

NON-VIOLENT RESISTANCE NETWORK NEWSLETTER

Published on behalf of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

Address: NVRN, Mordechai Vanunu House, 162 Holloway Road, London N7 8DQ

Tel: 07539-321 118; e-mail: davidtrpolden1@gmail.com

Editor: David Polden.

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PALESTINE ACTION (PA): TWO YEARS OF DIRECT ACTION

On August 1st, PA reported on its two years of direct action against factories and offices in the UK of the largest Israeli weapons manufacturer Elbit. In particular it manufactures 85% of the military drones used in attacks on Palestinian cities and villages in the West Bank and Gaza. The aim has been try to shut down these facilities by effective direct action usually using small numbers of activists.

In this it can claim some striking successes, with the closing down of the Elbit Ferranti factory in Oldham in January this year followed by the closing down of its London offices on 20th June. And on 16th August PA reported that Fisher German, the landlords of Elbit's UAV Engines factory at Shenstone in Staffordshire, has shut down its offices in Birmingham.

This been achieved by an unremitting campaign of actions at offices and factories connected with Elbit. In the case of Elbit's London offices, this has involved 15 blockades and occupations since PA was launched with an action at these offices. The latest such action there involved activists locking-in across the main entrance stopping work and drenching the building with red paint "to represent the blood spilt by Elbit's trade".

A new PA group, PA Scotland has recently been formed. Its first action was on June 1st when six activists occupying the roof of Thales's Glasgow factory. (Thales works with Elbit on drone projects.) The activists also destroyed factory equipment, causing workers to evacuate the factory. PA Scotland carried out a similar action at the factory on July 11th.



PA activists occupying the roof of the Fisher German offices prior their closing down

Other recent PA actions have included occupation of Arconic's Birmingham factory on June 13th in protest at the company having supplied the highly-flammable cladding used on Grenfell Tower and other buildings as well as producing vital equipment used in military aircraft supplied to Israel. There have been four actions at the UAV Engines factory at Shenstone in Staffordshire, on 2nd of June, 4th and 24th of July and 4th August. UAV manufactures engines for military drones supplied to Israel. On 8th August four PA activists occupied the roof of "The Good Packing Company", a firm that does business with Elbit and packs, transports and exports Israeli weapons. They then caused extensive damage, including dousing walls with red paint.

Some 200 people have been charged as a result of these actions and some held in detention for a few days after arrest, thought two foreign nationals were remanded into custody for a month, and many of these charges have been dropped before trial or the defendants found not guilty. Still there are now some 46 PA activists awaiting trial on a variety of charges: some 30 with criminal damage (or conspiracy to commit criminal damage) charges, with the damage valued at various sums from £5,000 to £4 million (two of these are also charged with aggravated trespass), six charged with going equipped to commit criminal damage and eight variously with conspiracy to blackmail, burglary and criminal damage. See: www.palestineaction.org

JUST STOP OIL (JSO) CAMPAIGN

JSO is a new environmental action group campaigning for the UK government to satisfy five demands: to stop issuing of licences for new oil and gas fields, insulate homes, give everyone enough free energy to cover basics such as heating, cooking and lighting, provide cheap public transport and tax big polluters and billionaires to help fund this.

JSO have been using tactics very similar to that of PA (see above). The difference from PA's campaign is that the actions are more indirect, aimed rather at publicity-worthy actions to bring attention to their demands rather than action to try to achieve them directly. These actions have included stunts in art galleries during opening hours in which two or more activists in bright orange t-shirts labelled "Just Stop Oil" glue themselves to the frames of famous paintings.

The paintings targetted have included *My Heart is in the Highlands* in the Kelvingrove gallery in Glasgow, Turner's *Aeolian Harp* at the Manchester Art Gallery and in London, Van Gogh's *Peach Trees in Blossom* at the Courtauld, Constable's *The Hay Wain* at the National Gallery and *The Last Supper*, after Leonardo da Vinci at the Royal Academy. At some galleries, red paint and messages were sprayed on the floor and at the National Gallery activists hung from the upper frame of *The Hay Wain* a full-size copy of it, but it brought up-to-date with aeroplanes, the river turned into a road, an abandoned car and a smoking factory.

This campaign inspired at least one similar action outside the UK: on July 23rd it was reported that climate activists had attempted to glue their hands to the glass covering Botticelli's *The Primavera* in the Uffizi Gallery in Florence.



