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Remember World War I, The 1914 Christmas Truce. “The Power of Peace in the Time of War”. In 2023, “Let It Happen Again” in Solidarity with Palestine. Abolish All Wars

By Dr. Jacques R. Pauwels and Prof Michel Chossudovsky
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The 1914 Truce: “The Power of Peace in the Time of War”.

In 2023, “Let It Happen Again” in Solidarity with Palestine.

Abolish All Wars

By Michel Chossudovsky

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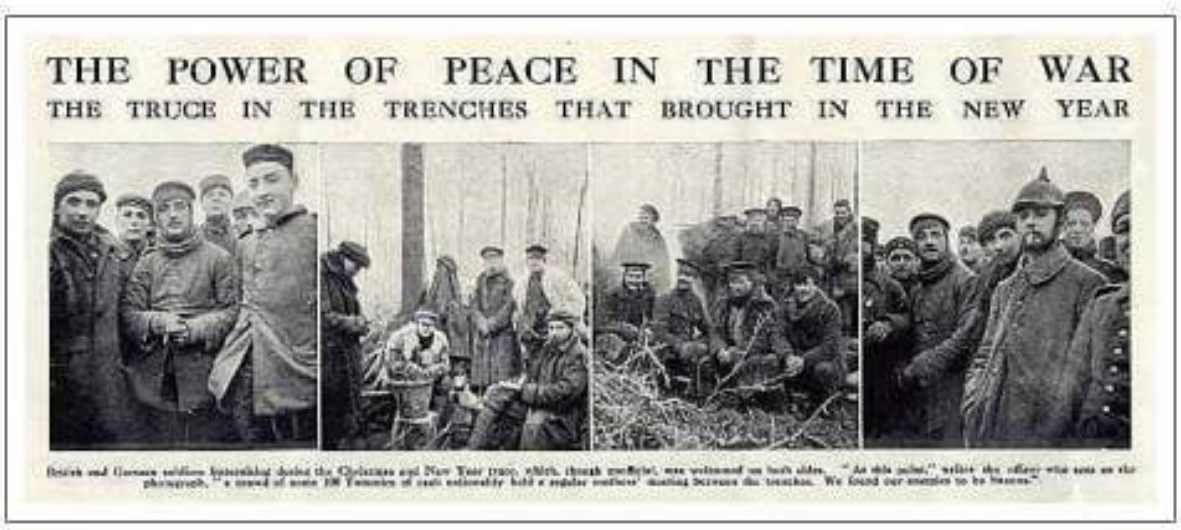
This Christmas, I have Tears in my Eyes

Let us have tears to our eyes in solidarity with the People of Palestine, in building a Christmas mass movement Worldwide, which confronts the ongoing mass slaughter before our very eyes.

Let us recall The Christmas Truce of 1914, 109 years ago this Christmas Eve:

> “Something happened in the early months of the “War to End All Wars” that put a tiny little blip of hope in the historical timeline of the organized mass slaughter that is war. The event was regarded by the professional military officer class to be so profound and so important (and so disturbing) that strategies were immediately put in place that would ensure that such an event could never happen again.” (Dr. Gary G. Kohls)


THE POWER OF PEACE IN THE TIME OF WAR

THE TRUCE IN THE TRENCHES THAT BROUGHT IN THE NEW YEAR

> “The ordinary soldiers developed more and more antipathy and even hatred toward their own officers. Simultaneously, they started to empathize and even sympathize for the men facing them on the far side of the no man’s land.
>
> The authorities condemned and prohibited all forms of fraternization and “live-and-let-live” in general. The officers sometimes put snipers to work when they suspected that fraternizations “threatened” to take place.
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> The men learned in many ways that the official enemy was in fact not the real enemy, that the soldiers on the other side were human beings just like themselves.” (Dr. Jacques Pauwels, Excerpt from his book, See below)

Today, we are “fraternizing” and acting in solidarity Worldwide with the People of Palestine against the hegemonic agenda of the U.S. and it allies which are waging an all-out war against humanity.

