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Waging peace: militarising pacifism in Central Africa and the problem of geography, 1962

Jake Hodder

Despite the discipline having undergone a ‘peace turn’ in recent years, the history of the peace movement itself remains curiously under explored by geographers. This paper retraces the World Peace Brigade and its collaboration with the Northern Rhodesian independence movement in 1962. I argue that the Brigade offers geographers important insights into how ideas of peace have been circulated, adapted and even resisted. The paper suggests that geography poses a distinct conceptual problem for peace movements, which must simultaneously operate beyond conventional forms of territorial politics while remaining sufficiently flexible in the political arena for their strength and relevance. In Central Africa this meant the Brigade developed two, ultimately incompatible, conceptions of peace: an internationalist one that stressed world community, and a local one that adapted pacifism for nationalist movements. I suggest this case study has two implications for peace research in geography. First, it encourages us to remain attentive to the big stories of peace and, specifically, the way in which the peace movement has been a historically important conduit for a range of internationalist ideas. Second, the histories of waging peace (peace armies, civil disobedience, etc.) allow us to critically interrogate the co-constitutive geographies of violence and nonviolence while retaining peace as a distinct category around which to promote political engagement.

Key words Central Africa; internationalism; Northern Rhodesia; pacifism; peace; World Peace Brigade

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We shy away from anything that smacks of building an ‘army’ of nonviolence, smacks of uniformity and regimentation ... because we are academic, over-intellectualised and conventional in our attitudes, we think that making speeches about pacifism, even superficial and dull ones, or mailing leaflets discreetly, is necessarily virtuous (Muste, 1941).¹

Introduction

In his classic essay *The moral equivalent of war*, the renowned Harvard psychologist William James argued that we have a curiously paradoxical relationship with warfare. While intellectually we conceive of it as almost completely negative, only permissible as a last resort, he argued that the military commands a powerful cultural and emotional attraction, reflected in an unwillingness to

envisage a future in which army-life, with its many elements of charm, shall be forever impossible, and in which the destinies of peoples shall nevermore be decided quickly, thrillingly, and tragically by force. (James 1911, 108)

For James, a pacifist programme that relied on demonstrating the irrationality, horror or bloodiness of

war was wholly inadequate: the horror drove the fascination; the more bloody the battlefield, the more heroic the soldier. He argued that these feelings of admiration were too deeply entrenched to be easily abandoned without some kind of functional, psychological substitute. A genuine alternative to war therefore, a pacifism built for purpose, needed to not only critique processes of war and violence but to forge a moral equivalent to them, one that retained the admirable elements of army character, discipline and bravery that were so central to the military imagination.

Written at the very end of his life and prior to the outbreak of the First World War, in many respects James’s essay is of its time. The ‘positive martial virtues’ that he praised sat uncomfortably alongside the senselessness of the war that followed, one memorialised not by heroic statues of military fortitude but by the unadorned grave of the Unknown Soldier. Yet rather than diminishing James’s critique, the war also gave its central message a renewed prescience: fuelled by a growing sense of urgency in their calling many pacifists, including America’s most prominent A. J. Muste, believed that ‘essentially individualistic, moral

or religious pacifism ... [was] no longer a sufficient basis for the movement', and that the wartime fixation on conscientious objection, while indispensable, had also proved vastly inadequate.²

This paper reconstructs the historical geographies of the 'World Peace Brigade for Nonviolent Action', one of the clearest attempts made to realise James's vision. When 55 of the world's leading pacifists met at its founding conference in 1961, they shared a belief, like James, that the military offered a possible blueprint for building a more politically influential form of pacifism – a term defined by leading peace historian Martin Ceadel as 'the belief that war is *always wrong* and should not be resorted to, whatever the consequences of abstaining' (1980, 3; original italics). Delegates envisaged an international peace army, manned by pacifist soldiers, who were expertly trained in nonviolent direct action (e.g. strikes, boycotts, civil disobedience), and who could be deployed in any hostile situation around the world. The Brigade forms one part of a largely unexplored history of experimental peace activism that ranges from Maude Royden's Manchurian 'peace army' in 1931 to the efforts of the Gulf Peace Team in 1990 (Weber 1993) and, most famously, Mahatma Gandhi's *Shanti Sena* (Sanskrit for Peace Army), a nonviolent action force dedicated to minimising communal violence and promoting constructive peace work (Weber 1996).

This tradition is driven by two beliefs exemplified in James's opening account. First, that there is something intrinsically commendable in ideas of duty, service, group discipline and courage, which are ordinarily associated with the military. For example, Gandhi showed a deep admiration throughout his life for the soldier and army culture, what Maria Misra (2014) has recently termed his 'non-violent martiality'. Second, that the abolition of war ultimately required pacifists to tailor their individual moral convictions to the political realities of national and international affairs. The prominent American pacifist Francis Hall noted, for example, that

If pacifism is only an individual matter, there is little hope that it will ever have a wide influence on the practical life of the world ... a strong pacifist movement will come into being only when individual pacifists will be willing to subject their consciences, to a degree, to group discipline.³

Yet despite having undergone something of a 'peace turn' in recent years, geographical scholarship has largely and curiously overlooked the history of the peace movement itself. I address this absence by reconstructing the World Peace Brigade's formative contribution to 'Africa Freedom Action', a cross-political organisation formed to support Kenneth Kaunda and the Northern Rhodesian independence movement in 1962. I argue that the experiences of the

Brigade in Central Africa offer geographers important insights into how ideas of peace historically have been circulated, adapted and even resisted. These insights foreground the central claim of this paper: that geography poses a distinct conceptual problem for peace and peace movements, which have to simultaneously operate beyond conventional forms of territorial politics while relying on the support of political leaders and the political process for their strength, influence and credibility. The paper shows how during the Brigade's time in Central Africa it developed two, ultimately incompatible, geographical conceptions of peace: a grounded, local one that emphasised the strategic effectiveness of nonviolent methods for the independence movement; and a transcendent, internationalist one couched within broader terms of world community. In practice, this meant that the Brigade developed a close working relationship with nationalist movements, while continuing a self-proclaimed mission to cure the world of what the Brigade's chairman termed the 'disease of nationalism'.⁴ While the tension between local practices of peace and the wider global imagination of peace activists could be temporarily overlooked in the heat of a short campaign, the paper shows how it eventually disrupted pacifists' goals in Central Africa and prevented them from playing a longer term, political role.

