



**FARINGDON**

**PEACE GROUP**

**NEWSLETTER (7)**

**OCTOBER 2020**

**DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

**PEACE GROUP MEETINGS**

after the summer will be on

**SATURDAY 3rd OCTOBER**

Virtual Peace Rally at Croughton

(see separate notice) below

**WEDNESDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER, 7.30pm**

Monthly meeting: We aim to hold our AGM.

Agenda on p.4

**WEDNESDAY 4<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER,**

Monthly Meeting.

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

**PEACE RALLY AT CROUGHTON**

Saturday 3rd 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/>

**BLACK LIVES MATTER**

Liz has sent this report about the ongoing course on 'Black Lives Matter'.

"Fifteen of us met last week for the first of three sessions looking at Diversity, working with two facilitators from Deep Black - Trupti Magecha and Petra Hilgers.

We looked at some historical examples of institutional racism in this country with regards to the governmental approach to the Windrush generation and the handling of the murder of Stephen Lawrence by the police and legal system. We were also invited to consider our own experiences and ask ourselves about the groups we felt part of and who was in those groups and who was not and to reflect on what might contribute to the presence or lack of presence of the BAME community.

There was some reflection on Faringdon and who makes up our community here and differing experiences of that through our various experiences. There was some reference to experiences in Africa but given we only have three sessions the aim is to keep our focus narrow and work more deeply to understand how things unfold in the UK, which of course has a long and significant colonial history.

We worked in the larger groups and in smaller groups to discuss different questions and set an intention for how we would stay focussed on this work between the sessions.

Some were focussing on reading, others on people they were meeting who they could learn from and several of us recommitted to doing the monthly vigil in Faringdon Market place. The next session is in November."

## And from CAAT ...

The last few past months have given many of us pause for thought, about the global nature of the problems we face - and the solutions needed. About the inequalities in our society, where the people who keep our health, food and care systems going are paid the least. About the escalating climate crisis behind the unprecedented heat waves. About the problems of institutionalised racism we must end, and how we cannot solve any of these issues alone.

At the same time, the government has been conducting a major overhaul of its military, security, foreign and international development policy. Announcing the "Integrated Review" earlier this year, the Prime Minister explained the UK needs to adjust "to the changing nature of threats we face". We couldn't agree more.

After pressure, the government has finally opened up this review to wider input. **Will you have your say?**

Government cuts have pushed our basic health services to breaking point. And the government, fixated on military threats, ignored warnings in its own reports that it needed to stockpile protective equipment to prepare for a global pandemic. This has cost lives - and disproportionately impacted on people of colour.

The climate emergency is the biggest security threat we face, and those who suffer most are still recovering from centuries of exploitation by the same colonial powers who helped create climate change. The government should start to address the injustice by ending support for the arms trade and using that funding to rebuild our economy with millions of green jobs.

The pandemic, and the arrival of refugees and migrants at our increasingly militarised borders, has shown us is that our security is interconnected with that of our fellow citizens around the world.

### **We need to completely rethink what we mean by security.**

To create real human security we must end government support for the arms trade, and instead invest in decent housing and health care for all, preparing for pandemics, working for racial justice, promoting international solidarity not militarising borders, and taking radical action to address climate change.

To add your voice to the government consultation, and call for a focus on areas of real human need, not outdated notions of security, which only protect arms company profits, **go to the CAAT website.**

## **LOWER CLASS TO GET A PAY CUT, TO HELP OUT THE MOST FORTUNATE.**

**Planned rise in minimum wage to £9.21 per hour is set to be scrapped because UK 'can't afford it' after coronavirus pandemic**

75 years ago, Japan surrendered to the Allied forces, including the UK. This was the end of the Second World War.

But there is no victory in war. Human beings on all sides, whether they are soldiers or civilians, lose in war. We all lose. We lose terribly. And the people we would have been able to support, if our resources and energies and skills had not been diverted to war, also lose; people who are homeless, people who have physical and mental health conditions, people who are living in poverty. And our environment loses. The planet which supports us, gives birth to us, loses grievously. It is so important that we remember the people who died, that we re-connect with their, and our, humanity. And vow that it will never, ever, happen again..

