

ABINGDON PEACE GROUP

Newsletter

November 2022

Northcourt Centre at risk of closure – can you help?

The Peace Group has made constant use of the centre over four decades. We would be bereft without it. The problem is that by law there have to be three trustees and that one of the present trio is retiring. Would you be interested in replacing him (whatever your gender)? It's a voluntary, ie unpaid, role requiring about five hours a week.

For further information regarding the position and Guidance on being a Charity Trustee please contact David Ward at: David.ward@draweven.co.uk. It's not even about money, but it does really matter!

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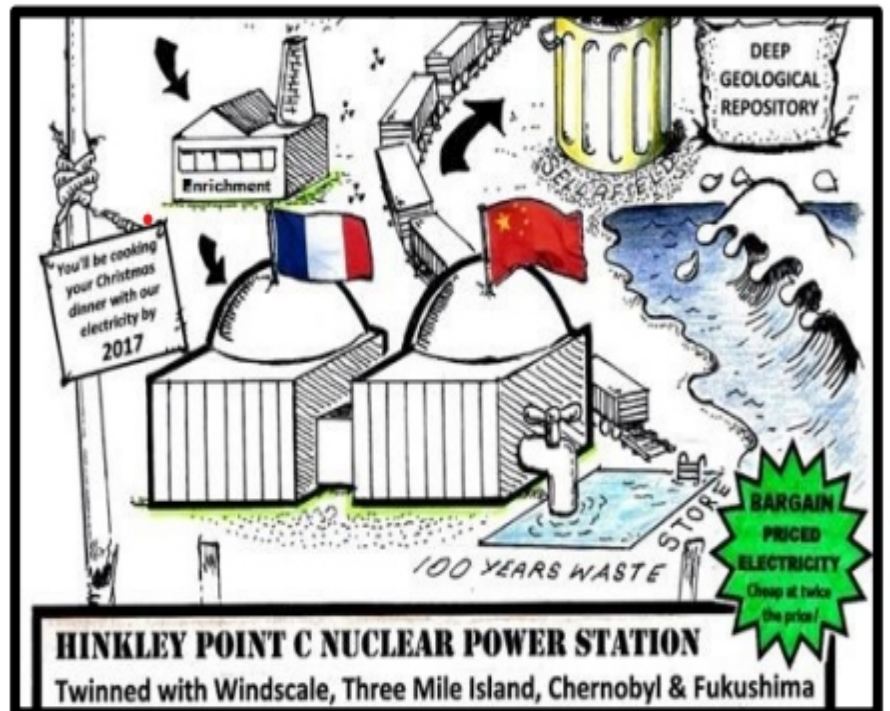
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Next meeting: Tuesday, 15 November at 8.00 pm
on zoom

Nuclear Power & Nuclear Weapons – Twin Evils?



Speaker: Rowland Dye

Rowland Dye recently drove a giant CND symbol from Bristol to Faslane in Scotland, the submarine base for Trident nuclear-armed submarines, to raise awareness of the dangers. He is a physicist turned activist. He has a PhD in nuclear physics, and whilst not claiming to be a high-powered "expert" has spent the last decade or so working with local campaign groups against Hinkley Point C.

This meeting will be a zoom call. To join us either use the link below or look out for a message with the link on November 15th. If you don't receive it and would like to take part, simply email us

(abingdonpeace@gmail.com). Link:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/91315134101>
pwd=RmxHLzBQaXIHjFSRm5nREVzYjdSdz09
Meeting ID: 913 1513 Passcode:015836

Our October meeting: GLOBAL PEACE & SECURITY AFTER UKRAINE (18 Oct)

We heard Paul Rogers on this topic – and it was certainly not 'the same old same old'. (We have listened to his perceptions twice before). He set the current conflict against the environmental crisis and looked at differences in attitude to the war of non-European and non North Americans against that of many other parts of the world. For example, if you get your news only from the standard suppliers you might assume that the Russian atrocities in Ukraine were not a normal thing. But if you watched the Al-Jazeera Arab language news channel during the Iraq war, you would know that it has been standard military practice at that time. (Think the virtual levelling of Fallujah in 2003). So it's hardly surprising that many around the world take a 'plague on both your houses' attitude.