Crimes against the Peace, War Crimes, Crimes against Humanity

Both Prime Minister Bibi Netanyahu as well as President Joe Biden are responsible for “war crimes”, “crimes against peace” and “crimes against humanity” as defined under Principe VI of the Nuremberg Charter:

> The crimes hereinafter set out are punishable as crimes under international law:
>
> (a) Crimes against peace:
>
> (i) Planning, preparation, initiation or waging of a war of aggression or a war in violation of international treaties, agreements or assurances;

(ii) Participation in a common plan or conspiracy for the accomplishment of any of the acts mentioned under (i).

(b) War crimes:

Violations of the laws or customs of war which include, but are not limited to, murder, ill- treatment or deportation to slave-labour or for any other purpose of civilian population of or in occupied territory, murder or ill-treatment of prisoners of war, of persons on the seas, killing of hostages, plunder of public or private property, wanton destruction of cities, towns, or villages, or devastation not justified by military necessity.

(c) Crimes against humanity:

Murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation and other inhuman acts done against any civilian population, or persecutions on political, racial or religious grounds, when such acts are

Disobey Unlawful Orders, Abandon the Battlefield

According to Principle IV of the Nuremberg Charter:

> "The fact that a person [e.g. Israeli, U.S.soldiers, pilots] acted pursuant to order of his [her] Government or of a superior does not relieve him [her] from responsibility under international law, provided a moral choice was in fact possible to him [her]."

Let us make that "moral choice" possible, to enlisted Israeli, American, and NATO servicemen and women.

Disobey unlawful orders! Abandon the battlefield! … Refuse to fight in a war which violates Nuremberg Principle 6, The U.N. Charter and The Geneva Convention.

Let us call upon Israeli and American soldiers and pilots "to abandon the battlefield", as an act of refusal to participate in a criminal undertaking **against the People of Gaza**

Let the World War I "Power of Peace in the Time of War" "Happen again".

Confront corrupt politicians.

The Tears in Your Eyes

May the tears of humanity in your eyes in December 2023 be conducive to a Worldwide movement to abolish and "criminalize all wars".

Let us break the insidious narrative of a handful of Wall Street billionaires who finance America's "humanitarian wars", unseat the West's "Classe politique" and establish the foundations of "Real Democracy by the People for the People".

Michel Chossudovsky, Global Research, December 23, 2023

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An excerpt from Dr. Jacques Pauwels' book The Great Class War, 1914-1918

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The Great Class War (1914-1918)

Remember the 1914 Christmas Truce

by Jacques R. Pauwels

The situation in the fall 1914, after the "war of movement" has given way to the infamous stationary "trench warfare":

The ordinary soldiers developed more and more antipathy and even hatred toward their own officers. Simultaneously, they started to empathize and even sympathize for the men facing them on the far side of the no man's land. The official enemy – the Germans, Russians, French, whatever – were demonized by the authorities but the soldiers had little or nothing against them. In many cases, they hardly knew the people they were supposed to hate and kill. Furthermore, they soon found out that they had much in common with "the enemy," first and above all a lower-class social background, and second, the same exposure to danger and misery.

The men learned in many ways that the official enemy was in fact not the real enemy, that the soldiers on the other side were human beings just like themselves. This lesson could be learned, for example, by reading letters and looking at pictures found on taken from prisoners. The contempt for the "other," deliberately fabricated by the military and political superiors, thus soon gave way for mutual respect and the feeling "that we are all the same," for a "reciprocal respect and even sympathy." In January 1915, a French poilu commented as follows on letters he had found on a prisoner:

> "The same as on our side. The misery, the desperation, the longing for peace, the monstrous stupidity of this whole thing. The Germans are just as unhappy as we are. They are just as miserable as us."

This kind of lesson was also learned by physical meetings with the enemy. What is meant is obviously not hand-to-hand combat, which was actually far less frequent than we have tended to believe, but encounters with prisoners of war. About German captives a British officer reported that “they were pleasant chaps, who generally behaved like gentlemen.” And in 1916 a Scottish soldier, Joseph Lee, expressed his pity and sympathy for German prisoners as follows:

> When first I saw you in the curious street,
>
> Like some platoon of soldier ghosts in grey,
>
> My mad impulse was all to smite and slay,
>
> To spit upon you – tread you ’neath my feet.
>
> But when I saw how each sad soul did greet
>
> My gaze with no sign of defiant frown,
>
> (…)
>
> I knew that we had suffered each as other,
>
> And could have grasped your hand and cried, ‘My brother!’

