**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**Annual National Peace History Conference comes to Leeds**

*Holy Trinity Church and Leeds City Museum - October 14 and 15, 2016 –* 100 years since the introduction of conscription during the first world war, the conference explores “Conscience and Conscription and the Resistance to War 1916-2016".

**The Peace History conference, organised by the Movement for the Abolition of War and the International Peace Bureau, has been held annually since 2007.**

Previously held in London (at the Imperial War Museum) or Manchester, this year the conference comes to Leeds for the first time. It is open to everyone, and aims to increase the understanding of past peace movements and activity and alternative ways of responding to conflict, to inform the present and the future.

Recognising the hundredth anniversary of the introduction of conscription during World War 1 the title is ‘Conscience and Conscription: the Resistance to War 1916-2016. The programme focuses on groups and individuals, such as conscientious objectors, who have refused to fight in wars over the last century. It includes a number of international experts speaking on the experiences of war resistors (including noted scientists) from both Britain and Germany during World War 1, present day protests at military bases and the plight of refugees and child soldiers.

Local co-organisers of the conference include Bradford Peace Museum, Grassington and District Peace Group, the University of Leeds, Leeds Beckett University, Yorkshire CND, Northern Friends Peace Board and Leeds City Council. There will be a welcome from the Lord Mayor and an introduction from long time peace campaigner Bruce Kent.

The conference starts on Friday afternoon with a guided walk around Leeds Peace Trail (meeting outside Leeds Beckett University’s Rose Bowl at 3pm) followed at 7pm at Holy Trinity Church by a musical evening of historic songs in opposition to war by Clive Barrett from the Bradford Peace Museum and The Free Range Choir.

Saturday will consist of a full day starting at 9.30am at Leeds Museum. There will be talks and panel sessions from experts in the fields of history, politics, journalism and art. There are talks on “Martyrs and Rebels – perceptions of resistance in World War One” and “Inspired to action – conscientious objector stories on stage and in schools”. The panels cover “Different Faces of Resistance”. There will be ample time for questions and discussion and a chance to look over stalls and exhibitions - so participants can remain active throughout the conference. There will also be a showing of the film “Watford’s Quiet Heroes” during the lunch break.

It all looks set to achieve the stated purposes the Peace History Conferences - to raise awareness about individuals, movements, ideas and initiatives from all periods of history concerned with promoting peace, overcoming violence, and abolishing war and to uncover the hidden history and tradition of peacemaking that is often ignored by standard histories.

Tickets for the Friday evening event only are £6 and £3 for full-time students and unwaged and for Saturday conference only they are £20 and £10 for full-time students and unwaged. For both Friday & Saturday tickets cost £25 and £12.50 for full-time students and unwaged. They can be booked through the MAW website [*www.abolishwar.org.uk*](http://www.abolishwar.org.uk)*.*

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