



# FARINGDON PEACE GROUP

JANUARY 2021

Newsletter 10

## AT OUR LAST MEETING:

### "THE CARBON BOOTPRINT OF THE MILITARY"

Speaker: Gillian Smith from Scientists for Global Responsibility summarises the latest data on the large but neglected carbon emissions of military activities, using a presentation developed by colleague Dr Stuart Parkinson, SGR. These emissions are often not included within official national inventories, and in many cases not even estimated at all. He argues that these emissions need to be counted and rapidly reduced in the struggle against the climate crisis.

You can see this talk on You Tube,  
by following this link  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zhk1LyePvjs>



### THE NEW YEAR SOCIAL WILL TAKE PLACE

WEDNESDAY 6th JANUARY  
from 7.30 pm for about an hour.

Socialising with each other will be  
interspersed with

### HOPES AND DREAMS FOR '21

So charge your glasses and Zoom in.  
The Link will be sent in the New Year

## OUR PRIORITIES?

The decision to prioritise military spending over helping people in some of the world's most desperate situations is terrible and heart-breaking. Nobody can eat a gun.

COVID should have led to a rethink in security policy and a focus on the biggest threats that face us, such as global inequality, climate change and pandemics. Instead Boris Johnson's 'Global Britain' looks set to continue its deadly 'business as usual' approach.

## DON'T CUT AID, SPEND IT PROPERLY

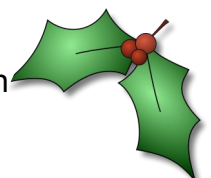
Our collective efforts in recent days have mobilised opposition across society to this measure. So far it has not been enough to stop these cuts in their tracks, but it's not over yet. It looks like the government will need to bring in new legislation to make the cuts happen, so there will be an opportunity to test where each and every MP stands on this.

After years of diverting more and more aid spending to benefit big business and British foreign policy, and then abolishing the Department for International Development in the summer, it is clear this government thinks attacking aid is good politics. The only way to change this is to keep campaigning, and keep educating ourselves and each other.

The aid budget is a small and imperfect recognition of the UK's historic responsibility to countries and continents it has colonised, and it continues to be worth fighting for. We need to push not just for this aid cut to be blocked, but for every penny of the aid budget to be spent properly on ending poverty and tackling inequality, not repurposed for the self-interest of 'Global Britain'. There can be no more funding for fossil fuels, unaffordable private hospitals or things like luxury hotels using UK aid.

That's why as well as opposing these cuts, we need to make sure that aid spending continues to be scrutinised in parliament following the abolition of the Department for International Development. A vote is expected on this in the coming weeks. Can you contact your MP now and ask them to fight to protect aid and spend it properly?

The Shellingford branch  
wishes all readers a  
Peaceful Christmas.



## MULLED WINE & POETRY EVENING

This annual get-together for a winter's evening is going virtual in 2021. Bring your glass of wine and a mince pie to the screen on

TUESDAY 26th JANUARY at 7pm

You are invited to bring a poem on this theme of WINTER WAITING if you wish, to read aloud and bring us closer to the earth and the season.

Please tell Jenny (jennyridd@yahoo.co.uk) if you wish to come, and she will send you the link to join the Zoom meeting nearer the time.

Chaired by Pam de Wit. To help the Zoom meeting run smoothly, if you plan to bring a poem to read, please email Pam with the title of your poem, and the full text if it is not well-known). pamandjohndw@btinternet.com)

*This is organised by the Churches Together Earth and faith group. FPG members have attended and enjoyed in the past.*

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## TRUE OR MYTH?

### What do you know about Leprosy?

1. You can catch leprosy by touching someone who has the disease. T / M
  2. Leprosy bacteria grow very slowly. The symptoms of leprosy can take up to 20 years to show T / M
  3. Leprosy is curable. T / M
  4. Leprosy can cause body parts like fingers and toes to fall off. T / M
  5. If leprosy is treated as early as possible, it can have no lasting physical effects T / M
  6. People affected by leprosy should not live near others and they should be isolated from the rest of the population. T / M
  7. 24 countries still have laws that discriminate against people affected by leprosy T / M
- Answers on page 5



## TRIVIA

Is this the biggest suitcase you have ever seen? It had already done two flights (including one transatlantic) and a train journey before it arrived outside my house! Guess what it contained?

a bike

## WOMEN IN BLACK - PEACE VIGIL IN SUPPORT OF WOMEN IN PALESTINE

This year being the year of Covid-19, six women from the Peace Group stood socially distanced in sympathy and in silent vigil in support of peace in Bethlehem, while others handed our leaflets to the shoppers to the market in Faringdon town centre.