I suggest this argument has two broader implications for peace research in geography. First, it encourages geographers to remain attentive to the *big stories of peace* and, specifically, the ways in which pacifists have long understood their task as necessarily global in its vision and scope. While recent scholarship has rightly problematised 'top-down' accounts of peace in favour of excavating its intimate and everyday geographies, the case of the Brigade reminds us of how pacifism, in understanding war as an inescapable consequence of nationalism, has long been a historically important conduit for a range of broadly internationalist ideas. This perspective is exemplified by figures like Leo Tolstoy, who argued that the pacifist conscience could only be realised through the total abstention from state-accredited forms of political life. Tolstoy's conviction that the state was 'the arch-enemy of humanity' (cited in Brock 1998, 86) is a sentiment not far removed from the Brigade's own chairman A. J. Muste's belief that it was 'the concept of the State, of national sovereignty – which is the embodiment of evil, and the true "enemy" of all'.⁵ This paper does not propose a return to traditional peace histories of elite, global, state and non-state institutions, but rather a closer engagement with the way many peace activists, confined to the political margins, cultivated a more organic and nuanced sense of world community and citizenship than is commonly accounted for. In short, a geographical perspective on peace must not only trace how the

concept is shaped by diverse cultural and historical contexts (as I show here), but also reconstruct the geographical imagination of peace activists themselves and the role this played in both enabling and constraining the possibilities of their activism.

Second, I suggest that closer attention to the historical peace movement offers geographers a means to negotiate the contradictory nature of peace research, which, as Jenna Loyd (2015) suggests, is shaped by two competing agendas. On the one hand, it is conceptually motivated and seeks to destabilise the war/peace binary to more accurately account for its relative and conditional nature. As Colin Flint has suggested, geographers need to approach 'peace and war as an assemblage of social processes ... seeing how the two are intertwined manifestations of dynamic social contestation' (2011, 31). On the other hand, it is politically driven and privileges peace as a stable, strategic category around which to classify emerging scholarship, promote research agendas and organise political engagement (Megoran 2011; see critique by Ross 2011). Through the case study of the Brigade, this paper charts the *parallel geographies of peace* – spaces that are not absent of conflict, but are shaped by a pacifistic approach to it. As the prominent American pacifist J. Holmes Smith argued:

While avoiding all that smacks of aping militarism, [pacifists] cannot avoid certain actual parallelisms between the way of creative conflict which is total pacifism, and the way of destructive conflict which is total war ... Both demand disciplined teamwork, surrender of private interest, sacrificial devotion to the Cause.⁶

In mapping these 'actual parallelisms', I suggest that the histories of waging peace (peace armies, civil disobedience, sit-ins, boycotts and other forms of nonviolent direct action) allow us to interrogate the entangled geographies of war and peace in situated and empirical ways. Such an approach recognises the shared structures of struggle on which forms of violent and nonviolent resistance are mutually constructed, yet retains the conceptual stability of peace as a distinct category that people have committed their lives to pursuing.

To build this case the paper draws from a collection of published and unpublished sources, including a range of newspapers and magazines, first-hand accounts by leading Brigade figures (Olson 1964; Scott *et al.* 1980; Sutherland and Meyer 2000), and Kenneth Kaunda's own reflections (Kaunda and Morris 1980). These are read alongside the Brigade's unpublished papers and those of key pacifists involved in it. What follows is divided into four sections. The first begins by tracing geography's recent 'peace turn' and outlines the conceptual contribution that a historical geography of the peace movement might make. In the second part, I

examine the founding principles of the Brigade and situate its emergence within the fast-changing political context of Central Africa in 1962. In the third part, I show how pacifists understood political collaboration through a shared, counter-intuitive belief that nationalist movements offered the most expedient means to dismantle nationalism. The final section charts the rapid demise of the Brigade and shows how such a belief was increasingly untenable as Northern Rhodesia moved towards independence.

Toward a historical geography of peace

Notwithstanding the long and uneven engagement geographers have had with peace and peace studies (Bunge 1973; Pepper and Jenkins 1983 1985; Stolberg 1965; Wisner 1986), in the past several years the discipline has undergone something of a 'peace turn', reflected in the publication of three edited volumes on the theme (Kobayashi 2011; McConnell *et al.* 2014; Tyner and Inwood 2011). This has been in response to a trio of interventions that appeared in 2011 lamenting the asymmetry of geographical scholarship on issues of war and peace (Inwood and Tyner 2011; Megoran 2011; Williams and McConnell 2011). While engagement with the former had been 'authoritative and informed, eloquent, theoretical and interdisciplinary' (Megoran 2011, 178), they argued that geographers had failed to develop a comparably sophisticated conceptual understanding of peace, despite often alluding to it as a goal of their research.

In redressing this, recent scholarship has sought to problematise peace in three key respects. First, geographers have critiqued approaches that frame peace in dualistic terms as a stable, static or singular end-point (e.g. that which comes after war). Instead, it has been argued that peace is precarious and uncertain; as Woon suggests, it is 'fragile, contingent, and always in the process of becoming' (2014, 662). As such, geographers have emphasised the impossibility of untangling the structures of struggle and conflict that underpin violent and nonviolent geographies, noting how peace is a process that can only ever be partially remitted of violent potential, broadly defined. A geographical approach to peace must therefore account for a range of experiences, practices and representations that are always infused with 'diverse repertoires of violence *and possibility*' (Darling 2014, 230; italics original).

Second, geographers have challenged representations of peace as universally formed and experienced across time and space. Instead, there has been a growing call across a range of disciplines to pay closer attention to the sites and scales in which peace 'takes place' (Björkdahl and Buckley-Zistel 2016). Sara Koopman (2011b), for example, has called for geographers to move away from abstract definitions in favour

of conceptualising peace as a socio-spatial relation, one that is permanently being made and unmade relative to its historical and geographical contexts. As she writes, 'peace means different things at different scales, as well as to different groups and at different times and places', i.e. peace has a history and a geography (Koopman 2014, 111).

Third, geographers have questioned accounts of peace that position it beyond, after, above or without politics. Placing peace necessarily foregrounds the role of power in shaping what peace is and who it is for. The work of Fiona McConnell (2014) and Philippa Williams (2013 2015) has demonstrated how shifting conceptions of peace (real or imagined) structured how a range of competing interests were promoted and how patterns of difference and marginality were sustained. Geographers have shown how NGOs, peace industry professionals and state elites reproduce discourses of 'liberal peace' associated with free market economics and democratisation that can themselves perpetuate structures of inequality and corruption (Le Billon 2008) and, as Patricia Daley (2006 2014) has shown of Central Africa specifically, work against local practices and understandings of the concept. The challenge facing geographers therefore is to account for both the problematic dimensions of peace as well as its generative possibilities. In short, by re-examining peace in these three ways there has been a broad consensus of the need to dislodge fixed, ageographical or apolitical accounts of peace and reconceptualise it instead as a spatially constituted and politically contested process (Lloyd 2012).

