

November 2023

KINGSTON PEACE NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF KINGSTON PEACE COUNCIL /
CAMPAIGN FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

<http://kpc.gn.apc.org> www.facebook.com/kingstonpeace



We are appalled at the actions of Hamas on October 7th in the taking of hostages and subsequently killing of some. This is completely contrary to International Law. However, we are equally opposed to the collective punishment and killing of the innocent Palestinian citizens of Gaza, and depriving them of water, food, and shelter, again totally contrary to International Law.

*This is an email sent to me on Tuesday October 24th by **Jewish Voice for Peace**. They are one of several Jewish groups who have been at the Palestinian protests and vigils with their banners. They are equally as horrified by the extreme violence being meted out to the Palestinian people trapped in Gaza as the rest of us, also by the escalating attacks by settlers and Israeli troops in the West Bank.*

All of Palestine is under attack.

For many of us, it's impossible to imagine the scale of death and destruction in Gaza.

In just two weeks, the Israeli military has killed over 5,000 Palestinians in Gaza. Israeli warplanes have flattened entire neighbourhoods. Shell-shocked children are left to search for their parents under the rubble. Millions of Palestinians have once again been made refugees, bombed as they tried to flee. Surgeons are operating by the light of their cellphones, increasingly without anaesthetics.

Let us be clear: This is genocide.

This isn't a war on Hamas. It's a war on all of the Palestinian people.

While international attention is focused on Gaza, the Israeli government and extremist settler groups are taking the opportunity to accelerate the ongoing ethnic cleansing of Palestinians in the West Bank.

Israeli settlers are being armed by the Israeli state, and have become indistinguishable from Israeli soldiers. Both abuse Palestinians with impunity

You can read more at <https://www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org>

A Message from Erella, A Jewish woman who lives in Israel and drives every day to help in South Hebron hill villages.

“Only our friend Sh... and his family now live in what once was a beautiful cave village. Settlers and soldiers harass him cruelly even on normal occupation days. Now it has become unbearable. They come with drawn weapons and threaten his life, beat up his wife, him and his children, and he – in his basic Hebrew – says: “We are not Hamas. I am very much against what they have done. I have many Jewish friends. We can live excellently together. There is room for everyone.”

“Now it is war”, these spiritual “giants” answer. Settlers and soldiers. And he insists: “War is not here. So do not bring it here.” One’s heart breaks just listening to him. He possesses this innocence and total trust in the human spirit. And even this is about to break... All this happened on Friday, October 20th.

Erella and Ehud (a UN worker) belong to the Villages Group. I often get emails from them. If anyone would like to see more of these let me know and I will forward them. At present they are all heart-breaking of course. Rosemary.

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Report on CND AGM, Sat 7 October 2023

All members of National CND were entitled to attend the AGM, held on Zoom, to elect CND officers and Council members, to hear the report on CND campaigns during the year, and the Treasurer's report for 2022. The voting took place before the AGM, and all members registered for the AGM were sent a link to vote.

CND's Chair, Tom Unterrainer, introduced the meeting from his car parked at RAF Croughton, where a rally, organised by Oxfordshire Peace Campaign and others, was being held as part of **Keep Space for Peace** week. After paying tribute to Alice Mahon and Pat Arrowsmith, veteran peace campaigners who have died recently, he handed over to Kate Hudson, who chaired the rest of the meeting.

Results of the elections were announced:

Chair	Tom Unterrainer
Vice-Chairs	Sophie Bolt, Sam Mason and Carol Turner
Treasurer	Linda Hugl

Company Secretary Annie Tunnicliffe and all 14 other Council nominees.

These positions were ratified, along with all Council members nominated by the nations, regions, specialist sections and Youth & Student CND, although not all these positions have yet been notified to CND, and the relevant sections were urged to inform CND asap.

Kate then delivered the annual report, accompanied by slides, and this was accepted by the meeting.

She began by referring to the **Domesday Clock**, whose hands have now advanced to only 90 seconds to midnight, while the world's nuclear arsenal has increased.

We are alarmed by the return of US nuclear weapons to Britain, which has only recently been given coverage by national media (*BBC* and *The Guardian*). In May a demo was organised at Lakenheath, unusually featuring participation by Michael Mears, and workshops, and on 23 Sept there was a Day of Action, when a 'weapons inspection' was carried out (an impressive video of this is available – it has been posted on our Facebook page), covered by *BBC East*.

