



FARINGDON

PEACE GROUP

NEWSLETTER (6)

SEPTEMBER 2020

TEAR GAS SELLING REPRESSION

The UK has licensed at least £34 million worth of tear gas sales to over 50 countries over recent years

The US is not the only country for which the UK has licensed sales of tear gas. An investigation by CAAT and The Independent found that the UK has licensed at least £34 million worth of tear gas sales to over 50 countries over recent years, with 202 unlimited-value open licences since 2008, including to some of the world’s most abusive regimes and dictatorships.

In 2014 the Hong Kong police used UK-made tear gas against pro-democracy campaigners. In the aftermath of the crackdown, the UK government pledged to take the abuses into account before approving licences to Hong Kong in future. Unfortunately, within 12 months the UK was again allowing the export of tear gas to the Hong Kong authorities. Last summer the same equipment was used again, with the same horrific results.

Likewise, in 2011 UK-made tear gas was used against protesters by Egyptian forces, aiding a bloody crackdown that killed more than 800 people. It has been sold to Greece, where tear gas has been used against refugees, and to France, where tear gas was used against Black Lives Matter protests in Paris. The UK doesn’t just license the sale of weaponry. It actively promotes the sale of “crowd control equipment” – and with it, the militarisation of policing – through multi-million pound arms fairs like Defence and Security Equipment International and Security & Policing.

HONG KONG POLICING HAS HAD A LITTLE HELP

An investigation by CAAT and The Independent (02/06/2020) found that the UK College of Policing was providing training to the Hong Kong police as recently as 2019. The Hong Kong authorities have inflicted a brutal crackdown on pro-democracy campaigners.

TAKING ACTION

This year CAAT is running its first ever Reading Group series! The idea is to delve deeper into some of the profound issues connected to the global arms trade over the course of six weeks with the help of some of the UK’s brightest critical thinkers. The events began in July and ran throughout August. Topics have included Borders and Migration and the Arms trade, Coronavirus and the Arms Trade, Climate Change and the Arms trade ...

But you can catch up as **Videos of previous events can be found on CAAT’s Youtube channel.**

CAMPAIGN AGAINST ARMS TRADE

Some of you receive the printed newsletter, but if you do not, it can be accessed online.

Just go to caat.org.uk

Click on resources, then CAAT News

PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE

Send me more news and other interesting or newsworthy pieces for the next newsletter, to jennyridd@yahoo.co.uk

Please send in as a ready-made piece, using Word, rather than a vague reference to ‘use what you can’ from a news item.

by 21st September 2020

THE MIGRANT 'CRISIS'

We have heard a lot about asylum seekers and refugees coming to the UK lately, and have no doubt heard people complaining "why do they all want to come here". Whilst it may be debateable as to why anyone wants to come here, it is certainly worth pointing out to people that other countries are accepting far greater numbers of refugees than we are.

Let me take Uganda as an example.

Uganda is a small landlocked country with a population of some 45 million. It has, you recall, had its own war in the north of the country, and this still has an ongoing effect. Yet the country hosts the most refugees of any African nation - 1.2 million - and is the third refugee-hosting nation in the world.

There are now **one million** South Sudanese refugees in Uganda, the vast majority of them women and children.

As well, there were (last year's figures) some 345,000 Congolese refugees in Uganda. They were among about 25,000 refugees to enter Uganda from the **DRC** this year alone.

Conflicts in DRC and South Sudan have been going on for years, as have wars and skirmishes in neighbouring countries, each of which have added to Uganda's refugee crisis.

Just north of Gulu (in northern Uganda) is a vast refugee camp, for refugees from South Sudan

GYDA, the training centre in Gulu, at one time partially funded by the Faringdon Quakers, has in the past welcomed students from South Sudan, whose education has been funded by the Danish Refugee Council. They were said to work harder than the indigenous students! These were tailoring students, learning how to pattern-make, and they were practising well into the evening, long after the Ugandan students had finished for the day.



"Sin is resilient stuff, that's where the money is." Russ Mould, of investment firm AJ Bell on investing in unethical industries, including arms. Daily Telegraph, 21/04/2020

ARMING APARTHEID

There is a close political and military relationship between the UK and Israeli governments.