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**From Irene Gill, via Oxford CND**

I'm sure we all buy The Big Issue when we see a vendor - a homeless person being given "a hand up not a handout" - John Bird's brilliant idea to help the homeless, since 1991. Issue 1425, 31st August 2020, includes a lurid red image of women leaning against the Greenham Common fence, with a review of a book, *Other Girls Like Me* by Stephanie Davies. It describes her reaction to a news bulletin on the radio about the women being evicted from their shelters, who were pleading for backup. She decided then and there to join them. ... "Living in the peace camp felt like the only rational response to an entirely irrational situation. If the UK government was going to allow US weapons of mass destruction to be unleashed from our countryside onto civilians many miles away, the very least we could do was to put our bodies in front of the military convoys and spray paint war planes with peace messages."

The book is published by Bedazzled at £13.70.  
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## GOOD NEWS FROM GLOBAL JUSTICE

*Nick Deardon writes...*

I've got some good news. Together we've forced the government to release more information on their secretive trade talks they're holding with more than a dozen countries.

Our court case was funded by hundreds of our members and supporters. We brought this action because we believe it is wrong that the government can negotiate trade deals behind closed doors, when these agreements so profoundly affect people here and around the world. We wanted to force the Government to disclose the details of these talks, so we can begin to have some democratic control over trade policy.

Today, the judge ordered the trade department to release more documents on trade talks they are holding with over a dozen countries, including the United States. This is a big step forward. But we need to keep fighting their dangerous trade agenda. Will you help further our campaigns by joining as a member today?

This court case has been incredibly important. It allowed us to put our concerns about the US trade deal centre-stage during the 2019 general election, when then Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn publicised the censored papers which formed a part of our case.

It allowed us to highlight government secrecy when it comes to trade talks. It even exposed that the government is holding some trade talks in total secrecy, with countries yet to be named.

The judge by no means gave us everything we asked for. But he was critical of the government's attitude toward transparency, saying the government's representative had shown a "clear inability to provide answers on many points of detail" and that the trade department had failed to deal with the aspects of the case in a "detailed and rigorous way".

So we have moved forward in challenging the government's excessive secrecy when it comes to trade talks.

Winning public accountability for trade policy is important not just in helping us stop toxic trade treaties like that being negotiated with the United States, but also in allowing us to push for fundamental reforms to a global trade system which is turbo-charging inequality and climate change.

This campaign success was down to hundreds of people who helped fund the court case, and to our members who support us with a regular donation. Membership helps us stay independent, making us able to continue to speak truth to power without watering down our campaigns, and gives us a stable source of income so that we can see our campaigns through to the end.

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## THE PEACE PLEDGE UNION

**"What is called the utopian dream of pacifism is in fact a practical policy – indeed the only practical, the only realistic policy that there is." - Aldous Huxley, early PPU member**

The Peace Pledge Union is the oldest secular pacifist organisation in Britain. Since 1934 it has been campaigning for a warless world. From anti bombing campaigns during WW2 to protest at the remote controlled military drone assassinations of today. Campaigning against the militarisation of Armistice Day in the 30s to the militarisation of society today.

'War is a crime against humanity. I renounce war, and am therefore determined not to support any kind of war. I am also determined to work for the removal of all causes of war.'

So why, in the 21st century, with all our skills, knowledge and resources, are we still waging war?