Other campaigns covered by the report:

Ukraine – calling for peace talks, and deploring sending weapons containing depleted uranium

AUKUS/No to NATO (summit in Vilnius, but protest in Brussels)

Rolling global 'peace waves'

XR's 'The Big One'

Militarisation of space (demo at Newquay)

Supporting Palestine

Glastonbury (Student CND and local groups)

CND side meeting at the NPT Prep Com in Vienna

Nuclear power

Stalls at Conferences (eg TUC and Unison) and vans with CND message around Tory & Labour conferences

CND webinar as part of DSEI protests.

Also :

Peace Education

Materials – new leaflets and popular placards at Ukraine demos.

Linda Hugl then presented the Treasurer's report, which was accepted.

Total reserves are down by nearly £56,000.

The main reasons for this are:

Value of investments down by £30,000 (some were sold because they were considered no longer so ethical, and so corporation tax had to be paid)

Income from appeals down (due to cost of living crisis)

Increase in staff costs (they were given a cost of living bonus)

Increase in direct campaigning costs (more campaigning after the Covid years).

Thanks to Gill Hurlle for attending the Zoom meeting and preparing this report.

There was also a **CND Annual Policy Conference** on Saturday October 28th, on Zoom (and live in Manchester). I attended this on Zoom and will send a report for the next KPC/CND Newsletter. *Ed.*

Our Member Pat Mortimer died on August 28th in Poland, where her carer Kasia sometimes took her for family holidays during her last years. She was aged 102.

Please see her obituary which is on Page 5

DSEI (Defence and Security Equipment International) Leafletting Day in London

At the time of the Arms Fair in the Excel Centre, Kingston Peace Council/CND members joined with Movement Against War on September 13th to give out leaflets in Central London at the junction with Whitehall and Trafalgar Square. This action was decided upon as a way to let more people know about this, in addition to the actions being taken at the Excel Centre itself. Over 2000 leaflets were given out, and many passers-by saw the posters and banners, displayed near to the Department for Business and Trade building.



Many of the brilliant posters displayed were made by our member Martin Birdseye.

There was also this excellent banner brought along by The Mad Hatters group.



Many thanks to all who came along to give out leaflets and hold the banners.

*This huge arms fair has been held at Excel every two years for very many years –I can remember being there on 11th September 2001 when we heard that a plane had flown into the World Trade Centre. Let's hope we don't have to come to it again in 2025!
Ed.*

While compiling this Newsletter I looked at the World Beyond War website www.worldbeyondwar.org (World Beyond War is a wonderful campaign based in Canada and the USA)

I found this and was impressed by the date – 30th September 2023. So now I worry terribly about what has happened to these two people, and the thousands of others now dead or in terrible danger.

I haven't had time to play the actual podcast yet, but I will, and hope some of our readers will try it too...



By Marc Eliot Stein, World BEYOND War, September 30, 2023

Episode 52 of the World BEYOND War podcast is the longest interview I've done with a single guest, and when you hear Mohammed Abunahel's story you'll know why. Mohammed and I have never met in person but we work together at World BEYOND War on our **No Bases project**, which presents an interactive map and extensive visual database to illustrate how USA threatens other countries and escalates global conflicts with over 900 foreign military outposts around the world.

As we worked together on this project, I got a chance to know Mohammed Abunahel and hear the incredible story of his growing up in besieged Gaza City, and the efforts he had to go through to gain a higher education and build a meaningful life with his family as a doctoral student in India and antiwar activist on the team at World BEYOND War, hoping through his studies,

writings and research work to make a difference on a war-torn planet.

- It never feels easy to work for a better world in an age of cynicism and rampant fear. But Mohammed's story of perseverance in the face of impossible odds and numbing, constant denials of a Palestinian person's basic human rights shows why he holds hope in his heart. The story he tells here is not the story of the violence he endured as a child, but rather of his own determination to find his own destiny in the world, as he shows up uninvited in airports and embassies from Indonesia to Jordan, enduring an ordeal that most of us will never experience.

Most of all, the story in this interview is about reaching out for help when it is needed, and being willing to accept help – one of the hardest things a person can do – and then give back. I think this is one of the most moving and important stories I've captured on this podcast, and I hope everyone will listen and hear the voice of a human being from Gaza, a place where humanity itself has to fight for the right to exist. Please enjoy episode 52 of the World BEYOND War podcast, and I think you'll never forget this one.