Paul spoke for just under seventeen minutes and was followed from Ukraine by the incredibly brave and robust Yurii Sheliashenko, executive secretary of the Ukrainian Pacifist Movement. No concessions to militarism from any side from him! After Yurii came Vijay Prashad, director of the Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research and a fellow at Renmin University of China, speaking from Chile. Another rousing and witty speaker, who I don't think used the word 'hypocrisy', but who pointed out examples by the bucketload. Another thing that Paul reminded us of is the decades long NATO policy that in the event of finding yourself losing a conventional war you would resort to nuclear weapons. So Putin's threats to go nuclear are threats to do what the west reserves the right to do.

If you would like to see the recording (made by Peace and Justice Scotland in Edinburgh on International Peace Day in September) go to the URL below and use the passcode. (The first 10 minutes or so is missing):

https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/yZLubjMS3JJCZII1772HRlo9mdpp2FSHHGuSaNqeJoTXMoB_4iDUdLRUCmirGxU.9ZJuzls9zQk8j1al?startTime=1663782167000 Passcode: Ugd=wh2J

(Mike Bloom)

After the meeting Sally Reynolds wrote:

Dear friends, It was so good to have 13 people in the room on Tuesday for our first in-person meeting for a while! We watched the first 40 minutes of the recording of a meeting in Edinburgh last month on "Global Peace & Security After Ukraine". The discussion following was rich and productive. As the latest issue of Peace News makes clear, now is the time for the Peace Movement to be making loud and persistent calls for negotiations towards a peace settlement. On 30 September, Putin said: 'We call on the Kiev regime to immediately cease fire and all hostilities; to end the war it unleashed back in 2014 and return to the negotiating table. We are ready for this, as we have said more than once.'

Can we amplify this message? Write to the local papers, to the national papers, to your MP... talk to your friends!

You can read the whole article online here (and please do so, it is very nuanced!) (and please subscribe if you can afford it!)

<https://peaceneeds.info/issue/2662>

and a positive article in the same issue by Diana Francis & Andrew Rigby

here: <https://peaceneeds.info/node/10387/ukraine-do-not-give-peace>

Jumble Sale , October 8

Last month we held our first jumble sale for three years. There was quite a buzz as it proceeded. Perhaps we had forgotten how enjoyable an event it is. Lots of excellent cakes, an amazing selection of books and all the other things you'd expect. We raised just over £260 net of costs, principally room hire, which we thought was quite good outcome.

Three tweets from Peace News: protect the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant

(1) Activists are exploring the possibility of setting up an Unarmed Civilian Protection team at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant in Ukraine 'to prevent a nuclear explosion that would impact Ukraine – and the world' ... (Oct 25)

(2) The Unarmed Civilian Protection team idea is being developed by the Peace Action Training Research Institute of Romania (PATRIR), working with US peace activist John Reuwer, who previously carried out unarmed civilian protection in South Sudan with Nonviolent Peaceforce ... 2/3 (Oct 25)

(3) John asks for volunteers to contact him in case there is 'a call for training and planning for deployment to protect the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. Please contact PN if you would like to be put in touch with John: admin@peacenews.info <https://peacenews.info/node/10367/ukraine-unarmed-peacekeepers-wanted>

Report from the dayschool for climate and peace campaigners (Oct 29)

Around 50 people were brought together in Oxford by Mark Levene to explore common cause. Nafeez Ahmed, an investigative journalist, introduced the idea of causal feedback loops which drive disruption -see <https://www.rethinkx.com/climate-executive-summary>

Stuart Parkinson of SGR gave horrific figures for the Megatonnes of CO₂e emitted by the Ukraine War - he will post his slides on the website <https://sgr.org.uk/>, while Rebecca Johnson (eco feminist and co-founder of ICAN) was her usual lucid self.

But the most engaging talk by far was by Andrew Simms (founder of the network Rapid Transition Alliance and also a director of SGR) - "Evidence-based hope: Scientists say we have only a few years to stop the planet warming above 1.5C. Can we do it? History is full of examples of rapid change." Read more at <https://www.rapidtransition.org/> and be energised! (Sally Reynolds)

PS new website climatemilitarism.org

Hosted by the *Arms, Militarism and Climate Justice* Working Group that SGR is part of (Scientists for Global Responsibility), it is now live and active and also includes a list of events related to COP27.

