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November's Remembrance Day

Peregrin

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It's November, which means it's the time for red paper poppies again. When I'm asked why I'm not wearing a poppy it gives me pause for thought. Unlike many that obediently wear their poppy I do actually think about what I'm doing nowadays, if I choose to wear or not wear one I will at least do so mindfully and with purpose. Don't get me wrong when I was young, I used to blithely wear my red poppy and remember all the dead people I had never met and never knew. Then, later, I would wear my white poppy to challenge that narrative of only remembering those who died as soldiers in the war. I've moved on again since then.

When I'm asked why I'm not wearing a poppy there are several reasons behind that. Most people that ask won't want the answer. I suppose the easy answer is that I think that it's more important to help the living than remember the dead. That's a sound bite so let's go deeper.

Even as a child I instinctively understood that history was important. We had to remember the suffering from the past to learn how to stop it happening again in the future. It should be a process of evaluation and improving. In my innocence I thought that's what the red poppy stood for. That in some way we could prevent

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war by wearing it. As I got older I somehow came to believe that we could prevent war by remembering all the victims; soldiers, civilians, men, women, children and animals. I've come to the understanding that if this were true we would no longer have war or suffering or death, because remembering isn't enough. We need to understand the reasons for it and put in place prevention and cures.

War – what is it good for? Well, it's very good for making some people very rich. It's very good for killing people, but not just any people; it doesn't kill politicians and not so many rich people. It appears that the majority of people who are killed are going to be the poor old working class. Who does the fighting and the killing? It's not so much the rich and the officer class is it? It's the working class, privates, our children, the boys with the stars in their eyes off looking for adventure, and family, decent pay and heroism. Taken away to serve the ruling classes in a bid for control of the planet's resources.

When I'm asked why I'm not wearing a poppy I reflect on the glorification of war, the way the poppy is used as a recruiting tool. We wouldn't need to raise money through charities to support the victims of war if we did away with the wars of the ruling classes. The best way to support those victims is to stop making them.

I used to wear the white peace poppy, of course I was a pacifist back then, a hippy child of innocent heart. I used to believe in peaceful protest. In my naivety and because it made sense to me in the fight for justice and peace and equality, I thought it would make sense to the ruling classes to give up their wealth and their power, I don't know why I thought they would want the same things that I did. I thought we could march and that when we had enough people we could just ask for what we want and make a better world for everyone through co-operation.

I think I've grown up a bit since then. Why would the rich give up their power over us voluntarily. The more power we take the more they will try to defend what they have. They don't care about

fairness or equality, that's a lie they spin to the working class to get them to comply with the system from which they benefit the most.

When I'm asked why I don't wear a poppy, these are the thoughts that go through my mind. How does it benefit anyone to wear these symbols? They are symbols of compliance, they are to distract us by making us think about the dead rather than the living, a great display of pageantry and theatre to entertain us. The class war continues while we look the other way and remember, but we never learn, we just remember the past when we should be looking into the present. Looking at all our class who die and are killed by the system, the same one that caused the wars in the past and that causes the continuing class war today.

When I'm asked why I don't wear a poppy, these are the thoughts that go through my head but I don't have the words to express those thoughts and they wouldn't understand or care if I did. They would take it as a criticism but it's not. If you want to wear your poppy, if that's your thing, if that's how you make a difference in the world go ahead. I don't care if it's red, white, purple, black or rainbow coloured, I appreciate the sentiment behind the idea of trying to stop war. I just don't think a poppy has the power to do that, I've lost faith; I think we need to think about it more.

When I'm asked why I don't wear a poppy and why I won't be attending Remembrance Day this year I ask the question why don't you wear transgender badge? Why won't you be attending transgender day of remembrance when we stand together to remember a group of people that died this year around the world? Killed by the system, the same one that continues to kill people even to this day, young people who had to die for the crime of just wanting to be themselves. Because maybe if we remember the present instead of the past we might be able to figure out a way to stop it all happening again and again into the future. We do need to take action though – Watch, record, evaluate, understand and take action.

**Transgender Day of Remembrance – 20th November –
Think it over!**