have multiple dates lined up this autumn to deliver training on access to healthcare rights for refugees and migrants to medical staff and students.

It is testimony to the peacemaker scheme's ability to encourage and mobilise, while providing invaluable and otherwise virtually impossible to come by experience that I'm now able to work for a peace organisation I've admired for many years. The militarism that permeates our culture and education system infuriates me: it props up the circle of violence that engenders insecurity and violent conflict, and it distracts and prevents us from both utilising peaceful, nonviolent and sustainable responses, and from working to stop our planet from slipping further into climate catastrophe.

I'm therefore extremely grateful to Quakers and to Quaker Peace & Social Witness for giving me the experience that has enabled me to work in this area. I'm sad to leave the peacemaker scheme, but excited for the work to come, and looking forward to opportunities to share this work with you all. My ForcesWatch email address is education@forceswatch.net – please do get in touch if you would like me to speak on the topic of militarisation at your meeting, find out more or offer your support.

Finally, all my best wishes to future peacemakers – and here's a picture of this year's team celebrating the next steps we're all about to take.

In peace,

Rhianna