PPS extract from a message from Global Justice (Oct 31):

"We had our chance to make incremental changes, but that time is over. Only a root-and-branch transformation of our economies and societies can save us from accelerating climate disaster." – Inger Andersen, Executive Director of UN Environment Programme

Last week the UN issued its direst warning since it told us this was "code red for humanity", announcing it saw "**no credible pathway to 1.5°C in place**"(1). With COP27 less than two weeks away, and many countries still not having followed through on last year's pledges, we are currently on track for 2.8°C of warming by the end of the century. Given the extent of the destruction caused by just 1°C of warming so far this is a truly terrifying prospect.

The UN report says that the 45% cut in emissions by 2030 to have any hope of **keeping 1.5°C alive is a feat that could only be achieved by "urgent system-wide transformation"**. In particular the UN identified that we need fundamental changes to our energy, food and financial systems. This of course comes as no surprise to those of us who've been campaigning for a systemic approach to climate change for decades.

Solutions to transform societies exist, but the time for collective, multilateral action is now.



Peace Group Library display at Abingdon Library

It remains up until Monday am 7th November. If you get there before it goes down you can help yourself to a white poppy (and subsequently make a donation if you wish). (pictured: Rosie, who did the work with Sally).

White Poppies also at 35 Ock Street.

These will remain available right up until Remembrance Day.

A deadly legacy: 20 years of drone targeted killing (post by Chris Cole dated Oct 31)

On the 3rd November 2002, a US Predator drone targeted and killed Qa'id Salim Sinan al-Harithi, a Yemeni member of al-Qaeda who the CIA believed responsible for the attack on the USS Cole in which 17 US sailors were killed. While drones had previously been used in warzones, this was the first time the technology had been used to hunt down and kill a specific individual in a country in which the US was not at war – 'beyond the battlefield' as it has become euphemistically known. Since then, numerous US targeted killings have taken place in Yemen, Pakistan and Somalia, while other states who have acquired the technology – including the UK – have also carried out such strikes.

At first, the notion of remotely targeting and killing suspects outside of the battlefield and without due process was shocking to legal experts, politicians and the press. In an armed conflict where international humanitarian law (the Laws of War) apply, such strikes can be lawful. However, outside of the battlefield, where killing of suspects is only accepted in order to prevent imminent loss of life, such killings are almost certainly unlawful. Indeed in early reporting on the first such attack 20 years ago, journalists noted that the US State Department has condemned targeted killing of suspects by Israel.

For the whole post, go to: <https://dronewars.net/2022/10/31/a-deadly-legacy-20-years-of-drone-targeted-killing/>

Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists

Lots of interesting and important items, including "Russia says Ukraine is preparing a 'dirty bomb'. Is it true and what does it mean?" <https://thebulletin.org/2022/10/russia-says-ukraine-is-preparing-a-dirty-bomb-is-it-true-and-what-does-it-mean/#post-heading>

Recent Nukewatch sightings of nuclear warhead convoy on A34 in Oxon

The convoy was tracked and monitored on October 17 and 23. An MOD spokesman told the Banbury Guardian: "All defence nuclear material movements are kept to the minimum necessary to meet operational requirements". Well done, Nukewatch.



For full story:

<https://www.banburyguardian.co.uk/news/people/county-nukewatch-organisation-warns-of-deadly-convoys-passing-banbury-every-month-3900293>

Sea Green Singers

present

Which side are you on?



Songs and words tell the history of
power and protest in Oxfordshire

Sat.19th November 2022, 7.30pm

**Friends Meeting House,
43 St Giles, Oxford OX1 3LW**

Free entrance; doors open at 7pm

Donations for Asylum Welcome

www.seagreensingers.wordpress.com

Diary

Sat 12 Nov: MAW Remembrance Lecture: Nuclear Risks in the Light of the Ukraine War
MAW's 2022 - Kate Hudson General Sec CND UK at 2pm at Welsh Church of Central London, 30
Eastcastle Street, Oxford Circus, London W1W 8JD, preceded by AGM at 11am, and Remembrance
Lecture. For further info and to register, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/nuclear-risks-in-the-light-of-the-ukraine-war-tickets-440441631777> If you intend to come to the venue, please opt for an 'In Person' ticket.
Otherwise, choose the 'On Line' option.