In undertaking this task, geographers have been encouraged to pay closer attention to how peace-makers themselves have defined and used the concept (Koopman 2011b; Williams *et al.* 2014). Koopman's (2011a 2014) work on international protective accompaniment in Colombia sits beside a wider range of geographical writing on the contemporary enactment of peace movements that sets about this task (e.g. Miller 1994 2000; Oslender 2008). Yet the history of the peace movement – its institutions, individuals and ideas – remain curiously overlooked by geographers (excluding Herb 2005).

There are at least two reasons why this should concern us. First, the large body of literature outside of geography on the historical peace movement pays insufficient attention to its distinctive geographical traditions, or spatial and scalar dynamics. Instead a premium is placed on developing typologies of pacifism (Brock and Young 1999) and nonviolent practice (Sharp 1973) that are differentiated by either ethical derivation (e.g. anarchism, humanism, religion) or by varying degrees of commitment (e.g. the distinction between a consequentialist view that emphasises pacifism's preferable practical outcomes, and a

deontological perspective that sees violence as universally and morally wrong). Such distinctions are important (both within the rest of this essay and beyond) and illustrate how terms like pacifism are highly contested, taking on a variety of meanings and connotations as they travel. Yet besides a hardy core of believers, many activists and those with whom they worked (including Kaunda, as we shall see) moved between these categories in problematic ways. Similarly, by focusing on discrete national traditions (e.g. Brock 1968; Ceadel 1980; Chatfield 1971) or some comparative perspective between them (e.g. Zunes *et al.* 1999), these accounts are ill-equipped to examine how operationally transnational organisations, like the Brigade, consciously traversed borders in ways suggestive of their anti-statist politics.

Second, within geography, emphasis has been placed on routine 'moments of cooperation and coexistence, exchange and encounter' in order to address questions of peace, violence and agency within the micro-politics of daily life (Williams and McConnell 2011, 928). This has rightly prioritised the oft-overlooked 'intimate' (Brickell 2015), 'everyday' (Williams 2013 2015) or 'peopled' (Woon 2015) geographies of peace. Yet these studies 'from below' can become unhelpfully positioned, implicitly or otherwise, against traditional international accounts of 'liberal' peace framed by the terms of policymaking elites and peace professionals, housed in a range of prestigious, international agencies. This does a disservice to how many activists, resigned to the counter-cultural margins, had a more nuanced sense of internationalism and international organising in mind.

For centuries, philosophers and reformers of all creeds have shared a belief that peace would necessarily accompany new forms of world consciousness and international governance. The peace historian Lawrence Wittner wrote, for example, that when 'Americans dreamed of a world without war, the vision shimmered hazily before them of the restoration of the human community' (1969, 4). Yet, as David Cortright (2008) suggests, the terminology of internationalism and pacifism is too imprecise and obfuscates the diverse political traditions (ranging from the conservative to the radical) that underpin these global visions of peace. There is a broad historical division, for example, between those who accepted the legitimacy of the nation-state and those who did not. The former included large organisations and peace industry professionals who were tightly associated with corporate and governmental life. The latter group, led by more radical pacifists (including the Brigade's members), were cautious of state-centric conceptions of international law, or a legal machinery of institutions necessary to enforce it, in favour of fostering a more organic sense of world community and internationalism 'from

below' (Herman *et al.* 1973). This perspective was characteristically anti-nationalistic, believing national sovereignty to be indivisible from its capacity to exercise violence (Atack 2012), reflected in a tradition that has long pioneered pacifist forms of radical decentralisation (e.g. ashrams, communes, co-ops, collectives, cells) that challenged the normative role of the nation-state as the basic political unit of organisation (e.g. Ostergaard 1982).

This paper encourages geographers to remain attentive to the important, complex and contradictory role that the peace movement has played in shaping the historical geographies of internationalism in the twentieth century (Hodder 2015; Hodder *et al.* 2015). When the Brigade chairman A. J. Muste talks of the 'world task of pacifism' and the urgent need to stop approaching peace 'with a narrow and provincial vision and on a petty scale', for example, he means something quite different from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace's sense of its global mission.⁷ Centring these contested international histories of peace offers new insights into the role that geographical ideas have played in shaping the contours of peace activism as well as the possibilities of adapting pacifism for a diverse range of political contexts. While in one sense this allows us to destabilise ideas of peace, showing its fluidity and amenability as it moves, it nonetheless holds our focus on the always material realities of those engaged in peace activism. Such an approach is critically supportive of a research agenda in geography that underscores the potential of rethinking the discipline in more inclusive and peaceful terms, whether through the lens of 'pacific' (Megoran 2008 2010), 'subaltern' (Sharp 2011) or 'alter-' (Koopman 2011a) geopolitics. In the rest of this paper, I use the case of the World Peace Brigade in Central Africa to explore the benefits of examining the historical peace movement from a geographical perspective.

Northern Rhodesia, 1962

At the end of December 1961, fifty-five leading pacifists met at the Brigade's founding conference in Lebanon, charged with implementing the decision of the Tenth Triennial Conference of the War Resisters' International to establish an independent, highly trained cadre of international pacifists skilled in emergency peace-making. They envisioned the Brigade as a 'sort of "fighting arm" of the world peace movement', infused with army-style organisation, strategy and discipline.⁸ Pacifist soldiers might 'capture some of the drama of daring and glamorous exploits which are now monopolized by the military', the prominent American pacifist Robert Swann noted, 'The publicity value is obvious, and we might reap great psychological strength by practicing nonviolent "war games"'.⁹

Britain's *Guardian* newspaper reported how the new Brigade's strength derived from its international group of 'non-political' activists, unattached to the ambitions of individual governments or states.¹⁰ As the leading peace scholars Johan Galtung and Richard Gregg told the conference, pacifists were uniquely placed to articulate a broader, impartial moral conscience on international affairs, one reflective of the 'ultimate unity of life'.¹¹ This global perspective was woven through the Brigade's operational structure. The organisation had three regional councils that, in turn, reported to a world council: Asia, chaired by the Indian independence activist Jayaprakash Narayan and operating out of Varanasi; Europe, chaired by Rev. Michael Scott, the renowned British anti-apartheid activist, and based in the Peace Pledge Union's offices in London; and North America, run by A. J. Muste out of the New York offices of the American Friends Service Committee.¹² The Brigade's constitution centred on the importance of its 'one world' vision: 'World Community can replace the institution of war' and its principles were based on

- (i) the acceptance of the underlying unity of all men ...
- (ii) the acceptance of the principle of non-violence and the use of methods consistent with those principles to achieve world community.¹³

In recruiting an army of world citizens, the Brigade's volunteers would become what Abbe Pierre nobly called, 'the nonviolent defenders of man'.¹⁴