As well as the women of Bethlehem being withheld freedom, the coronavirus has also spread to their city, and now people are not allowed in or out. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas earlier declared a state of emergency after many cases were confirmed. Tourists and pilgrims are banned from the area at the moment. The Church of the Nativity, revered among Christians as the birthplace of Jesus, is among the sites that have been closed.

As a demand for change, Women members of the Faringdon Peace Group regularly hold a Silent Vigil, dressed in black, to especially denote the misery of Palestinian women imprisoned in their own land

On Tuesday 8 December 2020, they stood to mark the disapproval of Israel's actions in Palestine and in hope of that change. A total of £60 from a joint charitable collection on the day has been sent to Medical Aid for Palestinians. (Sand Cooper)



Photos courtesy Al Cane

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Pope Francis declared that it is no longer possible to speak of a 'just war'."

"We believe that active nonviolence - a spirituality, a way of life and a program of action - is key to this global shift"

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I did not include the article from our MP last month as most of it did not seem relevant to us, but I will mention this part.

“I was pleased to hold my first adjournment debate, where a backbench MP can raise any issue and require a minister to respond, in the House of Commons recently. My subject was safety and littering on the A420 and the A34 and I laid out in detail the safety problems we know exist on both roads. In the last 6 years there have been 1057 accidents on the total stretch of the A420 and 2593 on the A34; these are just the ones that involved injury to people – it doesn’t include the accidents involving vehicle damage alone. I also wanted to raise litter issues as I regularly receive complaints about that, too. I will now sit down with the relevant minister to discuss how to improve both matters on both roads”.

Littering hardly seems anything to worry about, at the moment, unsightly as it is, and symptomatic of our throw away society.

But what a lot of accidents on the A34! Particularly worrying, since, as we know, there are something like eight convoys (plus return journeys) per year carrying nuclear material on the A34.

### **Government bringing manufacture of nuclear warheads back in house**

The government has claimed that bringing the manufacturing of nuclear warheads back in house will enable it to better “invest in technology”. Since 1993, the Atomic Weapons Establishment – which is responsible for developing, manufacturing, and managing the UK’s arsenal of nuclear weapons – has operated as a private company, under contract from the government. Hunting-BRAE held the contract until 1999, at which point a 25-year deal was awarded to AWE Management Ltd, a joint venture led by 51% shareholder Lockheed Martin, supported by Serco and Jacobs Engineering. Defence secretary Ben Wallace announced in parliament this week that, following a review, the “Ministry of Defence has concluded that AWE will revert to a direct government ownership model”. From as early as next summer, the nuclear agency will become an arm’s-length government body, wholly owned by the ministry.

*from Salisbury CND newsletter*

### ***Writes Heidi Chow from ‘Global Justice Now’***

I’ve been hearing a lot on the news this week about who will get the new vaccine first in this country, how we can get the vaccine to care homes and how many vaccine centres are being set up. And it’s exciting for us to start imagining how our lives could change as this vaccine gets rolled out.

But I want people who live in Pakistan, Colombia, the Philippines and other countries to also share the same excitement.

Unfortunately, countries in the global south are at the back of the queue. And that’s because profits are more important to pharmaceutical companies than public health.

But there’s a plan to change this. The governments of India and South Africa have put a proposal on the table of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to suspend the global trade rules on patents for Covid-19 vaccines and treatments.

Pharmaceutical companies are preventing other manufacturers from making their vaccines through their patents as well as keeping the technical know-how under wraps. By not allowing others to make the vaccines, pharmaceutical companies get to rake in the profits and please their shareholders while people lose their lives because there are not enough doses to go round.