Sympathy for German prisoners was also reflected in the poem “Liedholz,” written by the British officer Herbert Read. He may have been an officer but he happened to be a convinced anarchist. Read captured a German named Liedholz, and already before they reach the British trenches, “werden de versperringen van formele vijandschap weggenomen,” to use the words of a literary commentator:

> Before we reached our wire
>
> He told me he had a wife and three children.
>
> In the dug-out we gave him a whiskey.
>
> (…)
>
> In broken French we discussed
>
> Beethoven, Nietzsche and the International.

In “Memoirs of an Infantry Officer,” published in 1930, Siegfried Sassoon was to write that, during the war, the Germans were generally hated by British citizens, but not, or certainly far less, by British soldiers. He himself, he added, “had nothing against them.” Countless French soldiers likewise failed to develop feelings of hatred with respect to their German “neighbours on the other side.” “We don’t hate the Germans,” wrote a poilu in a letter that was intercepted by the censors.

The French soldier Barthas soon felt sympathy for the German prisoners he escorted on a train travelling from the front to a camp somewhere in southern France, and who were verbally abused by civilians in railway stations. He and his comrades shared the wine and

the grapes those same civilians had offered them with their prisoners in a gesture of camaraderie. “Those who has seen the dreadful realities of war,” observes Max Hastings, “recoiled from displays of chauvinism.” The soldiers loathed the civilians, journalists, and politicians who could or would not understand their miserable fate. Conversely, they found it impossible to hate a so-called enemy who shared their misery. “The soldiers of the rival armies felt a far stronger sense of community with each other than with their peoples at home,” writes Hastings.

The “no man’s land” that separated the armies revealed itself to be less wide than the gap that separated the soldiers from the officers of these armies. During the late summer and fall of 1914, two different wars had thus actually started to ravage Europe. First, a highly visible “vertical” war, a conflict between groups of countries, in which all uniformed men of the one side were enemies of all uniformed men on the other side. Second, below the surface, so to speak: a “horizontal” war, an explosion of class conflict, a conflict in which the officers of each army were the enemies of their own subordinates, while a high degree of solidarity united the ordinary soldiers of both sides. In the first war, a geographic (or topographic) frontline separated friend and foe. In the second war, a social gap separated the antagonists.

In the autumn of 1914, when on the western front the “war of movement” petered out and gave way to a “stationary war,” the soldiers discovered that their enemies were human beings just like themselves, with whom they happened to have a lot in common. They were overwhelmingly of a lower-class origin and they all experienced an urgent need to curb the mutual massacre as much as possible. Practices emerged that have been described as “live-and-let-live.” For example, the soldiers often deliberately refrained from firing their weapons, especially during mealtimes, hoping that the enemy would do the same, as usually turned out to be the case. When, during such a pause, a mortar did suddenly get fired, a German voice loudly offered excuses to the British “Tommies,” which prevented an escalation of the firing. When specific orders arrived from “above” to open fire, the men deliberately aimed too high, and the enemy did the same. The artillerists also often opened fire at the same time of the day, aiming at the same target, this in order to give the enemy a chance to withdraw to a safe area.

Quiet sectors thus originated along the front, areas where the casualty rate was noticeably lower than elsewhere. In the vicinity of Ypres the British and Germans thus agreed to let the men on both sides sit on the parapet of their muddy and frequently flooded trenches, in full view of each other, in order to stay dry. Yet another form of “live-and-let-live” consisted in the conclusion of inofficial ceasefires, unauthorized by the superiors, after heavy fighting, which allowed both sides to recuperate the wounded and bury the dead. Those opportunities were often used to start a conversation with the enemy and to exchange small presents such as tobacco and insignia, in other words, to “fraternize.” Occasionally this even involved visits to the trenches on the other side of no man’s land! A German soldier later remembered such a pause in the fighting in France toward the end of November 1914: “French and German soldiers walked around, fully visible in the bright daylight. Nobody fired their weapons. It was said that some brave men even visited the enemy trenches.” The same soldier related how even later, for example in February 1915, “it was silently agreed to leave each other in peace as much as possible.” And a French poilu, Gervais Morillon, described in a letter how on December 12, 1914.

