



ABINGDON PEACE GROUP

Newsletter

January 2022

Next meeting: Tuesday, 18th January 2022, at 8pm, online

Holocaust and Genocide

“A nuclear war cannot be won, and it must not be fought”

BBC reported on January 4 that the United States, Russia, China, Britain, and France issued a joint statement unanimously opposing nuclear war and an arms race.

Is it enough to say you repent or do you have to take actions to show it?

Will the UK government now for instance cancel the recent decision to increase Britain’s nuclear arsenal by over 40%?

Meanwhile the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) review, due to have started this month, has been postponed due to Covid.

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from Nazi Germany to Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur to Nuclear Mutually Destruction, will we ever learn?

We have decided to devote our January meeting to discussing this topic as just a few days later, on the 27th, the world will mark Holocaust Memorial Day*. There will be no shortage of important persons telling us it must never happen again and, of course, we agree. But our two speakers will explore the issues and make some important links in ways that should prompt us to reflect more widely on the subject.

Daniel Scharf, a Peace Group member whose father was a holocaust survivor, will speak about his father, and about Nuclear MADness at Upper Heyford former USAF base. (See also page 2).

Rebecca Tinsley, a genocide expert, will talk about the factors leading to genocide, with particular reference to Rwanda and Darfur, and will draw the parallels between the conditions in the 1930s and the stages leading to genocide ever since then.



* The UK Ceremony for Holocaust Memorial Day 2022 will be streamed online on Thursday 27 January at 7pm. Register at www.hmd.org.uk

This meeting will be a zoom call. To join us either use the link below or look out for a message with the link on January 20th. If you don't receive it and would like to take part, simply email us (abingdonpeace@gmail.com).

Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/91315134101>
pwd=RmxHLzBQaXIHjYjFSRm5nREVzYjdSdz09
Meeting ID: 913 1513 **Passcode:015836**

This year's Path of MADness Daniel Scharf writes (and see front page): On 30th January 2022 (Sunday after Holocaust memorial Day) The Path of MADness will take place starting at 11am. Due to lack of communication from the owners of the former RAF Upper Heyford it cannot be confirmed whether this will take place there or at the former cruise missile base at Greenham Common. Those who would be interested in attending should email Daniel Scharf at pause.forthought@gmail.com so that details can be confirmed before the day.



The theme for HMD 2022 is One Day that we put aside to come together to remember, to learn about the Holocaust, Nazi Persecution and the genocides that followed in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur, in the hope that there may be One Day in the future with no genocide. We learn more about the past, we empathise with others today, and we take action for a better future.

Letter in the Guardian on Dec 21

The diversion of military spending to combat pandemics, the climate crisis and poverty is certainly desirable, and 2% of the current obscene £1.49tn annually would be worthwhile ('Colossal waste: Nobel laureates call for 2% cut to military spending worldwide, 14 December') But how unambitious of these eminent scientists to set such a low figure. Why not 10%, 20%, 50%, or even, as Simon Jenkins has argued, 100%? Unrealistic? Perhaps, but if the human race is to survive the many threats to its future, it must learn to settle its differences without periodically slaughtering one another and squandering the Earth's precious resources on the means to do so. And it is the realists, with their friends in the killing industry – the military-industrial complex – who profit from the slaughter, who have got us into this parlous state.

A substantial part of that military spending is related to creating the means for the existential threat of a nuclear holocaust, one possible scenario leading up to what is described so terrifyingly by Julian Borger ('15 minutes to save the world': a terrifying VR journey into the nuclear bunker, 14 December). With the high probability of a nuclear detonation by accident, miscalculation or malfunction, the economic cost of these megadeath machines is just one more reason for demanding their abolition in the shortest possible time. (Frank Jackson, Former co-chair, World Disarmament Campaign).

Our December meeting

This was our accustomed annual seasonal gathering, but alas we felt in the end that we had to hold it online. Disappointing, of course, but we had some fun. We thought you might like to have a go at some of the quiz questions that were put.

- 1 Who in her youth joined her mother in campaigning against Trident and is now being touted as a replacement for a certain Mr de Pfeffel Johnson?
- 2 Who was Secretary of Defence from 1997 to 1999, then Secretary General of NATO in 1999, becoming Baron [...] of Port Ellen, of Islay in Argyll and Bute. It's also reported that when he was 15 years of age, he was involved with protests against US nuclear submarines docking in Scotland.
- 3 Which country acceded to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) on 10th December 2021, becoming the 57th state party?
- 4 What is the value of the Afghan government financial reserves, most of it held in New York, that were frozen when the Taliban came to power in the summer?
- 5 Who is the great grandson of Ali Kemal Bey, who in 1919 was Turkish interior minister under the British occupation? He came to a horribly sticky (ie violent – don't ask) end.