PA activists stuck to the frame of *The Hay Wain*, covered by amended version

Other actions by JSO have included activists throwing red paint over the UK's new "hub" building, the Queen Elizabeth House in Edinburgh and over the Treasury in London, JSO arguing that the UK government has blood on its hands by encouraging new oil and gas projects. On July 3rd, five activists in JSO t-shirts, sat on Silverstone track during the British Grand Prix when the race was halted after the first lap because of an accident. And on July 20th, five JSO activists climbed gantries supporting signs over the M25 causing police to stop traffic in three places. As a result of the M25 action, three JSO activists were placed on remand in prison for a month until trial set for August 19th.

Previously, on May 31st, JSO activist Ana Heyatawin was sentenced to three months in prison at Stratford Magistrates' Court for contempt of court for glueing herself to the dock when facing charges as a result of a JSO action.

Not that JSO have given up on larger-scale demonstrations. On July 23rd, JSO joined with Insulate Britain, the Fuel Poverty Action group, CND and the Peace and Justice Project to organise a "mass swarming march" which involved groups setting off from eleven separate locations, causing much traffic disruption, and converging in Parliament Square for a symbolic mass sit down.

UK GOVERNMENT NOT GIVING UP ON REFUGEE DEPORTATION SCHEME

The UK government has paid the Rwandan government £120m to accept refugees who've arrived in Britain "illegally" (mainly in small boats across the Channel). It has also agreed to pay the cost of flying such refugees to Rwanda and for housing and maintenance costs.

However the first attempt to fly up to 130 refugees to Rwanda ended in farce on June 15th. By then only seven refugees remained on the plane after lawyers for other refugees intended for the flight had won cases against their deportation. Then, two hours before the flight was to take off, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) issued an order that one of the seven should not be

deported. The remaining six made similar claims and the flight was cancelled.

The day before, as reported in *Freedom News*, Stop Deportation protesters had blocked Colnbrook immigration removal centre and a coach carrying five refugees for deportation to Rwanda by locking-on to each other through metal tubes.

Meanwhile applications had been brought for legal review of the policy of deportation of refugees to Rwanda. The first of these was launched by the public servants' union PCS, to which many immigration officials belong, as well as Care4Calais, Detention Action and four

asylum seekers facing removal to Rwanda. The group are challenging the right of the Home Office to carry out such removals, the rationality of Home Secretary Priti Patel's claim that Rwanda is "generally" (!) a "safe third world country" the adequacy of provision for malaria prevention in Rwanda and whether the policy complies with the Human Rights Act. (There will be a demonstration in support of this application outside the High Court on 5th September when this application is heard – see under "Coming Events" below.)

The High Court was due to carry out this judicial review on July 19th, but shortly before the review was postponed until September 5th. Meanwhile it is unlikely that any further flights will be attempted before this date as it could be seen as contempt of court for pre-empting the court's decision.

This hasn't stopped the two remaining candidates for becoming Prime Minister vying for the votes of Conservative Party members by enthusiastic support for the deportation policy.

Rishi Sunak said on the 24th June that he would do "whatever it takes" to get the plan "off the ground and

operating at scale" and vowed to pursue partnerships with other countries to take deport refugees to. He also issued a 10-point plan on immigration which would cap the number of refugees Britain would accept each year, tighten the qualification of who qualifies, and withhold aid from countries that refuse to take back those whose claims failed and criminals.

Liz Truss for her part, said she is "determined to see the Rwandan policy through to full implementation as well as exploring other countries where we can work on similar policies". She has cited Turkey as such a suitable country, in spite of its appalling human rights record. Moreover, she vowed not to "cower" before the ECHR, and to reform Britain's relationship with it court "so it works better" (ie so Britain can ignore its decisions presumably).

Meanwhile, Priti Patel's plans to house up to 1,500 asylum seekers in a disused former RAF base in North Yorkshire, because it would be cheaper than housing them, as presently, in hotels, has been abandoned after it faced legal challenges and opposition from local Tory activists.

PRITI PATEL SIGNS ORDER FOR ASSANGE TO BE EXTRADITED; THE CAMPAIGN CONTINUES

On 17th June the Home Secretary signed the order for Julian Assange to be extradited to the US to face 17 counts under the US Espionage Act, for receiving and publishing secret US military documents in the journal *Wikileaks he publishes*. The documents give evidence of US war crimes in Iraq and Afghanistan. If found guilty of all these charges Assange faces a possible total of 175 years in prison.