And here is another example of World BEYOND War's campaigning:-

Prevention is often far easier than a cure, and military bases are no exception. Where U.S. bases have been established, they have led to more wars. The solution is not even more U.S. bases. Whenever we can prevent one or more bases being built, we can save ourselves a great deal of effort trying to close them. **Here are three places we're working on this approach:**

1. Papua New Guinea: This country has outstanding claims for long-overdue compensation for environmental destruction resulting from U.S. military operations during World War II, including the debris that still congests the coastal seaways and oceans. Papua New Guinea needs to be paid for past damage before the U.S. does more damage, and uses this peaceful place to help start a war with China!
Let's keep U.S. troops out!

2. Montenegro: With help from all of our members the people of Sinjajevina have been keeping militaries out for years **and are not about to let up now.**

3. Norway: Let's keep U.S. bases out of this beautiful, formerly peaceful, land!

Obituary – Pat Mortimer, 1921-2023

I worked with Pat Smith in Richmond at the engineering union TASS, producing the monthly magazine for members. She was the editor of TASS News and Journal from the late '70s until she retired in the early '80s. It was there that she met Jim Mortimer, who went on to become General Secretary of the Labour Party, then head of the arbitration service ACAS. They formed a life-long partnership that ended in marriage when they were in their 80s. Pat was active in her own trade union, APEX, and encouraged me to become active too, though I remember her admonition when my offer to leaflet Richmond Green in my lunchtime was hedged around "if it's not raining".

"The revolution won't wait for the weather," she said. She was the reason I joined the Labour Party. She was an excellent political guide and mentor. When we started to publish our journal as a newspaper we had to learn how to lay out pages the old way, with word counts and type size books for working out headlines – a whole new area of expertise. We journeyed each month to Manchester, to 'put the journal to bed' at the printers. I didn't see Pat for several years, apart from a brief evening at hustings for Ed Miliband, when a familiar voice behind me shouted out: **"What are you going to do about the troops in Iraq, Ed?"**.

Then a mutual friend from the union invited us both for tea. We had some hilarious reminiscences – and Pat revealed she was in the Kingston Labour Party, as was I. We did meet in London Road at an AGM. By this time she was in a wheelchair with her carer, about whom she was full of praise. I'm so glad she found someone she liked to care for her in her last years.

Thanks to Peta Lunberg, Kingston and Surbiton Labour Party member. Pat and Jim were much valued members of KPC/CND

Gaza, Israel and the Law

In its statement of 13 October, **the Balfour Project** set out its view on war crimes committed by Hamas and by Israel.

"Nothing can excuse the murder of civilians and the taking of hostages by Hamas. These are war crimes. The hostages should be released immediately. Indiscriminate rocket fire into Israel should stop. Nothing can excuse the indiscriminate bombing by the Occupying Power of civilian homes and amenities in Gaza; the military order to evacuate hospitals leading to the death of patients; starving the entire people of Gaza of food, water, fuel and electricity; or the order to 1.1 million people to move from north Gaza to the south, while continuing to bombard the south. **This is collective punishment of the people of Gaza, ie a war crime**".

For more information on the Balfour Project see www.balfourproject.org

From the West Bank -Sunday 15th October

This report (edited) is from our supporter Johnnie Byrne. She is due to return to the UK on December 3rd

What a difference a week makes!

On Sunday 1st October, exactly a fortnight ago, I took the bus to Bethlehem and arrived at the Palestine Museum of Natural History / Institute for Biodiversity and Sustainability at the University of Bethlehem, housed in the buildings and grounds of an old convent. I received a warm welcome from Jessie Qumsiyeh, in time to be introduced to other volunteers.

The first few days were very full and just fun. Everyone works hard but in a great atmosphere. By a lucky coincidence, the University was celebrating its 50th anniversary, with a week-long Conference, and Professor Mazin Qumsiyeh, co-director of the Museum and Institute, invited us to several events. On Monday evening, he and Jessie invited the group for a delicious meal at their local restaurant, in the neighbouring town of Beit Sahour, where we met two of his cousins. On returning to the Centre, we went down to the education room in the basement to watch a video about Turkmenistan culture.

My first job on Sunday after we cleared away lunch was helping feed some baby hyenas. The orphaned cubs had been brought to the Centre's Animal Rehabilitation Unit by the Palestinian Government's Environment Quality Authority. They are very sweet, and it's difficult to resist treating them as pets – which would obviously frustrate attempts to return them to the wild once they're old enough and would be very dangerous as they get bigger. The work here is varied, from simple gardening tasks to helping researchers with an educational programme for children about reptiles or constituting a reference collection for the Herbarium.