Yet precisely how 'non-political' the Brigade would be was a point of contention. While some hoped for the Brigade to be an impartial conciliator, more radically minded delegates argued that there was an immediate strategic need to 'take sides' on the issue of colonialism. They suggested that the Brigade's originality relied on its ability to locally adapt pacifism into a resistance tool for those otherwise consigned to either ongoing injustice or violent overthrow.¹⁵ The African American pacifist Bill Sutherland told delegates that it was

academic to speak of consensual goals when considering the policies of South African or Angolan governments, the status quo is a condition of static violence ... [and] creative conflict may be necessary to bring about true peace.¹⁶

When the conference closed at the start of 1962, therefore, little seemed more fitting to the Brigade's founding principles than the evolving political situation in Northern Rhodesia. The country's independence struggle, led by Kenneth Kaunda and the United National Independence Party (UNIP), sought to capitalise on the rapid gains made by anti-colonial movements across Africa in the late 1950s and early 1960s (see Figure 1). Seventeen African nations had achieved independence in 1960 alone, including the neighbouring Republic of the Congo, where Belgian rule had

been notoriously restrictive. Even within the paternalistic logic of colonialism, few seriously believed that the states of British Central Africa were less capable of self-government. Neighbouring Tanganyika (later Tanzania), a close political ally, had also become independent in December 1961, less than a month before the Brigade's founding.

Yet the forms of colonialism that remained (including Northern and Southern Rhodesia) were more recalcitrant, more entrenched and more willing to violently defend the status quo. This reflected the different political arrangement of settler colonialism, where a permanently based white minority economically, socially and politically dominated the numerically larger African population. Northern Rhodesia was a

member of the Central African Federation (CAF), which consisted of three British territories: the protectorates of Northern Rhodesia (later Zambia) and Nyasaland (later Malawi), and the self-governing colony of Southern Rhodesia (later Zimbabwe). Though by virtue of its vast copper mines Northern Rhodesia was technically the wealthiest member state, it was Southern Rhodesia, with a white settler population almost three times larger, that was the dominant territory in CAF.

When the Brigade was founded at the start of 1962, British withdrawal from the region seemed likely, but there was uncertainty over what shape independence would take. One side, represented by CAF's Prime Minister, the white Southern Rhodesian Roy Welensky,

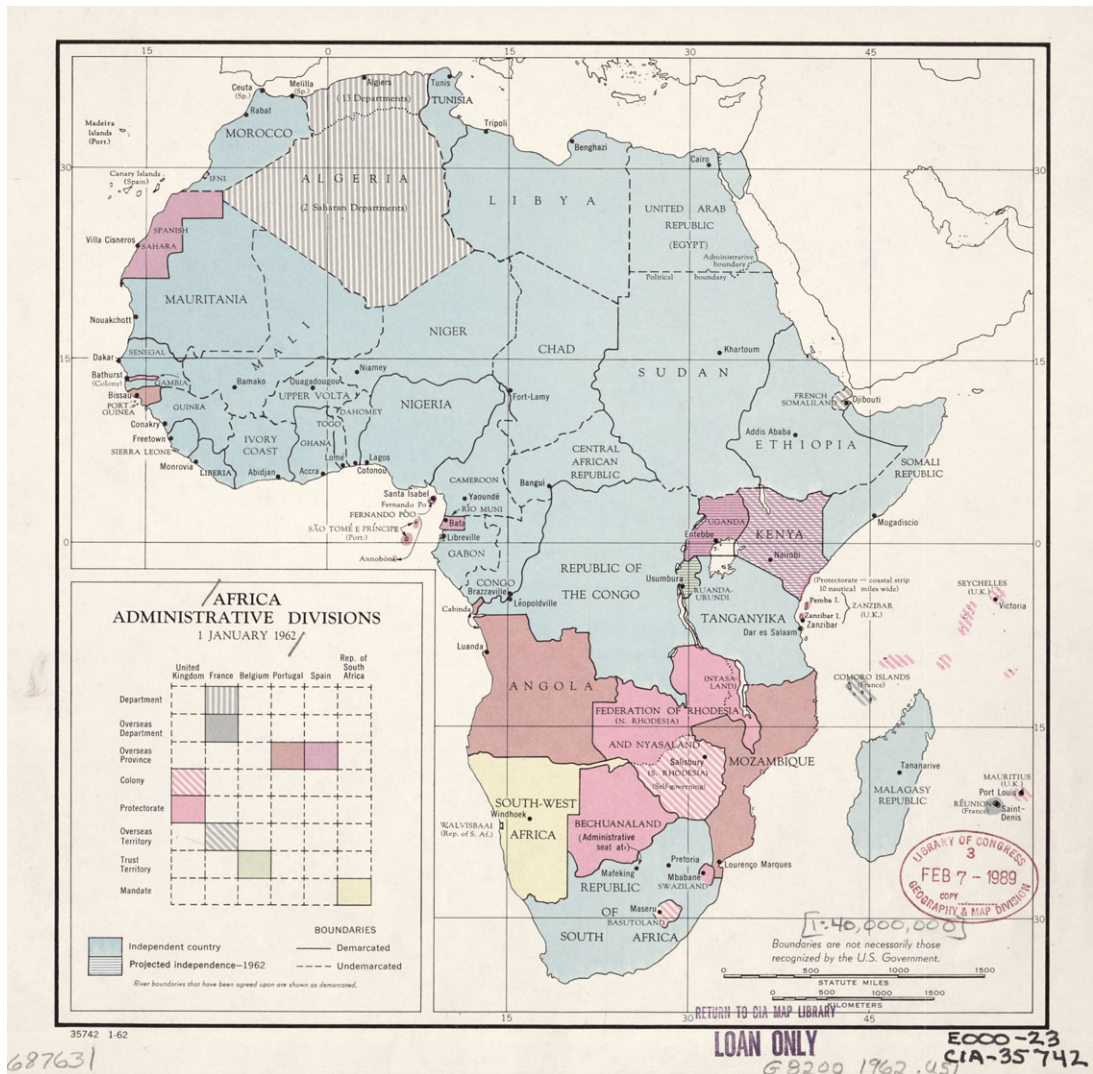


Figure 1 Africa administrative divisions, 1 January 1962

Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Washington DC, 1962¹⁷

campaign to retain the federation post-independence. Conjoining the Rhodesias would combine the copper wealth of the north with the industrial capacity of the south, forming a large and prosperous white minority that could comfortably govern across the region. The other side, represented by Kaunda and UNIP, demanded that the British government grant all three territories a separate, democratic constitution based on cross-racial suffrage. Kaunda believed the British government, keen to remove itself from the equation, would bend to Welensky's federalist campaigning without sufficient counter-pressure. He set about mobilising a mass, nonviolent campaign, announcing in the copper belt that he had a grand master-plan that could cripple the prized extraction industries and called on Northern Rhodesians to sabotage key government infrastructure. These mounting tensions had made the country a global focal point of anti-colonial unrest at the start of 1962 (see Hatch 1976).

