



ABINGDON PEACE GROUP

Newsletter November - December 2023

Remembrance Sunday 12th November at 11am in Bonn Square -

Oxford CND are holding a gathering to remember all the dead in both World Wars. Please come along and bring a short poem or thought for all those whose lives are wasted in those terrible wars, and for a minute's silence to hold a vision of working for peace.

Tuesday 19th December APG Christmas social.

As usual at this time of year, we will gather in the Northcourt Centre at 8pm with drinks, nibbles and peaceful quotations. There may even be a quiz! Do join us.

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This month's meeting: Tuesday 21st November 8pm online Gaza/Israel - the unfolding nightmare

In our Zoom meeting this month we will create a space to share thoughts, quotes and articles we have each found helpful as we mourn the continuing crisis together. Please join us! We recommend watching <https://youtu.be/Y58njT2oXfE> for a 6-minute cartoon on the history of the conflict, and do read the BBC's excellent "History of the conflict explained": <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/newsbeat-44124396>

Layla Moran joined forces with a Labour MP. Alex Sobel, to issue a statement to the Guardian: [https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/oct/27/we-are-westminster-mps-of-palestinian-and-israeli-descent-this-is-our-call-for-peace?](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/oct/27/we-are-westminster-mps-of-palestinian-and-israeli-descent-this-is-our-call-for-peace?CMP=share_btn_link)

[CMP=share btn link](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/oct/27/we-are-westminster-mps-of-palestinian-and-israeli-descent-this-is-our-call-for-peace?CMP=share_btn_link) In it they call for nuance in parliament, and ask people to understand the raw pain that both Israelis and Palestinians are experiencing, rather than choosing one side and ignoring the other. It's worth reading in full. We printed the final paragraphs for our display in Abingdon library for Remembrance.

More suggestions from members for reading overleaf.



To join our Zoom meeting, click this link any time after 7.30pm:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/91315134101?pwd=RmxHLzBQaXlHYjFSRm5nREVzYjdSdz09>

Meeting ID: 913 1513 4101 Passcode: 015836

Gaby Hertz sent this from Berlin: We know of the organisation called HAND IN HAND. They are building up bilingual schools in Israel where Israeli and Palestinian children work and learn together. <https://www.handinhandk12.org/> HandinHand Centre for Jewish-Arab education in Israel.

Carry from Salisbury CND sent this suggestion:

The Parents Circle - Families Forum for Israeli and Palestinian families (PCFF) who have all lost an immediate family member as a result of the conflict. They meet, set up dialogue groups and listen to each other, finding out all they have in common. They (a Palestinian and an Israeli) also go into schools to talk to children about things perhaps never talked about there. They have offices in both Palestinian and Israeli territories. https://www.theparentscircle.org/en/about_eng-2/

Sally shared: Quaker Peace and Social Witness (which helps host the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel) has suggested [5 actions you can take](#), especially if you use social media:

1. Email your MP (even, or especially, if you agree with them! It's very easy if you use <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/mp/>)
2. Donate to Medical Aid for Palestinians <https://www.map.org.uk/donate/donate>
3. Understand the context: watch the Very Short Introduction (6 mins) on <https://youtu.be/Y58njT2oXfE> or the 1 hour Virtual Tour of the Gaza Strip : <https://youtu.be/iS5bbvanfRA?si=s16T3wPUhnFyHAqY>
4. Choose your media wisely – includes a link to a full list of Palestinian and Israeli Peace & Human Rights Organisations – an impressive list! <https://www.eyewitnessblogs.com/localorganisations/>
5. Show public solidarity

News from other areas of conflict.

Ukraine. In August peace activist Yurii Sheliazhenko was placed under house arrest in his home in Ukraine, and as far as we know still is. There is an international call for his release: <https://wri-irg.org/en/story/2023/ukraine-release-peace-activist-yurii-sheliazhenko-and-drop-all-charges-against-him>

Yurii Sheliazhenko is a prisoner of conscience detained simply for peacefully expressing his genuine pacifist views. This reminds the Ukrainian government that pacifism is not a crime in democratic states.

Updates from Cameroon. The sectarian violence in Cameroon sadly continues. Anne & Sally get weekly updates from Canadians for Peace in Cameroon which they are happy to share. You can also follow the stories on X(Twitter): <https://twitter.com/Canadiansforpe1>

Chris & Kate Sewell of Abingdon Quakers shared: Our daughter, Laura, has just sent us this quote from an unknown source :

*'Peacemaking doesn't mean passivity.
It is the act of interrupting injustice without mirroring injustice,
The act of disarming evil without destroying the evil-doer,
The act of finding a third way that is neither fight nor flight
But the careful, arduous pursuit of reconciliation and justice.
It is about a revolution of love that is big enough to set both the oppressed and the oppressors free.'*

Members Corner! Lesley Lovell's memoir, instalment 5. *I became engaged to a nuclear physicist in Cambridge; at a party for newcomers at Corpus Christi, my husband's college, the Master Prof Sir Neville Mott chatted with us, heard my views, and told me if I started a Pugwash group he would come and speak to it. The third time he said it, I took him at his word, so I did and he did too. The group flourished for two years until we left, then collapsed, and I began to realise that one individual could make a difference.*

My husband was in Civil Defence, and they had an exercise trying to see how an attack would be dealt with. 'Reports' came in from different towns and he had to work out which towns had been bombed, how badly, and where services should be sent. It was hopeless; very soon they were days behindhand and realised the whole exercise was useless. A sad disillusioned CD husband came home, a new member of CND. Lesley Lovell. To be continued...