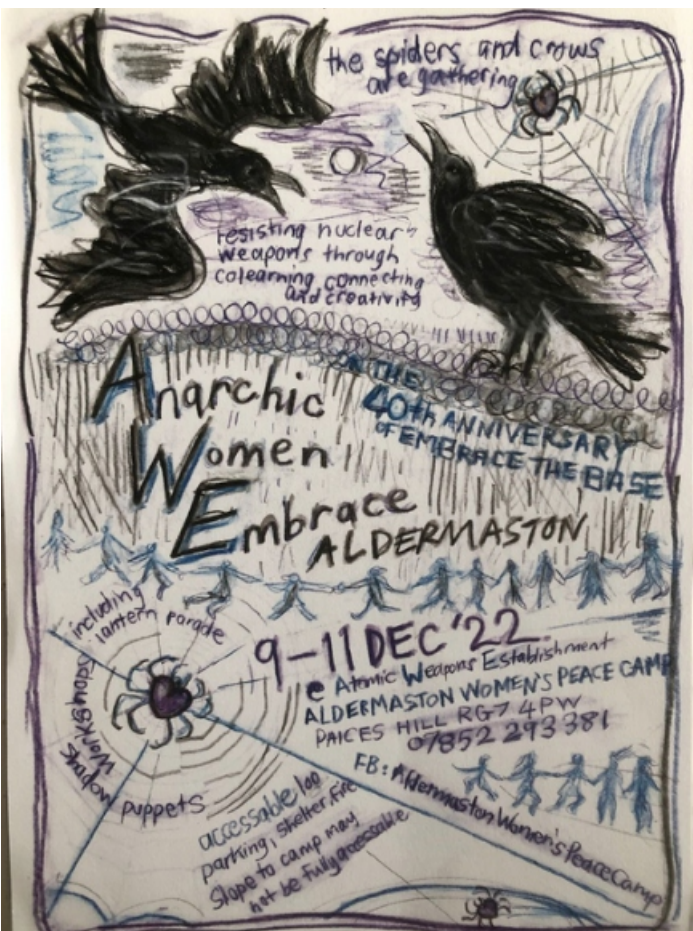
Sat Nov 12: Climate Justice Mobilisations

Full details here: https://climatejustice.uk/cop27/?mc_cid=f91cfd6bcf&mc_eid=d5f4058752

Sat Nov 12: Future Wars: The Shape of Things to Come, a one-day conference at Birkbeck University, London. Speakers include Paul Rogers (via video), Kate Hudson, Jeremy Corbyn MP, Matt Kennard (Declassified), Anuradha Damale (BASIC), Stuart Parkinson (SGR) and lots more. Further details and free registration are here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/future-war-the-shape-of-things-to-come-tickets-425083675717>

Sat Nov 19: Sea Green Singers: Which Side are you on? See poster on page 5.

Thu Dec 6: The International Network of Museums for Peace webinar hosted by the Tehran Peace Museum 3pm GMT + 4:30. Further info via <https://inmp-news.museumsforpeace.org/>



Fri Dec 9 – Sun 11 Dec:
40th anniversary of Greenham

A celebration of the day when over 30,000 women surrounded the Greenham Common airbase near Newbury in 1982 to protest the arrival of US Cruise missiles. To be held at Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp.

<https://facebook.com/events/s/awea-anarchic-women-embrace-al/889150202045459/>

until Sun May 28, 2023: War Games: Real Conflicts | Virtual Worlds | Extreme Entertainment Imperial War Museum (Imperial War Museum, Lambeth Road London SE1) exhibition which will delve into one of today's most popular storytelling mediums and seeks to challenge perceptions of how video games interpret stories about war and conflict through a series of titles which, over the last forty years, have reflected events from the First World War to the present.

<https://tinyurl.com/2ph3gruo>

Corrections and contributions to this newsletter are very welcome.

Abingdon Peace Group meets on the third Tuesday of each month except August. All who are interested in peace and campaigning for it are welcome to take part. The Group has no party political affiliations. Contact us on abingdonpeace@gmail.com and (01235) 526265 & 522163.