Consequently, Northern Rhodesia had an obvious and timely appeal as the Brigade's inaugural project. In Kaunda, pacifists had a natural political ally. No other African leader had reflected so passionately and so publicly on the importance of nonviolence. Unlike others, like Julius Nyerere in neighbouring Tanganyika, who were nonviolent in practice but held no philosophical opposition to violence, Kaunda was a self-professed Gandhian disciple who had spent several months in India in 1958, and later wrote that the Indian leader's 'teachings flooded my mind with light' (Kaunda and Morris 1980, 16). His strategy was also inspired by the 'positive action' campaigns of Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah, with whom many of the Brigade's key figures had experience working alongside. Michael Scott, A. J. Muste, Michael Randle, Bill Sutherland, Bayard Rustin and E. C. Quay, the Mayor of Accra, all came to the World Peace Brigade conference fresh from organising a march with Nkrumah to obstruct French nuclear testing in the Sahara (see Allman 2008; Skinner 2015). Yet pacifists had since become marginalised in West Africa and, with the situation in Northern Rhodesia more immediately amenable to their influence, they were keen to make one more decisive case for nonviolence on the continent. *Peace News* told its readers that the outcome would 'set a pattern for internal non-violent revolution backed by international direct action or the final defeat of non-violence as a serious idea in power politics'.¹⁸

Pacifist collaboration also brought distinct benefits for Kaunda. The British government had no clear stance on the shape of independence in Northern Rhodesia, yet in the wake of Harold Macmillan's famous 1960 'wind of change' speech it was clear that the British appetite for colonialism had much diminished. The Brigade's support strengthened Kaunda's claim to hold a credible master-plan that could

economically and politically cripple the country. If Kaunda's strategy was to devise 'an amalgam of Gandhi's non-violence and Nkrumah's positive action', the Brigade, whose members had experience working alongside both figures, offered a unique way for doing so (Hatch 1976, 161).

Moreover, international opinion was increasingly shaping events. In 1957, when Kaunda attended the Commonwealth Conference in London, besides a few days spent in Southern Rhodesia and Tanganyika, it was his first experience of foreign travel (Hatch 1976). The visit marked a distinct shift, following which independence was increasingly placed in a continental and international context. Throughout the early 1960s, Kaunda tirelessly built his international profile. His several visits to Washington during this period established him as the key political figure in Central Africa. In the eyes of foreign officials, his non-threatening reputation as a 'gentle, ascetic' character committed to a 'path of moderation and non-violence' (Larmer 2011, 46–7) helped steer the independence movement through the increasingly polarised world of the Cold War. The Brigade reinforced this 'peaceful' reputation and connected Kaunda to unofficial, international support groups like the American Committee on Africa, which organised and funded his US visits (Nesbitt 2004). In so doing, pacifists allowed Kaunda to build international pressure in a way that, however crudely or briefly, transcended Cold War geopolitical channels – a strategy he would refine post-independence as a leader in the non-aligned movement, hosting their summit in Lusaka in 1970 and serving as its chairman from 1970 to 1973.

It is important, however, not to over-emphasise the role of the Cold War here. As Sue Onslow (2009) has written, although international pressure was a significant determinant of independence, local actors themselves did not see the Washington/Moscow axis as singularly important (see also Onslow 2015). The immediate goal of decolonisation was the dominant driving force of political change on the continent. As a special issue of *The International History Review* (Schaufelbuehl *et al.* 2015) has recently suggested, we need to avoid ascribing the Cold War an omnipotent presence that undermines the agency and dynamism of independence movements to navigate a path that was, as Gerard McCann writes, 'in the Cold War, but not of it' (2013, 260). In this spirit, I now turn to consider how the Brigade negotiated its founding global vision of peace, with the local political role it sought to play in Northern Rhodesia.

'We are not betraying our internationalism'

The Brigade's influence in Central Africa was the result of a delicate geographical balancing act, one that both

capitalised on the political support offered by nationalist leaders while situating it within a broader anti-nationalistic vision of peace through world community. After its founding conference closed, the Brigade was invited to observe the Addis Ababa meeting of the Pan-African Freedom Movement of East and Central Africa (PAFMECA) in February 1962. There the Brigade's representatives spent several days with both Kaunda (then president of PAFMECA) and Julius Nyerere (head of Tanganyika's leading political party Tanganyika African National Union [TANU]), who were both keen for a nonviolent training centre to be established in Tanganyika's capital Dar es Salaam and, in the case of Nyerere, offered the government support necessary to do so. The centre would train local and foreign activists in nonviolent direct action, as well as form a base from which to organise the second, more dramatic, part of their work: an immediate march from Dar es Salaam to Northern Rhodesia's capital Lusaka. Kaunda and Nyerere were keen for the march to follow similar lines to the earlier Sahara protest and offered the resources of UNIP, TANU and PAFMECA to secure mass participation. The march would draw international attention to Kaunda's wider campaign for a six-month general strike. Writing in Tanganyika's largest English-language newspaper *The Standard*, Kaunda called on Northern Rhodesians to prepare for the strike, the start of which would be marked by the 'invasion' of 'thousands and thousands of volunteers of the World Peace Brigade'.¹⁹

The Brigade's quick ascension to power reflected its willingness to develop a close collaboration with political leaders, especially between its key representatives (Michael Scott, Bayard Rustin, Bill Sutherland), Kaunda and Nyerere. Together they undertook a series of rallies and spoke before enthusiastic crowds of four to five thousand in Dar es Salaam and eight to ten thousand in Mbeya, drawn by the chance to meet the independence 'stars'. Nyerere and Scott co-chaired fund-raising appeals that involved, in one example, holding a party at Nyerere's home for wealthy donors, and a national concert event in another.²⁰ Nyerere also gave the Brigade provision of a house in Dar es Salaam (a former prime ministerial residence), an office and cars, as well as government property for the training centre. This support reflected the international attention that the Brigade's work was attracting. In the USA, they were featured in the *New York Times*, *New York Post* and *The Nation*, as well as *The Times* and *The Guardian* in Britain.²¹ Yet it was also a collaboration that was closer than many in the West were publicly aware: 'Who can measure what it has meant that our house has had an open door for UNIP ... [or the] money we have given them', Sutherland noted in personal correspondence,

That we have on several occasions paid UNIP's office rent before the money came rolling in, gave money to the chief representative when he was ill – things one just can't put out in newsletters or hold press conferences about?²²