Assange has appealed against this order. He remains in solitary confinement in Belmarsh high-security prison where he has been since 2019 when forcibly removed from the Ecuadorian Embassy. Meanwhile the campaign against Assange's extradition continues with weekly Saturday vigils outside Belmarsh from noon to 2pm, plus one-off demonstrations.

I have recently been attending the Saturday vigils at Belmarsh and have been very impressed.



The vigil is by a a traffic-light junction on the main road outside the prison and very large signs are displayed facing oncoming traffic reading "Free Julian Assange" and "Hoot for Assange". About 20 regular participants leaflet vehicles halted at the lights, which are also addressed by megaphone. Public reaction is generally very supportive, with many taking leaflets and showing interest, and many drivers hoot for Assange. This reaction may be connected with many people in passing vehicles being from ethnic minorities - the prison is near Thamesmead. At the end participants march to the front door of the prison to make speeches and shout supportive slogans over the blank prison walls, trusting Assange will hear. At the July 23rd vigil long-time passionate Assange supporter Eric Levy, who died on July 21st aged 94, was remembered very affectionately for his long and dedicated support for the campaign. (See Eric's obituary, page 6)

The Free Free Julian Assange campaign is organising a human chain in London around Parliament in support of Assange on 8th October. Contact: <https://dontextraditeassange.com> David Polden

DAY OF ACTION FOR THE 2017 TPNW TREATY

The first review meeting of the 65 countries who had so far ratified the UN Treaty on the prevention of Nuclear War (TPNW) was held in Vienna on 21st to 23rd of June. By ratifying the treaty countries commit themselves to

develop, test, produce, manufacture, acquire or possess nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

On the 16th an International Day of Action was held to call on all countries to ratify the Treaty and get rid of their nuclear weapons if they had them.

In London, in an action organised by Trident Plowshares (TP) with the support of CND, activists held half-hour vigils successively at the Russian, French, German and German embassies and finally at Downing Street, displaying banners and attempting to hand in a statement of our demands at each place. We also leafleted the public by the embassies and on our walk between Embassies.

Those taking part in the event included Rev. Nagase from the Battersea Park Peace Pagoda and Sister Maruta from

the one at Milton Keynes. They drummed and chanted together at each Embassy and drummed during the walk which took us through St. James's Park and past Buckingham Palace

From the French Embassy on we were joined by the Raised Voices choir who sang anti-nuclear and peace songs and by two Veterans for Peace (VFP), one of whom, Alan Chick, read out a statement on behalf of VFP calling for an end to the threat of nuclear war. We repeated the same pattern at the German Embassy and at Downing Street.

FASLANE CAMP ECHOES THE CALL

From June 9th to 18th a peace camp named "Faslane Action for the Bomb Ban" (or "FABB") was held in Peaton Wood very near the Coulport nuclear warhead storage base which stores warheads for the nuclear submarines based at Faslane.

Among workshops, vigils, eatng, socialising, blockades of Faslane, and leafletting in the nearby town of Helensburgh, one of the most successful actions was an action by five canoes to try to see how far they could get into the Coulport base by sea. The answer was the whole way! One of the canoeists, Ginny, managed to actually evade MOD police and land on the shore inside the base. There she raised a peace flag to reclaim the base for peace and even managed to paddle back out to rejoin her fellow canoists before the police could clamber across rocks to detain her. On the last day of the camp a letter addressed to the commander of Faslane base was handed in making the same demand as the letters handed in to the London Embassies.



Ginny reclaims Coulport base for peace

HISTORY CORNER: A US PLOWSHARES ACTION, 1982

Art Laffin, a US activist friend of the editor, remembers a Plowshares action from 40 years ago. (edited version)



The Plowshares 9 "conspiring"

July 5th 2022 marked the 40th anniversary of the "Trident Nein" plowshares-disarmament action which I was honoured to participate in. I am forever grateful to each of my co-conspirators who were part of this lifegiving

witness, as well as for all those who supported us in our action, court proceedings and trial and imprisonment.