APG activities since the last newsletter.

Our last meeting with Tom Unterrainer, the chair of CND, was fascinating and well worth watching if you missed it. He turns out to have an encyclopaedic knowledge of the history of the bomb, and a long personal history of protesting against it. You can see it on our YouTube channel here: <https://youtu.be/30W8lg7jJbA>

Sally R

During the global "Keep Space for Peace Week", some members of Abingdon Peace Group went to the **rally at Croughton**. This is a U.S. air-base (under the auspices of RAF Croughton) and is a military nerve centre of the United States' war machine in the UK, with electronic surveillance and satellite communication spy base.

The current chair of CND, Tom Unterrainer, gave us an interesting talk on our agreements in place for the non-use of nuclear weapons. We do have a mutual defence agreement with the USA, and it has become clear recently that US nuclear bombs will be based at Lakenheath in Suffolk. A second speaker, John Gittings, remembered April Carter and Pat Arrowsmith, both working as activists throughout their lives in the Peace Movement at Aldermaston and Greenham Common. April Carter was a coordinator for the San Francisco to Moscow March (1961) and published a paper "Britains' Defence Without the Bomb" in 1983. Peter Burt of Drone Wars UK stressed the importance of what is happening now in the race for Space Domination. This is of serious concern. Meanwhile, for those who came there was a tea and cake tent thanks to Oxford CND and Abingdon Peace Group.



Barbara Micklem

N.B. Peter Burt's excellent 'highlights' video of the Croughton rally gives you a flavour of the event : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C2dxft1P_XM

Oxford CND: Women in Black Weekly vigil. Every Saturday afternoon from 2pm to 3pm, women meet up at the Martyrs Memorial in St Giles, dressed in Black, as much as possible, with placards and a banner against Militarism and War. There is a WhatsApp group for getting the latest information about upcoming vigils – Contact Kate to be added: katemck@me.com or Carol: carolstavris@gmail.com

Peace Poles started in Japan in 1976. They are an internationally recognised symbol for peace and there are now over 300,000 Peace Poles worldwide. We felt that St Ethelwolds garden, which is used as a sanctuary by people of many nationalities, would be a perfect site for one, and the trustees have agreed!

Peace poles have 4 sides and a 6ft tall one can have “May Peace Prevail on Earth” in up to 8 different languages. Which languages would you choose? There will be a ballot box in St Eth’s garden, and you can also tell us your choice by email or when you send a contribution. The total cost will be £230.

You can send a donation by cheque made out to “Abingdon Peace Group” and sent to the treasurer, Denise Watt, 39 Boxhill Road, Abingdon OX14 2ET. If we raise more than we need it will be added to our general funds.

Alternatively you can send a donation direct by bank transfer to Abingdon Peace Group, Lloyds Bank, Ock St, Abingdon, Sort code 30-10-04, Account 00408091. Please give “Peace Pole” as a reference, and email us with your suggestion of languages on abingdonpeace@gmail.com

Thank you in advance! You will be invited to a ceremony to unveil the Peace Pole in the Spring.

DIARY. For more events see <http://www.networkforpeace.org.uk/calendar> and also the very up-to-date collection on CND Salisbury’s website <https://www.cndsalisbury.org.uk/events>

Every Monday except Bank Holidays 8.15 - 8.45am. Vigil for peace. War Memorial, The Square, Abingdon.

Fri 10 Nov 7pm at RISC 35-39 London St. Reading The Legacy of Nuclear Colonialism, part of Reading International Festival. Contact. Trish Whittam 07935009078

Sat 11 Nov 11am at Aldermaston Women’s Camp. Remembrance Poems

Sat 11 Nov 12 noon MAW’s AGM in Oasis Waterloo, 1 Kennington Road, London SE1 7QP.

Sat 11 Nov 2pm Michael Mears’ Remembrance Lecture . “The Role of the Arts & Culture in Promoting Peace and Opposing War”. Book a seat via <https://abolishwar.net/michael-mears/>

Sun 12 Nov 11am Bonn Square. Remembrance vigil for all the Dead in both World Wars

Tues 21 Nov 8pm on Zoom. APG meeting on Gaza/Israel. See front page.

Fri 24 Nov 7.30pm Unicorn Theatre. “Which Side Are You On?” - a history of protest in Oxfordshire by the Seagreen Singers. Book a free seat via <https://seagreensingers.wordpress.com/gigs-and-events/> or at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/715713707967>

Sat 25 Nov 10 - 4 Oxford Town Hall. Green Fair with CND stall, Seagreen Singers & so much more!

Sat 25 Nov Demo against Campsfield Immigration Centre. Contact: Liz Peretz eaperetz@gmail.com

Tues 19 Dec 8pm Northcourt Centre: APG’s Christmas Social. Bring nibbles, drinks, readings.



Corrections and contributions to this newsletter are very welcome.

Abingdon Peace Group will now meet on the third Tuesday of alternate months on Zoom. All who are interested in peace and campaigning for it are welcome to take part, and people with IT skills are urgently needed! The Group has no party political affiliations.

Contact us on abingdonpeace@gmail.com, 07786 055195 or (01235) 526265.