Frenchmen and Germans shook hands after unarmed Germans came out of their trenches,

waving a white flag…We reciprocated, and we visited each other's trenches and exchanged cigars and cigarets, while a few hundred metres further they were shooting at each other.

In some sectors such fraternizations developed into an almost daily routine. In the area of the town of Pont-à-Mousson French as well as German soldiers started in November 1914 to fetch water daily at the Fountain of Father Hilarion (Fontaine du Père Hilarion), a spring situated in a ravine in the middle of no man's land. Normally, they took turns to go there, and no shots were fired while water was being collected. But it frequently came to meetings and conversations. According to a report that appears to refer to that site, Frenchmen and Germans exchanged "bread, cheese, and wine," ate together, showed each other pictures of wife and children, amused themselves together, sang songs, played the accordion. That sociability abruptly ended when, on December 7, heavy fighting erupted in the area.

Daily Express Tuesday April 28 2009 29

Revealed: Secrets of 1914 Christmas truce

By **Martin Stote**

IT WAS one of the most poignant moments of the Great War – with British and German soldiers emerging from the trenches to share a fleeting peace.

And now one of the architects of the First World War's Christmas Day truce has been revealed in a new account.

Captain Robert Hamilton, of the 1st battalion Royal Warwickshire regiment, was at the heart of those magical few hours.

His grandson, former history teacher Andrew Hamilton, was inspired to collate his relative's diary and other illustrations and documents after his daughter visited the battlefields with her school.

He and historian Alan Reed have drawn on more than 100 photographs, cartoons, maps and sketches to write a book.

Mr Hamilton's daughter Alice took the diary with her on a school trip to the battlefields of France and Belgium.

Mr Reed was one of the tour organisers. "She gave him the diary to look at.

"We found we both shared a deep interest in the First World War and agreed to research my grandfather's experiences," Mr Hamilton from Walton, Warwickshire, said yesterday.

"For me it was fascinating following my grandfather's campaign footsteps and pinpointing the exact spot where he met a German officer, two miles from the Belgian hamlet of St Yvon on Christmas Day."

Writing in his small, leather-bound journal for December 25, 1914, Captain Hamilton wrote: "A day unique in the world's history. I met this officer and we arranged a local armistice for 48 hours."

He added: "The soldiers on both sides met in their hundreds and exchanged greetings and gifts."

Captain Hamilton returned to England in 1915 after being made deaf by shell fire.

The book, Meet at Dawn, Unarmed, has just been published.

The truce illustrated in this cartoon was also recorded by Captain Robert Hamilton, left, in his diary, below

The soldiers were supposed to hate each other, but something very different actually happened: on both sides many men, though admittedly not all, developed a considerable measure of empathy for, and solidarity with, their counterparts on the other side of the no man`s land. The outbreak of war had produced an explosion of nationalism and had dealt a heavy blow to the ideal of internationalist solidarity among proletarians, exactly as the elite had hoped. But it now appeared that the vagaries of war caused the uniformed proletarians to rediscover and re-appreciate internationalist solidarity. The military elite did not approve. Of the war it was indeed expected that it would bury internationalism once and for all instead of resurrecting it. According to Adam Hochschild, such an "outburst of spontaneous solidarity among ordinary, working-class soldiers…outraged higher-ups and militarists on both sides."

` `The ordinary soldiers were keenly aware that their superiors had their reasons for execrating all forms of “live-and-let-live,” even though it sometimes proved possible to persuade or even force them to participate, as we will see later. It is therefore understandable that these activities often occurred when the officers were not present, which was often the case in the dangerous first lines. The fraternizations were immediately aborted whenever it was signaled that officers were on their way. Barthas describes such an occurrence that took place in rhe Champagne region in the summer of 1916. The French had to inform the German soldiers with whom they were socializing that their officers had become suspicious, so that they had to suspend the meetings. “The Germans were deeply moved and thanked us cordially. Before they disappeared behind their sandbags, oone of them lifted his hand and called out: ‘Frenchmen, Germans, soldiers, we are all comrades!’ Then he made a fist: ‘But the officers, NO.’ “ Barthas commented as follows:

God! That German was right. One should not generalize, but the majority of the officers were morally farther removed from us than those poor devils of German soldiers who are being dragged against their will to the same slaugherhouse.