Answers at foot of page 4

From War to Peace -Thoughts on the end of war

This is a publication by The Movement for the Abolition of War with a large number and variety of valuable quotations. Here's just one, from Martin Luther King:

"Join with the Earth and each other, to bring new life to the land, to restore the waters, to refresh the air, to renew the forests, to care for the plants, to protect the creatures, to celebrate the seas, to rejoice in the sunlight, to sing the song of the stars, to recall our destiny, to renew our spirits, to reinvigorate our bodies, to recreate the human community, to promote justice and peace, to love our children and love one another, to join together as many and diverse expressions of one warm loving mystery, for the healing of the Earth and the renewal of all life".

The Rev Dr Martin Luther King, 1929–1968, US Civil Rights leader, Nobel Peace laureate. *Martin Luther King Day*, a public holiday in the US, falls precisely Jan 15 this year, the date of his birth.

The MAW booklet is available as a PDF here: [From-War-to-Peace.pdf \(abolishwar.net\)](#)

News from The Fellowship of Reconciliation (FoR)

First, Congratulations to APG member and supporter, Emma Jones, on becoming the administrator at Peace House in Oxford. Secondly, the FoR has available two books by Rev. Dr Inderjit Bhogal, both published by the Methodist Peace Fellowship. They are *Witnesses to Peace*, a compendium of biographies of inspiring British peacemakers; and *Things That Make for Peace*, a collection of essays by peacemakers from around the world reflecting on what makes for peace.. Sally will hold some copies in Abingdon so you can save on the postage. The former is priced at £5.99, the latter at £4.99; or you can have both for £10. Contact Sally at abingdonpeace@gmail.com or on (01235) 526265

Anna Silvester, 1951 to 2021: some Peace Group memories

Anna's death was announced last month. Sally Reynolds now pays tribute: Everyone will have their own favourite memory of Anna, who delivered the Peace Group newsletters in the Victoria Road/Spring Road area for more years than anyone can remember, joined the Easter marches and the Greenham night-watches, and helped on Peace Group stalls. Her favourite Peace Group activity had to be the Jumble Sale though, and her enthusiasm for a bargain and glorious laughter made it all so much more fun. Her funeral was attended by friends from many organisations – from bookclubs to yoga classes to tennis club and college colleagues – her untimely death leaves a hole in many lives, but we are all grateful to have shared a little of her energy, warmth and spirit.



Diary

Tue Jan 4: [NPT review starts](#) now postponed because of Covid (see front page)

Mon Jan 10: [Nuclear weapons are banned: what does this mean for Britain?](#) Parliamentary CND webinar at 6.45pm (UK). Speakers will include Kirsten Oswald MP, Rebecca Johnson and Julian Borger from The Guardian. To register contact information@cnduk.org

Thu Jan 27: [Holocaust Memorial Day](#) The UK Ceremony for HMD 2022 will be streamed online at 7pm. Register on the website to watch the Ceremony online. <http://www.hmd.org.uk/>

Sun Jan 30: Path of MADness – see page 2.

Diary continued

Thu Mar 3: CND, NFLA, Nukewatch webinar on nuclear warhead convoys at 6.30pm
 Convoys carrying nuclear bombs often travel along Britain's roads, putting at risk the communities which they travel through. No radiation warning symbols are carried and neither the public nor local authorities are warned of these nuclear convoys. This webinar will discuss these convoys, the dangers they pose and share how you can get involved in tracking them as part of the campaign to scrap Trident. To register: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_mbWfFo3ZTzqKJFN2TFoH9w

Sat Mar 12: A Celebration of Women's Voices in Peace and Protest – An evening of music and poetry with the Sea Green Singers, Iraqi Women Art & War, and women peace campaigners, celebrating women's voices in protest over the decades. Special event at Cornerstone Arts Centre, Didcot, at 7pm.

Quiz Answers (see page 2)

- 1 Liz Truss
- 2 George Robertson (please note the political balance in the first two questions)
- 3 Mongolia
- 4 9 billion dollars.
- 5 Mr. De Pfeffel Johnson

PS The information in Q5 comes from *Ottoman Odyssey – Travels through a Lost Empire* by Alev Scott, published by riverrun in 2018. The author travels all over the once vast Ottoman Empire and talks to people. It's a brilliant read, dedicated to her "Granny Şifa, and other victims of nationalism". I found the section on recent and contemporary Cyprus particularly illuminating. (Mike Bloom)

corrections, contributions etc to this newsletter are very welcome.

Abingdon Peace Group meets on the third Tuesday of each month except August. At present our meetings are taking place online. All who are interested in peace and campaigning for it are welcome to take part. The Group has no party political affiliations.

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