On Thursday 5th October, we – that is the five international volunteers, plus a couple of Palestinian friends – went to a festival in Beit Sahour, where we heard some excellent music before repairing to the Citadel, the local cultural centre, to watch a French film with English subtitles. It was a great evening. As we waited on the street to flag a taxi home, two very helpful young Palestinians came over, warning us about getting fleeced by drivers taking advantage of foreigners. They called us a taxi themselves, which charged the correct price.

Then came Saturday the 7th. We heard several explosions, gunfire and sirens. It was difficult to understand just what was going on, but the

Palestinians seemed to think “the Resistance” was successful and were clearly proud of their countrymen. At lunchtime, we saw tracers in the sky, which we were told were from Hamas rockets. We were told that the City of Jerusalem was closed, and probably the Airport too. Nevertheless, that afternoon, in the hospitable tradition of Palestinians, the Qumsiyehs invited us to a family wedding, an energetic Greek Orthodox ceremony, with a lavish party in the evening.

Then the messages started. Anxious relatives and friends asking if we were safe, were we planning to leave, would we be able to get home. This had a major effect on our little group. We seemed to have become very close in a short space of time, and now we were on the point of break-up. The first to leave was a young Danish man, also a volunteer with ActionAid, which decided on Sunday morning to evacuate all its people. He didn't have time to say goodbye – by midday he was on his way to Jordan. Our two Italian volunteers, a 24 year-old woman, whom I'd been shadowing, and a 40-year-old man, our film-maker, were feeling increasingly harassed. They'd already been here for a while and had planned to leave fairly soon anyway and were worried about getting trapped. We heard about road closures, checkpoint closures (Israel operates a series of internal border posts for Palestinians trying to get around their country) and flight cancellations. These Italian volunteers finally left on Tuesday to try and leave via Jordan – having given up trying to get a flight to Italy from Tel Aviv – a route necessitating many delays and assorted taxi journeys.

Jessie, who is originally from Taiwan and whose mother tongue is Mandarin, and Mazin, rescued several young Taiwanese and Chinese people who had got stuck and drove them to the only open checkpoint, from where they could get a taxi to Tel Aviv. Cars were not allowed through. Opinions were divided on the hostilities. Some were still enthusiastic about “the Resistance”, others were concerned about the apparently very brutal actions of Hamas and the inevitable massive Israeli retribution.

In the afternoon and evening, we heard several more explosions. In the small hours of Monday, I was woken by the sound of heavy aircraft and Monday morning saw more aerial activity, fighters, bombers and maybe transport planes, together with more explosions and the sound of gunfire. Hamas seemed still to be having some successes but they have no air power and it seems that America and other world governments have, shamefully, weighed in on the side of the strongest. No more talk of “balance” - as if there could ever have been balance between the might of technologically-

advanced and well-armed Israel and the resilient but oppressed people of Occupied Palestine, or of peace talks, or of a two-state solution.

During the night, I heard shouting coming from the direction of the refugee camps in the area above us, and in the morning, I heard that the refugee camps had been raided and a couple of inhabitants had been killed or kidnapped - “arrested”, in Israeli language. But this is Area ‘A’, as defined by the 1993 Oslo Accords, and is supposedly under the full control of the Palestine Authority, so arrest by Israel is clearly illegal though it often happens.

With only two volunteers left here, it was very quiet. There were fewer planes flying over too, a few in the morning and just one or two in the early afternoon. Wednesday was quiet too, though there seems to have been another raid on the camps. The mood here has changed, just in the space of a few days, to one of sad reflection. People who were supposed to be arriving here soon, both friends and volunteers, are having to cancel. Palestinian staff come in as normal but there's the same amount of work for fewer people.

The Qumsiyehs have been working late into the night. Mazin, an activist as well as a pioneering scientist and academic, has been doing interviews and having meetings almost non-stop, or so it seems. Unfairly, he has been receiving hate mail from Zionist sympathisers.

On Thursday evening I returned to Beit Sahour, on the off-chance that a second French film might be showing, but the manager told me a strike had been called in sympathy with Gaza and everything was closed. But I stayed chatting for a while, about the rights and wrongs of the situation, the madness of governments, and the parallels with Ireland, about which I feel very strongly.