*Human security, we believe, means individual freedom from basic insecurities. Human beings have a right to live with dignity and security, and an obligation to help each other when that security is threatened. All human life is of equal worth, and it is not acceptable that human lives become cheap in desperate situations. War - we say no*

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# **FARINGDON PEACE GROUP**

## **Proposed Agenda for the Annual General Meeting and 40<sup>th</sup> Birthday**

**WEDNESDAY 7 October 2020 7.30pm. ZOOMED**

1. Welcome - Sjoerd
2. Adoption of Agenda
3. Apologies :
4. Minutes of the AGM held on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2019
5. Matters Arising not elsewhere on the Agenda
6. Correspondence and Dates for the Diary (Jennie/Karen)
7. Reports and Discussion
  - a) Meetings and Activities (Jennie)
  - b) Faringdon Folly/Posters in town (Karen)
  - c) Treasurer (Steve)
  - d Fete (Sjoerd)
  - e) Resources (Karen, Pete S, Phil)
  - f) Artistic Projects inc Peace Plaque (Karen)
  - g) Monthly meetings – a) Help needed. b) Transport c) Hospitality
  - h) Press Reports ( Sand)
  - i) Any other reports
8. Election of Officers
  - a) Chair people (at present Sjoerd, Phil, Dave H, Adam, Pete)
  - b) Secretary for Meetings and Activities ( at present Jennie, also *Karen, Helen*)
  - c) Secretary for Faringdon Folly report/Poster distribution (at present Karen)
  - d) Treasurer (at present Steve)
  - e) Artistic Co-ordinator (for posters, etc.)(at present -Karen)
  - f) Fete Organiser (at present Sjoerd)
  - g) Website/computer Lists –(Sjoerd/Dave H at present)
  - h) Resources Organisers (Phil /Pete S/Karen at present)
  - i) Publicity –press releases (Sand)
9. Future Activities
10. Donations *to other peace organisations*
11. A.O.B. and 40th Virtual Birthday Cake

**From David Johnston MP**

I have been asked to write about Brexit this time. You might have noticed you don't hear me talking about Brexit very much; not because it isn't important – of course it is – but because I always feel when it is debated people just revert to the same old arguments that the country got bored of for three and a half years. Very few people have changed their minds. As an MP I sometimes get organisations in London telling me 'red wall' voters are changing their minds, but my colleagues who actually live in and represent these areas will tell you that is nonsense.

Although I voted to leave the EU, I don't intend to rehearse the arguments why here, as if you voted to remain you won't agree. Instead, I'll tell you what I think some of the benefits we are already seeing are.

Take the Agriculture Bill I spoke in favour of this year. Most people agree that the EU's Common Agriculture Policy is inefficient, bureaucratic and damages the environment. Now that we are leaving, we have designed a new system to pay farmers 'public money for public goods' –paying them to improve our air quality, our water quality, protect our biodiversity or improve our soil. Whilst I'm on the subject of the environment, I was a member of the Trade Bill Committee and, questioning some of the witnesses from organisations like ClientEarth, learnt that they feel the EU does not go as far as it should with its environmental standards and we now have the opportunity to go further in a number of areas here.

Trade is of course one of the big opportunities that leaving the EU presents. In the end, the EU is a protectionist body, allowing trade within it but restricting the amount of trade you can do with other countries. The Trade Bill itself enables continuity agreements with countries we have been trading with through the EU, such as South Africa and South Korea, but you will have already seen the progress we are making with new trade agreements with countries such as Japan, Australia and New Zealand. Alongside this, the Government is very committed to achieving a good trade deal with the EU, contrary to speculation otherwise.

There is a myth that people who voted to leave all did so because of immigration. They didn't. But immigration is important in one respect. It is odd that we allowed freedom of movement to (mostly white) Europeans yet not to (mostly non-white) Commonwealth citizens and I strongly support the new points-based immigration system that will make your skills, rather than your nationality, the important factor.

There are other benefits too but in sum, Brexit gives us freedom to do certain things differently, and it is up to us to us to make the most of it.

*A few pics from the past*



Please send items for the next newsletter to [jennyridd@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jennyridd@yahoo.co.uk) by 24th October.

Please submit in a printable format, using Word preferably, or email text.

I shall pass this way but once; any good that I can do or any kindness I can share, let me do it now.

*Etienne de Grellet, C18 French Missionary*

We used to say "hello". Now we greet each other with "can you hear me?"