This political collaboration may appear unremarkable; if violence is both morally wrong and endemic in colonialism, it is unsurprising that pacifists should side with anti-colonial movements. Yet this undervalues the novelty of the Brigade's approach, which marked a decisive break from traditional pacifist work in Africa that had long been associated with missionaries, colonial government officials and white commercial interests. In the past, A. J. Muste argued, pacifists had been

betrayed into thinking of themselves as some kind of middle ground between [these] elements and the movements of dissent and revolt among the Africans. Actually, where basic issues are involved there is no such middle ground.²³

Likewise, contemporaneous peace projects in Northern Rhodesia overwhelmingly emphasised grassroots development – building schools, housing and infrastructure – rather than bigger independence goals or political collaboration. This included the 'practical idealism' programme of the American Friends Service Committee, which constituted the largest delegation at the World Peace Brigade conference.²⁴ Political collaboration challenged a broader consensus that pacifists' strength derived from the consistency of their moral position, which, by refusing to take sides, allowed them to transcend conflict and build the foundations for reconciliation.

In seeking to furnish liberation movements with nonviolent methods, the Brigade sought to transpose and adapt pacifism therefore to the fast-changing political context in Central Africa in a way that could appeal to those at all scales of moral or pacifistic commitment. This was what the Brigade termed 'peacekeeping with its sleeves rolled up'.²⁵ It is what we might term, however, a parallel geography of peace, one that sought to find 'equivalent outlets for the war-producing drives', as Aldous Huxley put to the Brigade, rather than challenging the basic framework of intervention that militarism rested on.²⁶ This approach was built on an assessment of the mutual constitution of violent and nonviolent forms of struggle. As Thomas C. Schelling wrote in the introduction to Gene Sharp's three-volume classic *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*:

Discipline, command and control; intelligence about the adversary; careful choice of weapons, targets, terrain, time of day; and, especially, avoiding impetuous recourse to provoked or purposeless violence ... Most of what are usually called the 'principals of war' ... are about as appropriate to the study of nonviolent action as to the violent. (1973, xii)

As such, the Brigade reproduced many of the cultural and gendered assumptions of the military.

Rather than challenge the idea of the soldier as a symbol of masculinity, for example, they sought to capitalise on it (e.g. Woodward and Winter 2007). As Marian Mollin (2006, 182) has shown, these dramatic and radical forms of pacifism often relied on the insertion of mainstream paradigms of post-war manhood that allowed activists to cast themselves in familiar and respectable roles, and thereby undervalued the decisive contribution of women to the movement. The male-only draft had meant that pacifist women had been excluded from wartime imprisonment, where their male counterparts had carved out alternative notions of heroism and militancy which the Brigade, to some extent, was a continuation of.

By formally folding the Brigade's Africa project into a cross-organisational body called Africa Freedom Action (AFA), jointly run by the Brigade, UNIP, TANU and PAFMECA, they sought to minimise some of the potentially problematic issues that arose from pacifist 'outsiders' playing an increasingly significant role in an African liberation struggle. AFA's wording was accordingly delicate:

Africa Freedom Action is an international movement sponsored and led by Africans to secure the liberation of Africa from colonialism. It came into existence in response to a growing need to give organised expression to the international support which Africans have in *their* struggle to emancipate *themselves* from foreign rule and all forms of racial discrimination against them in *their own* country.²⁷

Like in West Africa previously, the Brigade recognised that collaboration with local political leaders helped to, as Michael Scott put it, 'take the racial edge off' (Scott *et al.* 1980, 135). A concern reflected in the Brigade's choice of representatives, which included two African Americans (Bayard Rustin and Bill Sutherland), an Indian (Suresh Ram) and Michael Scott, one of the most prominent white pro-African activists of his generation.

While the Brigade relied on these political alliances for their relevance, they keenly emphasised their more expansive global vision of peace. It was argued that by supporting African nationalism in the first instance, the Brigade could ultimately broaden aspirations beyond independence. This was based on a strategic calculation that the dynamics of nationalism continued to play an important role in mobilising social change, while their own, personal belief in the primacy of world community was either ignored or viewed with suspicion. Thus, the uniqueness of the Brigade's contribution would be determined by its ability to practically support independence movements while also retaining the longer term goal of reshaping nationalist energies into internationalist ones. The head of the Belgian branch of the War Resisters' International, Jean van Lierde, argued that:

When we speak of 'collaboration' to the nationalist parties, we are not betraying our internationalism, but simply

realising at what stage of liberation from imperialism the colonies are. This stage holds at one and the same time the possibility of quenching elementary, brutal reactions of tribalism and internal ethnic conflicts (these being forms of micro-nationalisms) and of superseding these nationalisms by integrating them into pan-Africanism and directing them towards universalism ... Thus pacifism must exert its influence on diverse political currents. It must remain unshakable in its radical witness against war and violence, but it must stay sufficiently flexible in the political field.²⁸

AFA was the embodiment of this political flexibility. It was, Michael Scott asserted, 'more than an African nationalist movement, yet draws its strength and inspiration from it'.²⁹ While the Brigade sought to 'loyally serve' political parties and their allies, they also stressed a healthy separation.³⁰ By couching intervention in terms of peace, Kaunda, like Gandhi before him, was not positioned as a nationalist but as a pioneer of nonviolence who, as the Brigade's statement to the UN noted, was 'in the true sense a leader of humanity, a leader of people of all races who want to find peaceful and orderly means of advance'.³¹ This was not unique to the Brigade; many contemporary observers admired Kaunda's deep personal commitment to 'non-racialism' (Hatch 1976, xiv). Through Kaunda's self-titled philosophy of 'humanism', the Brigade was able to imaginatively square its self-professed goal of world citizenship within the narrower political role it was playing alongside nationalist movements. Though not an ideal arrangement, this compromise seemed 'practical and necessary', as one returning Brigade volunteer put it, and reflected the ability of pacifism to be adapted to local political circumstances.³² Yet, as I now turn to show, as the need for a march diminished, these divergent conceptions of peace were ultimately incompatible and prevented the Brigade from playing a longer term political role.

New beginnings and ends

At the end of February 1962, under pressure from further political unrest, London offered an amended constitution with provisions for greater African representation. With votes for less than one-twelfth of the adult African population, it was some way short of the much-heralded 'one man, one vote', but it was eventually decided to postpone the march and to contest the elections under these new terms. Northern Rhodesians went to the polls at the end of October 1962 to vote in what *Time* magazine called 'the election that nobody won'.³³ While the British government's noncommittal stance had produced an effectively unworkable constitution, it had also prevented the white United Federal Party from re-forming a government and the general strike and march were officially cancelled. On 31 December 1963, the Central African Federation was

formally dissolved, and shortly following the protectorates of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland became the independent Republic of Zambia (with Kaunda serving as its president until 1991) and the commonwealth realm of Malawi. Southern Rhodesia had a more chequered history. It initially remained a British colony before its white-minority government unilaterally declared independence in 1965 and a protracted 15-year civil war followed, the eventual outcome of which was independence in 1980 as the Republic of Zimbabwe.