Early on July 5, 1982, as the nation just finished celebrating Independence Day, Sr. Judy Beaumont, a Benedictine sister; Anne Montgomery, of the Plowshares Eight; James Cunningham, an ex-lawyer; George Veasey, a Vietnam war veteran ; Tim Quinn, house painter; Sr. Anne Bennis, teacher; Bill Hartman, peace worker; Vincent Kay, house painter and poet; and I, a member of a Covenant Peace Community, entered General Dynamics-Electric Boat shipyard in Groton, Connecticut to enact the biblical prophecy of beating swords into plowshares and make a "declaration of independence" from the first-strike Trident nuclear submarine and all nuclear weapons. Bill, Jim, Vincent and Tim boarded the Trident USS Florida by canoe, hammered on several missile hatches, poured blood, and with spray paint,

renamed the submarine “USS Auschwitz.” They were arrested within half an hour. Meanwhile, Sr. Judy, Anne, George, Sr. Anne and I entered EB’s south storage yard and hammered and poured blood on two Trident sonar spheres and hung on them a banner that read: “Trident a Holocaust—The Oven Without Walls.” We were apprehended after three hours.

During a two-week jury trial in New London Superior Court we were disallowed a justification defence and expert witnesses were prohibited from testifying about the danger of Trident. We were convicted of criminal mischief, conspiracy and criminal trespass and ordered to pay \$1,386.67 in restitution to the Navy and were sentenced to jail for up to a year.

In 1982, the nuclear peril was as palpable and imminent as it is today. There was open talk by government officials of a nuclear exchange between the US and the Soviet Union. Then, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists turned it “Doomsday Clock” [which represents the

ERIC LEVY, 1928-2022

This obituary is heavily reliant on Emma Sangster’s excellent obituary in the current edition of *Peace News*.

As Emma mentions, I first met him when both supply teachers in a Hackney primary school. While there I had the ignominy of being replaced by Eric as teacher of a particular class because of my lack of class management skills. It is not surprising to learn that he seems to have had a longer career as a teacher than I suffered!

To give the facts of Eric’s life as set out by Emma: born in Syria he partly educated in Canada. This in spite of his hard-left communist views he espoused which it seems got him into trouble at some schools when he brought them into the classroom. In spite of his strongly-held views he was always ready to debate them in his quiet American drawl and listen to the views of others and he was much-liked over the years.

In the causes which he embraced Eric was always in it for the long haul. I’m not surprised that, as left-wing Jew, one of these causes was that of the Palestinians and that he showed this support by visiting to Palestine to help with the olive harvest on many occasions.

He also supported some long-term vigils over many years, including the anti-apartheid continuous vigil outside South House in Trafalgar Square in the 1980s and Brian Haw’s 10-year full-time peace and anti-war camp in Parliament Square in the 2020s.

Eric was also a participant in the “Gulf Peace Team”, initiated by Pat Arrowsmith. This organised a group of some 74 international activists to set up a peace camp in Iraq near the border with US ally Saudi Arabia in January 1991. This was just before the US started bombing

likelihood of a man-made global catastrophe, in the opinion of the members of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists] to three minutes before midnight. Three years later, it was changed to only minute before.

40 years later on January 20th this year, The Doomsday Clock was set at 100 seconds to midnight, due to the current dangers of nuclear war and climate change — threats compounded by cyber-enabled information warfare, upgrades to existing nuclear systems, and worsening world tensions.

This assessment occurred just before Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. This conflict has further exacerbated the nuclear peril between the two foremost nuclear powers. The US is the only nation to have used nuclear weapons and has always maintained a “first-use” nuclear weapons policy, Russia has publicly stated it would consider using nuclear weapons if it feels endangered by increased US and NATO intervention in the war in Ukraine.

targets in Iraq at the start of the Gulf War. The idea was to set up a neutral “human shield” between the two opposing forces, I don’t think the foundation idea was ever to defend infrastructure as such, though it’s quite possible that that’s how Eric saw it.



Eric, aged 92, being forcibly arrested at an Assange demo

In September 2017 Eric joined the Mad Hatters affinity group to which I belong and took part with us in taking part in a lock-on blockade obstructing lorries attempting to take in military equipment to the arms fair held biennially in the Excel Centre in London’s docklands. He was arrested for obstruction but the case dropped. He continued as a member of Mad Hatters till his death. His last main campaigning for freedom for Julian Assange, taking part in regular vigils outside Belmarsh prison where Julian is being held and in London. At the Assange vigil outside Belmarsh prison on 23rd July, two days of his death he was fondly remembered in speeches and by his friends for his passionate and dedicated support for the campaign.

Eric is survived by a daughter and granddaughter and by a great-granddaughter in Canada. David Polden.

