

CYNEFIN Y WERIN DAYSCHOOL



Ben Gregory (above) and David McKnight (below) leading workshops

Several members of WPJF went to the Cynefin y Werin Dayschool "Challenging Militarism in Wales" held in Newtown in February. Cynefin y Werin (Common Ground) is a broad-based network of campaigning groups in Wales.

At the last CyW meeting in October 2003 (report in WPJ News 4) we decided to invite a speaker from GROW (Grassroots Opposition to War); GROW is a network of groups united in their opposition to the roots of war and the "war on terror" and by their commitment to work in a non-violent, non-hierarchical, not London-centred way.

We welcomed Tom Hay from GROW, who outlined the history and organisation of the movement and the current state of opposition to the "war on terror." GROW was founded at a conference in September 2003, and now has regional groups in Birmingham, Sheffield, Leeds and London. GROW aims to provide a forum for the exchange of information, communication and co-ordination of action, focusing on creativity, the empowerment of groups and individuals, consensus decision-making, grassroots action rather than reliance on mainstream politics, and non-violence.

Tom's talk was followed by a lively question and answer session, which then split into discussion groups, mostly around the future relationship between CyW and GROW. It was decided (by consensus!) that the two organisations should co-operate closely, with GROW sending a representative to CyW meetings and CyW sending delegates to the forthcoming GROW conference in Nottingham in March. Genny Bove from WPJF also plans to attend this conference - report in next issue of WPJN.

The afternoon session split into 4 workshops discussing particular CyW projects, which then reported back to the meeting.

1. A Volunteer Peace Service for Wales. We discussed an excellent report about the feasibility of setting up a Peace Service in Wales, and agreed to plan a full day meeting to take this forward.
2. CyW web site. CyW is intending to set up a web site to act as an information network for campaigning groups in Wales. We have lots of great ideas for this.

Tim White has agreed to join the group to investigate this further.

3. Wales Social Forum. David McKnight reported on his research into setting up a Social Forum in Wales on similar lines to the World and European Social Forums.
4. Mapping Militarism in Wales. CyW is putting together a map showing all military-related activity in Wales, not only Army and RAF bases but also arms and component factories, pointing out the cost of such work and that it does not fit with the Assembly's aim for a sustainable economy in Wales. The map will also highlight alternatives to militarism. If you know of a site that should be represented on the map, please contact Ramsey Isak by email on: bajustpeace@hotmail.com or write to WPJF so we can pass it on.

There were also campaign updates and notices of forthcoming activities. Owen Hardwicke reported on the World Conference of Mayors for Peace, discussed elsewhere in this issue, and George Crabb told us about the campaign to erect a memorial to Conscientious Objectors in the Temple of Peace, Cardiff.

As always, the informal meeting was as valuable as the (not very!) formal sessions. It is inspiring to meet other activists and discuss the state of the world and our future plans. It was a very worthwhile day, and plans were made for the next meeting in six months time to discuss issues around trade justice and workshops on "How to Campaign."