As Kaunda turned to constitutional routes, the influence of pacifists dwindled in Northern Rhodesia. Accustomed to the political margins, they had little experience or appetite for electioneering and the postponement of the march before the election, and cancellation following it, made their role as organisers and strategists increasingly marginal. Recognising this situation, the Brigade sought to refocus its activities further south to those areas still under the yoke of colonial or minority rule. Leaders elsewhere were less receptive, however. In conversations between Sutherland and the Zimbabwe African People's Union, for example, it was clear that they believed nonviolence to no longer be a viable option.³⁴ As Muste noted, unlike Kaunda, they

do not have any appreciable faith in nonviolence as a philosophy or in the abstract ... [and] we in turn have not so far been able to come up with concrete ideas for nonviolent intervention.³⁵

Even Kaunda's commitment to nonviolence was under strain, however. As minority rule entrenched in southern Africa, there was growing pressure on him, from groups like the Organisation for African Unity, to support neighbouring countries to independence by 'any means', and even figures in his own party questioned his friendly acquaintance with foreign pacifists.³⁶ Kaunda publicly distanced himself from pacifists at the same moment that stories began circulating which characterised the Brigade as an 'imperialist peace corps'.³⁷ In the wake of independence, the Cold War increasingly coloured the suspicion with which African leaders viewed all shades of international support. Nkrumah had also threatened to evict American Peace Corps for spying in Ghana in 1962, for example (Deroche 2009). Without political backing (either within or without Northern Rhodesia), the Brigade's presence was untenable and it was agreed that it would close down operations by March 1963.

The Brigade's rapid rise and fall in Central Africa over the course of 12 months reflected the very real practical challenges of operationalising a 'moral equivalent of war'. The scheme was wildly expensive and always at odds with the peace movement's capacity to pay for it. The Brigade was never financially

independent, and by October 1962 it barely had the money for a phone line. Likewise, the ambition of building a mobile army of non-violent soldiers ignored any number of logistical challenges. Guidelines for volunteers to 'dispose of their affairs in such a way as to be ready on call', including, at the minimum, securing passports, visas and inoculation, was a prohibitively high and unrealistic commitment.³⁸

It is important to neither overlook nor underestimate these practical difficulties, yet it is the contention of this paper that there was a deeper, conceptual inconsistency that disrupted the goals of the Brigade in Central Africa, rooted in the tension between its local adaptations and its global representations of pacifism as a political project. While supporting nationalist leaders 'on the ground', they nonetheless retained the belief that peace was ultimately dependent on the unifying power of world community beyond the nation-state. Geography poses a broader conceptual problem therefore for peace and peace movements. If, as many pacifists believed, violence was constitutive of nationhood (or any other sub-global unit that divided the 'human community'), the support of post-colonial nationalism was a clear conflict of interest. As the anarcho-pacifist Paul Goodman wrote, there

might be some shadow of a reason for the transient existence of the new sovereignties of Africa and Asia in their emergence from colonialism, but on the whole this imitative evolution is an absurdity.³⁹

The Brigade's characterisation that nationalism was a necessary stage to world community – 'a transient existence' – worked only temporarily to gloss over how incompatible the support of anti-colonial nationalism was with their global vision of peace. In the longer term, there was no real sense of how pacifists could operate alongside newly independent states. Not least, because independence represented an enormous achievement for African leaders and, by denying this, pacifists undermined the relationship on which their position ultimately relied. Moreover, the direct action techniques that the Brigade offered as a peaceful alternative to violent insurrection derived their strength from the ability to undermine or disobey a state's authority and thereby challenge its broader claim to legitimacy. While this obstructionist repertoire may have appealed to nationalist leaders in the heat of battle against an oppressive colonial state, it did not when they were trying to consolidate power as heads of newly independent ones. Post-independence, anti-colonialism ceased to be the driving force in the region and pacifists were ill-suited for its replacement with state-building, which lacked a comparable moral clarity for them.

As independence loomed, Sutherland recalled Kaunda turning to him at a rally and stating that while

he had supported the Brigade until then, he had chosen to be a politician and to enter government (Sutherland and Meyer 2000). What Kaunda meant by this was later explored in his 1980 collection of essays *Kaunda on violence*, published as *The riddle of violence* in the USA. 'A thoroughgoing pacifism', he wrote, 'encourages blanket judgments about political regimes, ruling out the marginal moral distinctions that are the raw stuff of statesmanship' (Kaunda and Morris 1980, 60). In these essays, Kaunda's critique of pacifism rested not on its impracticality *per se*, but on the impossibility to exist perpetually in opposition to the state – and he believed no state could survive without the exercise of force, even if only limited and judicial. As Julius Nyerere later reflected, 'Once you've accepted the nation-state, you accept the consequences – including armies, including security services bureaucracy, police, and the lot' (Sutherland and Meyer 2000, 87). Kaunda's declaration to Sutherland at the rally was, in effect, a declaration on the intractability of statehood with a pacifist geographical tradition that had long prioritised the replacement of nationhood with new global forms of loyalty and affiliation. As a politician, he argued that he was now beholden to those who elected him, rather than his conscience, and therefore he required 'the freedom to *discriminate*'. 'I know that word sounds like a fall from grace into the grey areas of political morality', he wrote; 'Alas, much of my life is spent in these murky waters' (Kaunda and Morris 1980, 89; original italics).

Pacifists in the West were equally critical of the Brigade's work. 'There are risks involved when one enters the real world of action and politics', the volunteer Ed Lazar noted, but what was needed was 'a full and open airing before the peace movement'.⁴⁰ Pacifists were suspicious of the Brigade's secrecy and they had little faith that its work in Central Africa was separate from government at all. Lyle Tatum of the American Friends Service Committee suggested

that there is a heady wine of high places about WPB [World Peace Brigade] that needs watching – UN testimony, prime ministers as friends and patrons, etc. ... Rather than a positive force the WPB became sort of a secret weapon in a cold war.⁴¹

Even the Brigade's own representatives recognised that structuring the organisation's work within the AFA's tetrad of political parties inevitably 'made it impossible for the democratic and open approach most pacifists are used to'.⁴²

Sutherland later wrote that African leaders, while challenging the violence of colonialism, had failed to challenge the deeper violent structures of nationalism (Sutherland and Meyer 2000). Accordingly, pacifists struggled to consolidate their position in the post-independence period; this is true of the World Peace

Brigade in Central Africa, but it is also true of the earlier Sahara protest in Ghana, of South Africa or of Gandhi's heirs in India. In hindsight, convincing emerging leaders to surrender their hard-won independence in favour of 'a hypothetical, tenuous, inadequately financed nonviolence program' was an impossible task, and pacifists were instinctively uncomfortable with nation-building.⁴³ For many of those involved, the Brigade demonstrated a basic incapacity for pacifism to penetrate political practice in any kind of enduring way. As Sutherland wrote, 'I just can't find room in modern statehood for basic nonviolence' (cited in Danielson 2014, 295).