The officers did indeed abominate any arrangements reflecting solidarity between their own subordinates and the “enemy.” Charles De Gaulle, for example, the progeny of a Catholic bourgeois family in Lille, a young officer during the First World War, condemned each form of “live-and-let-live” as “lamentable.” But there were also many ordinary soldiers who did not approve of such gatherings, since they had internalized the elite’s nationalist and militarist ethos and thus genuinely hated the enemy. Hitler was one of them.

The authorities condemned and prohibited all forms of fraternization and “live-and-let-live” in general. The officers sometimes put snipers to work when they suspected that fraternizations “threatened” to take place. However, the spontaneous truces and fraternizations also reflected the need of all warriors to maintain and display a semblance of humanity even in the middle of an unprecedently bestial war. This explains why officers too sometimes chose to participate. The French soldier Gervais Morillon described how an officier walked at the head of a group of Germans who came out of their trenches. Sometimes superiors with a rank as high as that of colonel participated.

The fact that fraternizations were officially strictly prohibited, apparently made them even more fascinating and appealing to soldiers. It is probably thus that we can interpret a myth that enjoyed an inordinate amount of success among soldiers of both sides throughout the war. Countless soldiers were convinced that, somewhere in the no man’s land, in abandoned trenches and preferably deep under the ground, and thus beyond the reach of projectiles and of officers, beastlike deserters of all armies dwelled together in a kind of permanent state of fraternization. By night they would rob the dead and wounded, seek food, etc. They became such a threat to the troops that eventually the army brass ordered them to be exterminated with gas. This myth was a cocktail of many ingredients. It amounted to a modern version of the Medieval theme of the simultaneously feared and admired “wild man.” But is was also a commentary of the soldiers on their own beastly existence in the trenches and a fantasy about disobedience. Last but not least, it vaguely reflected the soldiers’ solidarity with the men on the other side of the no man’s land, combined with the ardent desire to wave adieu to their own superiors and the miserable war. “An anti-establishment smell was attched to this myth,” writes Tim Cook, it was “a form of disobedience.” Indeed, the generals could prohibit fraternizations in the real world, but they proved powerless in the face of such mythical fraternization – this clearly to the satisfaction

of the soldiers who wished to believe in this myth.

In any event, the authorities were also unable to prevent the wave of fraternizations that took place on Christmas Day, 1914. In the vicinity of Ypres, the sector of the western front that was held from September-October of that year by the British and became known to them as “Flanders’ Fields,” it already started on Christmas eve. The Germans decorated trees near their trenches with burning candles and started to sing Christmas songs such as Stille Nacht, “Silent Night.” The British reacted by lighting bonfires and singing English Christmas carols. Then the soldiers on both sides started to loudly call out Christmas wishes. The Germans arranged to deliver a chocolate tart to the British, accompanied by an invitation to conclude a truce. Shortly thereafter soldiers crawled out of their trenches in order to fraternize in no man’s land and in each other’s trenches. That sort of thing continued on Christmas Dayitself, and in some sectors even on Boxing Day. Presents such as tobacco, whiskey, and cigars were exchanged, and the two sides helped each other to bury the dead. In the no man’s land a soccer game was also played, which the British claimed to have won. An English soldier wrote in a letter that this was “the most remarkable Christmas” he had ever experienced, and that he “had had the pleasure to shake hands with numerous Germans,...to smoke together and to enjoy a friendly chat.” A favourite conversation topic was the madness of ta war of which both sides had had more than enough.