The next afternoon, there was a lot of firing coming from Checkpoint 300, just over a mile away up the hill above us. One of the Palestinian volunteers, who lives near there, told me the Israeli Army were firing gas bombs from their control tower at demonstrators in neighbouring streets. The firing went on for a good while. Later, in the early evening, there were some explosions from the same direction, and another one during the night.

On Saturday, we saw a couple of fighter jets flying overhead. There's been a lot of cloud cover recently and we usually hear but don't see them. Local people called a meeting here in the evening, trying to work out how they can help. On Sunday morning, about 100 people demonstrated in Beit-Sahour, while traffic rumbled on as normal through the streets. It takes courage to demonstrate in Occupied Palestine; but the news of big demonstrations in other countries gave them heart.

March for Palestine 21st October 2023



Going along Whitehall towards Downing Street where the stage was set up for the Speakers.



This photo is very interesting as it shows in the centre a member of the very religious Jewish group which campaigns against the Israeli government and the setting up of a Jewish Zionist state. They attend all the Marches for Palestine and were also present on all the Iraq War marches.



This one is also interesting as it shows that young protesters were climbing onto traffic lights outside Downing Street and waving Palestinian flags and the police were not intervening.

**KINGSTON PEACE COUNCIL
/ CND**

Subscription rates £8 annually, £10 family membership, £3 unwaged

CHAIRPERSON and SECRETARY'

Positions vacant.

Please offer if you could help as secretary. At present several people are sharing these jobs.

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Disclaimer: The views expressed in this edition are not necessarily those of Kingston Peace Council/CND

Our Regular Stalls in Kingston Market Place take place on 1st and 3rd Saturdays,

outside the gate of All Saints Church Kingston, in the market place..

Dates for November will be Saturdays 4th and 18th.

We start at 11am and have 2 or 3 one-hour shifts. Please contact Angie Cooper 0208-399-5537 to help, angecooper47@hotmail.com (If you are new to this, you will always be with an experienced member)

Forthcoming Events (Some online)

Thursday 2nd November 7.30pm

Songs to Stir Action for Peace Online

With Frankie Armstrong and Friends. The line-up will include fellow MPD Patron, the legendary Peggy Seeger, Frankie's own group Bread and Roses (with Laura Bradshaw and Pauline Down) and hard-hitting singer-songwriter Robb Johnson. *Due to unforeseen technical difficulties The Spookymen's Chorale will not be appearing as advertised. However instead there will be an inspiring film made by Boff Walley and the Commoners Choir of a project earlier this year involving three Northern Community Choirs.*

Bookings: www.mpdconcerts.org/events

Organised by: **Musicians for Peace and Disarmament**

Saturday 11th November 2pm

The Role of the Arts & Culture in Promoting Peace & Opposing War - MAW's Annual Remembrance Lecture will be held this year in the Oasis Hub Waterloo, London SE1 7QP, and will be given by **actor, playwright and peace activist Michael Mears.**

Come to hear him explore whether a stage play, film or painting can have a real, lasting impact on the serious issues of our time! **The lecture will follow MAW's AGM which will take place in the same venue at 12 noon. Free** The Oasis Hub has a wheelchair entrance round the corner at 75 Westminster Bridge Road.

Organised by: **Movement for the Abolition of War**

More info: sally@abolishwar.org.uk

Sunday 12th November 10.30am

Remembrance Day event WIMBLEDON

Wimbledon Disarmament Campaign/CND will lay a wreath of red-and-white poppies at the Wimbledon Village War Memorial from 10.30am on Remembrance Sunday

Wednesdays 8th, 15th, 22nd. and 29th November 6pm

Women in Black vigil London. They meet every **Wednesday**, around the statue of Edith Cavell in St Martin's Place 6-7pm. They are very happy to welcome new women to the vigils – even if they can only come once in a while. Please wear black if you can.

Tuesday 23rd November 6.30pm

London CAAT meeting Online

The London CAAT group meets monthly to discuss arms trade issues. Currently they are organising around the StopArmingSaudi campaign. For more information about the group, to request to be added to their group email list, or to confirm details of the next meeting, please email londoncaat@riseup.net. Currently via zoom.

Saturday 25 November

International Summit for World Peace, organised by Humanity United for Universal Demilitarisation in Buenos Aires, Argentina **and online**. Many Guests Speakers including Alberto Portugheis of World Peace IS POSSIBLE
Details: hufud@gmail.com