Since 2015, the UK has licensed over £376 million worth of arms to Israel.

Licences include:

- £183 million worth of ML22 licences (military technology)
- £98 million worth of ML10 licences (Aircraft, helicopters, drones)
- £16 million worth of ML4 licences (Grenades, bombs, missiles, countermeasures)
- £4.6 million worth of ML6 licences (Armoured vehicles, tanks)
- £1.8 million worth of ML3 licences (ammunition)
- £1 million worth of ML1 licences (small arms)

CONSCIENCE WEBINARS

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, Conscience (Taxes for Peace not War) has had to adapt the way it campaigns as an organisation, and as part of this has committed to a number of online actions.

At their first ever webinar in the series of the 'Voices of Conscientious Objection' project, the speaker was Symon Hill.

Following the success of this event - a really good 'attendance' - a second was planned but then postponed (due to sickness of one of the speakers) "**Conscientious Objection during the First World War**"

To register for the next event, and to hear a resumé of Symon's talk, go to:
conscienceonline.org.uk

Come the day when all turmoil will cease
No army, no way, no police
We'll send out a dove
With a message of love
Hereby Declaring World Peace

Lewis Gould

BLACK LIVES MATTER

Inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement, Faringdon Peace Group has decided to offer a very special opportunity starting this autumn **on Zoom**.

Tuesday 15th September 7.30-9.00,

Tuesday 16th February 7.30-9.00

and another Tuesday to be agreed with the group - likely to be 17th November 7.30-9.00

The theme of the sessions is

Exploring the dynamics of difference: race, power and privilege in the UK

Unlike the usual open meetings the three sessions have their numbers limited to 15 so that each of us can really grapple with the issues being discussed in a stable and committed group. All attenders must attend both sessions led by Trupti Magecha and Petra Hilgers, and the one facilitated by Liz in between those two dates to discuss what they are discovering through the work.

A link to the speaker profiles is available from Liz, contact details below.

Invitations will go out beyond the immediate Faringdon Peace group after August 30th if the places are not all taken.

There is no charge. The peace group is covering the cost of the sessions.

First session will

- Introduce a historical perspective about racism in the UK
- Reflect on current challenges in terms of race, power and privilege
- Consider anti racism as a practice
- Identify a goal that we each commit to further develop anti-racist practice

Second session

- stay connected to the work and share any questions or discoveries we have made.

Session Three

- Explore how much progress we made with our goals and the barriers that we met along the way.

To sign up email sjoerd@vogt.org.uk

There will continue to be a Black Lives Matter presence at the Market Square on the first Tuesday of every month 10-12

Contact Liz Rothschild if you want to know more, on lizrothschild@phonecoop.coop or 01367 240508. She loves having company!

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

PEACE GROUP MEETINGS

after the summer will be on

TUESDAY 15TH SEPTEMBER at 7.30pm.

Not our usual monthly meeting, but a special meeting on the theme of Black Lives Matter. Details included under the item 'Black Lives Matter'

SATURDAY 3RD OCTOBER

Virtual Peace Rally at Croughton
(see separate notice)

WEDNESDAY 7TH OCTOBER, 7.30pm

Monthly meeting: We aim to hold our AGM.

WEDNESDAY 4TH NOVEMBER,

Monthly meeting.

Speaker from Scientists for Global Responsibility, talking about the link between climate change and the military.

The last few months have been a learning experience for all of us. Zoom meetings have some advantages, but speaking personally, I'm really looking forward to a time when we can all meet together again in the Friends' Meeting House, and discuss the issues which are of such importance to our lives and the world.

Jennie

PEACE RALLY AT CROUGHTON

Saturday 3 October 2020

Peace Group supporters will be aware that every year, in October, a peace rally is held at RAF (should be USAF) Croughton, on the border of Oxfordshire near Brackley. Croughton is one of the hubs for fighting wars and causing mayhem world-wide.

This year, because of covid-19, Oxfordshire Peace Campaign, which organises the Rally has had to think again, and the result is an exciting development. CND has been persuaded to take on the organising role, and they will set up a webinar. OPC has contacted the speakers.