Between the British and the Germans the unofficial Christmas truce affected virtually the entire front of approximately forty kilometers along which they faced each other. In some sectors of that front the truce dragged on until New Year’s Day. Some historians claim that the Anglo-German fraternizations of the end of December 1914 were nothing less than “massive.” But on Christmas Day similar truces and fraternizations also occurred between the Germans and the French. Barthas confided to his diary that, in their sector, the morning of Christmas witnessed “singing and shouting and the firing of flares” and that no shots were fired. And it is known that poilus met boches to sing and exchange tobacco, cognac, postcards, newspapers, and other presents in the vicinity of Soissons and in villages of Picardy such as Cappy and Foucaucourt. A poilu later remembered that

The boches signalled us and indicated that they wanted to talk to us. I approached to three or four meters from their trench in order to talk to three of them who had surfaced...They asked that we would refrain all day and night from shooting and said that they themselves would not fire one single shot. They had enough of the war, they said, they were married and had nothing against the French, only against the English. They gave me a box of cigars and a package of sigarets, and I gave them a copy of [the magazine] Le Petit Parisien in exchange for a German newspaper. Then I withdrew to the French trench, where many men were keen to try my German tobacco. Our neighbours on the other side kept their word, even better than we did. Not even one single rifle shot was fired.

There were many other sites along the front where groups of French soldiers visited the German trenches in order to enjoy a drink, or where Germans came to offer cigars to the Franzosen. Christmas carols were performed in both languages, for example Minuit chrétien and O Tannenbaum. Belgians and Germans, who faced each other in the lowlands of the Yser River estuary, allegedly also fraternized on Christmas 1914. The Germans agreed to mail letters from Belgian soldiers to family members in occupied Belgium. At the eastern front it also came to fraternizations. The Russians met their Austrian-Hungarian enemies in the no man’s land in Galicia and exchanged the usual tobacco, but also schnapps, bread,

and meat.

The superiors were far from enchanged with the Christmas truces, but could not prevent them. On the British side an officer rushed to the scene with this intention, apparantly from the safety of the rear, but he arrived too late. His men had already started to socialize with Germans in the no man's land. He could only resign himself to the fait accompli. He himself and a handful of other officers ended up joining their subordinates and went to greet the German officiers. One of the latter ordered beer to be fetched for everyone, and the officers courteously drank to each other's health. A British officer reciprocated by treating those present with pieces of a traditional English plum pudding. It was finally agreed that the inofficial truce would last until midnight, so that everyoone would have to be back in their own trenches by midnight. The "damage" done by the fraternizations, at least from the viewpoint of the superiors, was thus limited somewhat, at least in that sector.

The higher the rank of the superiors, the less they liked this strange Christmas idyll. The British commander in chief, Generaal French, who on Christmas Day enjoyed a gourmet dinner, featuring turtle soup, with as digestif a brandy from 1820 offered by the Rotschilds, issued a specific order to nip in the bud any future attempts to fraternize. One year later, the artillery would be made to fire into no man's land all day, starting on Christmas Eve, in order to prevent any meetings there. However, it proved impossible to prevent fraternizations to occur here and there and from time to time.

In the 1980s, the strange events of Christmas 1914 inspired the song Christmas in the Trenches, 1914, written and put to music by the American folksinger John McCutcheon. It features the following lines:

> 'T was Christmas in the trenches where the frost so bitter hung,
>
> The frozen fields of France were still, no Christmas song was sung,
>
> Our families back in England were toasting us that day,
>
> Their brave and glorious lads so far away.
>
> (…)
>
> There's someone coming towards us!' the front line sentry cried
>
> All sights were fixed on one lone figure coming from their side
>
> His truce flag, like a Christmas star, shone on that plain so bright
>
> As he bravely strode unarmed into the night.
>
> Soon one by one on either side walked into No Man's land
>
> With neither gun nor bayonet we met there hand to hand
>
> We shared some secret brandy and we wished each other well
>
> And in a flare-lit soccer game we gave 'em hell.
>
> We traded chocolates, cigarettes, and photographs from home

These sons and fathers far away from families of their own

Young Sanders played his squeeze box and they had a violin

This curious and unlikely band of men.

(…)

’T was Christmas in the trenches, where the frost so bitter hung

The frozen fields of France were warmed as songs of peace were sung

For the walls they’d kept between us to exact the work of war

Had been crumbled and were gone for evermore.

My name is Francis Tolliver, in Liverpool I dwell

Each Christmas come since World War I I’ve learned its lessons well

That the ones who call the shots won’t be among the dead and lame

And on each end of the rifle we’re the same.

Articles by: Dr. Jacques R. Pauwels and Prof Michel Chossudovsky