The world’s countries are meeting this week to discuss the proposal to suspend patents to save lives during this crisis. If approved it would seriously disrupt the corporate grip over vaccines and put people first.

While 100 countries support this plan, there is a small group of rich countries opposed. And one of them is the UK. Unless there is unanimity at the WTO, this plan will fail. The countries opposed to the proposal are also the same countries that have used their power and wealth to buy up vaccines over the past few months.

While our allies put pressure on their governments to change their minds, we need to put pressure on ours.

Twenty years ago, the pharmaceutical industry used their power and influence to rig the global rules on patents at the WTO in their favour. Now is a real opportunity to unravel that corporate stitch-up and help save lives.

**Watch and share our video on You tube with voices from the politicians in the global south.**

# BURMA CAMPAIGN UK

## IT IS DISHEARTENING

For years we all campaigned for Aung San Suu Kyi to be freed. She said that once she was in government, she would free all political prisoners. She didn't keep her word. Today, after more than four years in government, Aung San Suu Kyi is keeping more than 200 political prisoners in jail. Some supporters of Burma Campaign UK have asked us, after all that effort, what is the point in carrying on? Why bother?

We carry on because however disappointed we might be, it is nothing compared with how disappointed those political prisoners sitting in a concrete cell with bars are right now. Many of them had put their faith in Aung San Suu Kyi that once she was in government, she would free political prisoners and repeal the laws used to jail them. People could speak out and make jokes without fear.

They don't have that hope any more. They can't count on Aung San Suu Kyi.  
**Can they still count on you?**

We are stepping up our campaign to free all political prisoners. We need your support for this campaign.

**The first step is to write to Aung San Suu Kyi asking her to free all political prisoners.**

Aung San Suu Kyi does not control the military. She doesn't have the power to stop all the human rights violations they commit. But she does have the power to free political prisoners, and she does have the parliamentary majority needed to repeal repressive laws.

**Will you email Aung San Suu Kyi asking her to free all political prisoners? It will only take a minute.**

## A CHANCE TO SECURE JUSTICE FOR THE ROHINGYA

For the first time ever, the Burmese military are in court for their crimes.

They are facing charges of genocide at the International Court of Justice (ICJ). The ICJ, also known as the World Court, is part of the United Nations and is the highest court in the world.

But it isn't the UK which has brought the case to the ICJ. It is The Gambia

The ICJ is now considering whether Burma has broken the Genocide Convention over what has been done to the Rohingya.

Even before the full case has been heard, the court was so concerned by the evidence that it ordered Burma to take immediate 'provisional measures' to uphold the Genocide Convention, to prevent genocide and preserve evidence of crimes committed.

But the government and military are ignoring these court orders. The genocide of the Rohingya is ongoing.

We now need the British government to join The Gambia in the case at the ICJ. We need Britain to bring its legal expertise and political clout to help secure justice for the Rohingya.

British intervention could make a real difference, but instead the British government is just watching from the side-lines.

Please email British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab asking him to intervene in the Rohingya genocide case at the International Court of Justice, and support justice for the Rohingya.

## NUCLEAR FREE TOWNS

National CND campaign to persuade local councils to become nuclear-free Campaigning for this continues, as towns and cities around the world – including Washington, Paris, Edinburgh and Oxford – are becoming Nuclear Ban Communities. The pressure is being kept up, locally and regionally.

Write a letter to your local paper about the campaign and/or post about it on social media. The more attention the campaign receives, the higher the possibility of a councillor taking notice. So make sure you talk about it with your friends and neighbours, and encourage them to get in touch as well

## THANK YOU

to those who have contributed to this and past newsletters.

Please continue to send in your contributions  
[jennyridd@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jennyridd@yahoo.co.uk)



# THE FACTS ABOUT LEPROSY

## 1. You can catch leprosy by touching someone who has the disease.

*MYTH.* Leprosy is a bacterial disease. You can't catch it by touching someone. It would take years of living close to an untreated leprosy patient to catch the disease.

## 2. Leprosy bacteria grow very slowly: the symptoms of leprosy can take up to 20 years to show

*FACT.* Because the bacteria multiplies slowly, symptoms of the disease can take a long time to develop - around five years on average but sometimes as long as 20 years. This means that people can have leprosy for a long time without realising.