COMING EVENTS

To 27th August, Edinburgh, 10.45am: *The Mistake*. 2-person play written and performed by Michael Mears and a Japanese actress exploring the personal stories surrounding the atom bombing of Hiroshima (referred to on the peace memorial in Hiroshima as “the mistake”!) At The Space on North Bridge, Argyll Theatre, EH1 1SD [venue 36] Info: thehalfitalian@aol.com; www.michaelmears.org

To 29th August, Birmingham: *The Near Breeder* (2022) A glass installation by Aboriginal artist Yhonnie Scarce bringing home the effects of British nuclear tests in Australia. At the Ikon Gallery, 1 Oozells Sq., Brindley Place B1 2HS. Info: <https://wmcnd.org.uk/whats-on/>

September 5th, UK-wide: Day of Protest against UK refugee deportations to Rwanda policy on the day an appeal against it is heard in London (see below)

September 5th, London, from 9.30am: outside the High Court in the Strand, where an application by the PCS Union, refugees and refugee support groups that the Rwanda deportation policy is unlawful will be being heard inside the court. Info: <https://standuptoracism.org.uk>

September 5th-10th, Wales: 7-day protest march from shut-down nuclear power station at Trawsfynydd to another at Wylfa in Anglesey, which UK government has chosen for site for “new modular nuclear reactors. Organised by CND Cymru “youth cohort”. Info: CND Cymru, www.cndcymru.org; 01792-830 330

September 10th, all over: start of next XR rebellion. Info: <https://rebellion.global>

September 17th, Lakenheath, all day: CND gathering at Lakenheath US airbase in Suffolk to protest at the upgrading of its nuclear weapons storage site (what for is the question.) Info:

September 17th-24th, Derby: “Derby Peace Week”. Singing events, a festival on the 18th, exhibitions, a documentary, plays, art and political workshops, a CND public meeting, a poetry event and a concert. Org. by CND. Info: information@cnduk.org

September 21st, Bromley, 7.30pm: “Peace One Day” event, with speakers, stalls, musicians and poets. At Bromley Friends’ Meeting House, Ravensbourne Rd. Organised by Bromley Peace Council. Info: Ann: anncgarrett@yahoo.com

September 24th, Harrogate, 10am-6pm: Peace Conference. Lectures, speeches, videos, photographs and debates At Friends’ Meeting House, 12a, Queen Parade.

Org. by Humanity United for Universal Demilitarisation. Info: <https://hufud.org>

October 1st, USAF Croughton: Keep Space for Peace March and Rally, at RAF Croughton, Brackley NN13 5XP. Org. CND. Info: information@cnduk.org

October 1st, Liverpool, all day: Christian CND AGM and Conference. Speakers and workshops. At C3 Church, Kempston Street. Info: <https://christiancnd.org.uk/events/>

October 8th, London, 1pm: Human Chain around Parliament calling for Julian Assange not be extradited to the US. Info: <https://dontextraditeassange.com>

October 8th, Place tba, all day: CND AGM and Annual Conference. Info: 020 7700 2393; <https://cnd.uk.org/>

October 24th-30th: UN Disarmament Week.

Every Tuesday, Menwith Hill, 6-7pm: vigil outside main entrance to US base. Org. by Menwith Accountability Campaign. Info: Sarah sswift64@gmail.com

Every Wednesday, London, 6-7pm: Women in Black silent vigil against militarism and war by the Edith Cavell statue in St. Martin’s Place, London WC2. Wear black. Info: <https://www.facebook.com/womeninblack.london>

Every 2nd and last Friday each month, London, 11am-12.30pm: “No Fukushimas Here.” Vigil outside Japanese Embassy, 101-104 Piccadilly. Organised by Kick Nuclear. Info: davidtrpolden1@gmail.com

Every Saturday, London, noon-2pm: demonstration in support of Julian Assange outside Belmarsh Prison. Take a 244 or 380 bus from outside Woolwich Arsenal station. Organised Don’t Extradite Assange, www.dontextraditeassange.com

1st Saturday each month, Menwith Hill, noon-1pm (on October 6th, times vary): Quaker meeting at Nessfield Gate, on the B645. Bring a chair. Org. by the Menwith Hill Accountability Campaign.

Info: barbarapenny@gmail.com

1st Saturday each month, Norwich, noon-12.30pm: socially-distanced and masked Vigil for Peace outside St Peter Mancroft Hay Hill, NR2 1QQ.

2nd weekend, every other month, Friday to Sunday, Aldermaston: women’s peace camp. info@aldermaston.net

Listings largely taken from Network for Peace, with thanks (Network for peace include ZOOM meetings in their listings.)