So far Kate Hudson (CND General Secretary and friend of FPG) and Paul Mobbs and Dave Webb are confirmed speakers: Jeremy Corbyn has also been invited. Together with peace songs from the Sea Green Singers, plans are in place for a really interesting, but purposeful afternoon.

<https://cnduk.org/events/global-war-fighting-starts-here/>

Please do put his one in your diary.

From Kate Hudson's latest blog

US B-52 Bombers back in Britain: escalating nuclear tension

Six US Air Force B-52 bombers [arrived at RAF Fairford](#) on Saturday. Official sources describe it as 'a long planned training mission', carrying out theatre and flight training across Europe and Africa. But local news site *GloucestershireLive* describes it as a '[surprise deployment](#)'.

Yesterday the much respected expert Hans Kristensen from the Federation of American Scientists posted a picture of all six bombers on twitter, describing it as 'a pointed message to Russia'. He went on to note the 'interesting timing of deployment', given what's happening in Belarus, observing that these exercises normally take place over Poland and the Baltic states – Belarus's neighbours.

Such a mobilisation raises serious concerns, not least because some B-52s are nuclear capable. To bring these into an already tense mix seems ill-advised to say the least but this appears to be what is happening: Kristensen points out that two of the B-52s in the image are nuclear-capable.

General Jeff Harrigian, U.S. Air Forces in Europe and Air Forces Africa commander, describes the deployment thus: "B-52s are back at RAF Fairford, and will be operating across the theater in what will be a very active deployment. Our ability to quickly respond and assure allies and partners rests upon the fact that we are able to deploy our B-52s at a moment's notice."

Maybe he is just talking about training exercises, but that actually sounds rather menacing.

Let's not forget the active bombing role that B-52s flying from RAF Fairford have played in the relatively recent past: during the first Gulf War in early 1991 – at the time Cruisewatchers

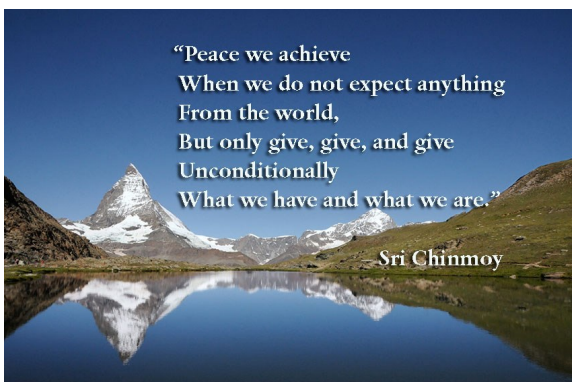
saw bombs being wheeled across the road from the bomb store; in March 1999 they were used in the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia; and in the Iraq war in 2003, there were 100 plus bombing sorties.

Reports from friends in [Nukewatch](#) also indicate that B-1 and B-2 stealth bombers exercise at Fairford while [news reports](#) show the recent US deployment of three B-2 stealth bombers, also capable of carrying nuclear weapons, on the Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia – an 'overseas territory' of the United Kingdom. The focus here is clearly China not Russia. Indeed the B-2s arrived on the island – which also hosts 6 B-52 bombers – at the same time as the USS Ronald Reagan aircraft carrier arrived in the South China Sea.

Whatever is going on is exceptionally dangerous. The build up of offensive military capacity – particularly nuclear capable bombers – in two areas of high political tension is potentially disastrous. These may well be understood as aggressive measures towards two countries that Trump has identified, in no uncertain terms, as [strategic competitors](#) against which he is prepared to wage war and win.

Once again Britain is being sucked into US military activities, with the potential for either deployment – from Fairford or Diego Garcia – to become part of a military attack. Serious questions must urgently be asked of government: Have they sanctioned these actions? Are US nuclear-armed sorties taking place from Fairford? And have the British people agreed to be drawn into more US wars?

Whatever the question, nuclear bombers are not the answer.



.... and so to cheer you after all this gloom....

IS ANYONE INTERESTED

in a Peace Group

UKULELE GROUP?

Let me know if you are.

jennyridd@yahoo.co.uk

I feel sure there must be lots of

Ukes gathering dust, or we can teach you.

So how about it?

Using Zoom for the foreseeable future of course