## 3. Leprosy is curable

*FACT.* A cure for leprosy has been available since 1982. Multidrug therapy (MDT) is a combination of three drugs taken daily for six or 12 months, depending on the severity of the disease.

## 4. Leprosy can cause body parts like fingers and toes to fall off.

*MYTH.* But if left untreated, leprosy can result in nerve damage meaning people are more likely to injure themselves. These injuries can then lead to ulcers, infection and permanent disability, including damage to fingers and toes.

## 5. If leprosy is treated as early as possible, it can have no lasting physical effects

*FACT.* If treated early, it's unlikely the disease will cause permanent disability.

## 6. People affected by leprosy should not live near others and they should be isolated from the rest of the population.

*MYTH.* Once a person has received treatment for the disease, they can live a life free of leprosy. Unfortunately though, the discrimination they face can last a whole lifetime.

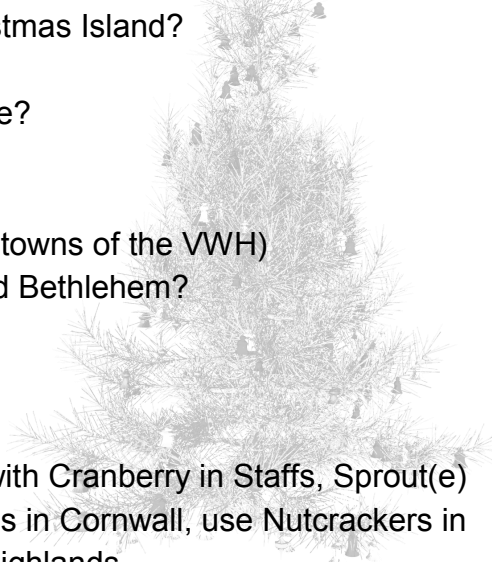
## 7. 24 countries still have laws that discriminate against people affected by leprosy

*FACT.* 24 countries globally - including five of the ten countries we work in- have laws on the books that discriminate against people affected by leprosy.

Produced by The Leprosy Mission which works tirelessly to combat the prejudice faced by people affected by leprosy..... and used with their permission

## WHERE ?

### Answers

- 
- |  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| 1. Which is the nearest neighbour to Christmas Island?       | 10. Hampshire   |
| 2. Where is the province of Natal?                           | 9. Mexico       |
| 3. In which part of London is Pudding Lane?                  | 8. Texas        |
| 4. In which country is Santa Ana?                            | 7. Wales        |
| 5. Where is the Reindeer Pass Railroad?                      | 6. Belgium      |
| 6. Where is Sint Niklaas? (one of the twin towns of the VWH) | 5. Iowa USA     |
| 7. Where is there a village in the UK called Bethlehem?      | 4. El Salvador  |
| 8. Where in the USA is Garland?                              | 3. London EC3   |
| 9. Where is Barra de Navidad?                                | 2. South Africa |
| 10. Where is Turkey Island?                                  | 1. Indonesia    |
- You might like to accompany your turkey with Cranberry in Staffs, Sprout(e)s in West Sussex, washed down by Brandis in Cornwall, use Nutcrackers in Devon and sing a Car(r)ol in the Scottish highlands.

## US/UK TRADE DEAL

Members of the Faringdon Peace Group teamed up Extinction Rebellion and other environmental groups to protest at the US/UK trade deal which is currently under discussion.

The main problems are that the talks have been held in secret and will lead to lower animal welfare and environmental standards and increasing privatisation of the NHS. The talks exclude any discussion of carbon emissions or targets and the deal will last for 30 years. The terms will be enforced through international investor state dispute settlement courts (ISDS) to

which there is no appeal and can result in states paying millions to international corporations or investors.

The photo was taken at the rear of the Catholic Church in front of the wall which has been recently painted by Karen. The photo was part of a national campaign to raise awareness of the deal. A letter will be sent to Robert Buckland, MP for Swindon South and Justin Tomlinson of Swindon North. A short press release will be sent to the Swindon Advertiser