Conclusion: an expensive experiment of failure?

It is often difficult to assess peace activism within conventional terms of success or failure, and the Brigade was necessarily experimental in its nature. Yet despite this, many pacifists were unapologetic in their criticism. Devi Prasad, the then General Secretary of the War Resisters' International, wrote that 'It was sheer good luck for the organisers that the project had to be given up, otherwise it would have proved the greatest flop in the modern history of non-violence' (1964, 2). Likewise, Anton Nelson, a founding conference delegate, argued that there was 'nothing to gain by not confessing that the AFA project was an expensive experiment of failure'.⁴⁴ The greatest failure, they suggested, was to reinforce the common suspicion of emerging African leaders that nonviolence was good in theory but unable to meet the tough demands of political action. Even Kaunda, who had been more publicly and vocally committed to nonviolence than any other African leader, found it increasingly untenable, noting that the 'business of statecraft is enough to sober the keenest idealist' (Kaunda and Morris 1980, 37).

This paper has drawn on the story of the World Peace Brigade's rapid rise and fall in Central Africa in order to reflect on the broader conceptual problem that geography poses for peace and peace movements – a problem that is partly reflected in these assessments. While on the one hand pacifists commonly believed that peace necessitated a wholesale reorganisation of political life (ordinarily expressed within terms of world community and human brotherhood), their ability to realistically articulate this as a political alternative depended on their closeness to nationalist leaders who, in part, drew their strength and credibility from the very same political system that pacifists openly denounced. The Brigade reminds us therefore of the remarkable, and often overlooked, access that pacifists had to anti-colonial leaders during the twilight of empire. Many pacifists saw decolonisation as a unique historical opportunity to reconcile their moral principles with

their political ambition, and the Brigade's brief history in Central Africa is a testament to this. Accustomed to life on the political margins, peace activists were disorientated by their sudden proximity to government, having just weeks or months earlier been working alongside insurgent movements like their own. They attached an uncharacteristic optimism to the prospects of decolonisation, a process they almost universally read as a struggle *against* imperialism, rather than one *for* nationalism. Championing the anti-colonial cause, they believed, offered the chance to contest state-centric conceptions of peace shaped by the imperatives of security, law and order, yet their success ultimately brought into being new states, with new security agendas. This optimism therefore, even within the space of a few years, looked to be tragically misplaced and they were later criticised for getting distracted by such political manoeuvres. As the British pacifist Michael Randle reflected, while government collaboration was enabling in very real ways, it also presented a series of 'dangers and temptations not all of which we dealt with successfully'.⁴⁵

In light of the relative absence of geographical scholarship on the history of the peace movement, the case study presented here has two broader implications for peace research in the discipline. First, it encourages geographers to remain attentive to the *big stories of peace* in a way that seriously engages with how pacifists understood their own historical project as one that was unapologetically global in its scope and ambition. As much as a moral or intellectual enterprise, therefore, pacifism was also a fundamentally geographical one. Woven into it was a distinctly internationalist conception of peace, which necessitated the founding of operationally transnational organisations like the Brigade that were unaffiliated with individual nation-states and that could form a new basis for a world community. In short, in the eyes of many peace activists the struggle for a world without war was inexorably entwined with the struggle for a world without borders. This paper has demonstrated how this internationalist spirit both shaped the organisation of the peace movement and yet limited its political possibilities. It is important therefore that scholarship not only considers peace contextually, but also that it meaningfully engages with the rich geographical tradition of those who dedicated their lives to using, understanding and campaigning for it. In attending to the pacifist world-view, the paper does not seek to discredit or critique recent scholarship that has rightly re-examined peace as experienced and understood 'from below', but it does caution against ascribing any simple political dichotomy onto this. From the political margins, these activists developed a nuanced sense of internationalism and international organising that bore little relation to the well-financed governmental and non-governmental

agencies that are commonly associated with global accounts of peace.

Second, the case of the Brigade highlights the parallel geographies of peace; the desire to forge a moral equivalent of war was not the result of an absence of struggle and conflict, but a pacifistic approach to them. As the radical peace activist Jim Peck told the *New York Times*, 'We are like the munitions makers, we boom in war and slump in peace' (Kaufman 1973, 30). I suggest that engaging with these histories allows geographers to negotiate the contradictory nature of peace research, which is shaped by two competing agendas. The first is conceptually driven and seeks to theoretically destabilise peace to more accurately account for its fragile, precarious and relative nature. The second is politically motivated and privileges peace as a singular, stable, strategic category around which to label scholarship, promote research agendas and mobilise a movement. It is the contention of this paper that waging peace (whether in the form of peace armies, sit-ins, boycotts, marches, civil disobedience, nonviolent direct action) allows scholars to excavate the common structures of struggle that co-produce both violent and nonviolent forms of resistance. War and peace geographies therefore co-exist in entangled and mutually reinforcing ways – the pacifists who formed the Brigade did not envisage the end of conflict: they believed all societies were a balance between coercion and consent. Rather they sought its 'reduction, management and transformation within a framework that precludes the violent use of force'.⁴⁶ By approaching these arguments materially and empirically through the histories of the peace movement itself, geographers can critically examine how ideas of peace are circulated, adapted and even resisted, while nonetheless retaining the conceptual stability of peace as a distinct category around which to organise and promote more peaceful futures.

In this spirit, despite pacifists' frank criticism, the Brigade ultimately leaves us a more ambiguous legacy, one wrought with both promise and failure. This is best summed up by its North American Regional Secretary, Theodore Olson:

The future of non-violent action depends on its relevance to the major concerns of masses of men. A 'way of life' it may be; a tool it must be, for the African on the land, . . . or for us Westerners, deeply alienated from the sources of power . . . It is this vision, of non-violence as a tool that people can use to help themselves, to use on their own concerns, that the WPB helped to project. Its failure to date is a failure to respond to that vision . . . For this we need desperately what the World Peace Brigade might have been. (1964, 40)

In short, as William James said, 'The war against war is going to be no holiday excursion or camping party' (1911, 108).

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