



# FARINGDON PEACE GROUP

NEWSLETTER 30

JULY-AUG 2023

## PETITIONS TO SIGN:

### From PALESTINE SOLIDARITY

This week the Israeli military invaded and bombed Jenin in the occupied West Bank, killing 6 Palestinians, including a child. Far from offering support to Palestinians resisting violent occupation, the UK government was busy tabling its anti-boycott bill aimed at preventing public bodies from boycotting those who abuse human rights or the planet.

Israel cannot be allowed to continue these attacks with impunity. Go to the website and sign our petition to oppose the bill.

### SCRAP ANTI PROTEST LAWS

The new laws are an attack on everyone's freedom

### SIGN THE PETITION

Go to Greenpeace website.

See Karen's report on the next page about our meeting in May, when Symon Hill was the speaker.

## FARINGDON PEACE GROUP

### CONTACTS

including for Speaker information, please contact

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## MONTHLY MEETING

All are welcome to our next Meeting  
WEDNESDAY 5th JULY at 7.30pm

### The Spanish Civil War and the International Brigades

Speaker: Björn Watson, a consulting engineer with a fascination for history!

### FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE

Coffee 9pm. Wheelchair Access

For more info, please ring 241707 or 710308

## OH, JEREMY CORBYN! THE BIG LIE

SATURDAY 29th JULY 2.10pm

Screen 2, Phoenix Picturehouse,  
Walton St, Oxford.

Details from Eventbrite. £10, with concs.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/oh-jeremy-corbyn-the-big-lie-documentary-tickets-639187546157>



PLEASE BRING COLD-AND READY-TO-EAT VEGETARIAN FOOD AND DRINK TO SHARE

**SATURDAY 1st JULY From 12 midday in the garden of 19 Coxwell Road, Faringdon**

A chance to renew old friendships, and make new ones.

Come by bus or on foot if you can; S6 bus stops almost outside; disabled parking only at No.19; otherwise there is drop-off only then parking (probably) down the road at the United Church.

Disabled Loo. Free Entry. Sorry no dogs

We shall be putting up gazebos on the previous Thursday at 4pm. Come and help if you can!

## **AN ALTERNATIVE VIEW OF THE MONARCHY FROM SYMON HILL**

Little did Symon Hill know when he came to speak to Faringdon Peace Group just before the coronation, that the anti-monarchy campaigning group 'Republic' of which he is a member, would become headline news! Using new Public Order laws which had been rushed through earlier in the week, police arrested 8 members of Republic and confiscated placards, despite the group having been in discussions with police about a peaceful protest for 4 months. Ironically, a policy of 'extremely low tolerance' designed to deter protesters in fact brought more onto the streets when it became a civil liberties issue!

Symon himself was assaulted and arrested last year while passing by a Proclamation ceremony in Oxford. He called out, 'Who elected him?', which was eventually deemed a 'spontaneous indistinct heckle' and all charges were dropped.

Symon, who teaches history and works for the Peace Pledge Union, described the close links between the monarchy and the military. Both are considered non-political and therefore no balance is required in media reporting. They are tied up with notions of patriotism and Britishness, so dissent is not tolerated and criticism is met with abuse. Symon believes there is much to be proud of in British history, which should not be narrowed down to a list of Kings and Queens. We should not allow the establishment to define what 'British' is.

There are historical links which carry on to this day – a monarch cannot maintain a standing army without permission of parliament. An Act which into the 20th century had to be passed every year is still required every 5 years. The armed forces still swear allegiance to the King.

Symon objected to the power and influence of the royal family, which, although less than it was, is not always used to defend democracy. He suggested that both the monarchy and the military reinforce subservience, the class system and hierarchies based on inherited wealth and privilege. This sets the tone for a society which demands blind obedience to superiors, denying rights and respect for each other as equals.

While not everyone in the room agreed with Symon's views, it was interesting to hear his analysis and a lively discussion followed his talk

## **UKRAINE**

*from* **STOP THE WAR**

Ukraine's counter-offensive against Russia has begun. Thousands from both sides are expected to lose their lives as the fighting intensifies. The frontline is more than 1,000km (620 miles) long and the Ukrainian army, with its western weapons and tanks, is attempting to penetrate Russia's defensive positions fortified with anti-tank ditches, mazes of trenches, barricades of concrete and steel, and minefields. This phase in the war will be both dangerous and costly and is expected to last for months. The devastating and far reaching impact of the Ukraine war became apparent this week with the collapse of the Nova Kakhovka dam. As water contaminated with sewage, oil, chemicals and possibly anthrax flows into the Dnipro River valley and onto the Black Sea the extent of the environmental impact is only just beginning to be realised. Concerns have now been raised over the safety of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant. The need for peace talks has never been more urgent. Notably both sides in this conflict are blaming the other for the destruction of the dam.

As Chris Nineham says in [the first of his series on war propaganda](#) 'Western powers, the Ukrainian government and the Russian authorities are working flat out to maintain popular support for the deadliest military mobilisations in Europe since the Second World War.' With the fog of war comes censorship, any questioning of the official narrative is 'met with McCarthyist-style denunciation.' But we must not give up or give in. Instead we must make our calls for peace even louder.

Yet calls for peace and a negotiated settlement are treated with contempt. In Vienna this week a [global peace conference](#) was the victim of cancel culture as venues pulled out at the last minute at the behest of Austria's Ukrainian ambassador. In an attempt to smear those involved in the peace summit the ambassador accused the organisers of being fifth columnists and Russian stooges. In a war supposedly being fought for democracy censorship is rife.

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## From **GLOBAL JUSTICE NOW**

Last week, Shell's CEO announced a huge U-turn as he **dropped Shell's target to reduce oil production year on year until 2030.**

His excuse for this climate vandalism? He wants to "reward shareholders". That's right. The future of humanity risked once again to line the pockets of the wealthy. All whilst communities in the global south grapple with severe climate damage, and people across the UK worry about how to pay the bills.

We already knew that oil giants couldn't be trusted to turn climate disaster around, now it's clear they're not even bothered about pretending. That's why we need to demand that this government steps in and makes polluters like Shell pay for the damage they're doing to our planet.

**Billions of people in the global south are already facing climate chaos.** Mexico has been rocked by a 'killer' heatwave this week that has already claimed lives. And in East Africa, people are dying every 30 seconds due to extreme drought and famine that has been ripping through the region since 2020.

These are not random events. Recent research found that climate change has made droughts in the Horn of Africa 100 times more likely.

The science is clear. Fossil fuel giants' obsession with profit is causing this crisis. It's unbelievable that Shell bosses think they can shelve even their limited climate plans when their greed is already putting so many lives at risk.

**We know that rich countries in the global north are the most responsible for climate change.** The UK is no different, being home to huge corporate polluters like Shell and BP.

The UK's responsibility goes back a long way – the British empire used slavery and colonial violence to control the economies of many countries in the global south for decades. It's a major reason why they have less resources to mitigate the worst impacts of climate change today.

It doesn't have to be this way. Technology exists to allow us to end our dependence on oil and gas. Governments have the power to force big polluters to take decisive steps away from fossil fuels as rapidly as the science requires.

We have a strong united movement, ready to stand up and say no to corporate greed killing the planet and putting communities – particularly in the global south – at risk.

**Please go to the Global Justice Now website and sign the petition.**

I know you want to demand our government uses their power for good. That's why **we need to make sure as many people as possible add their voice.**

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### **CAMPAIGN AGAINST ARMS TRADE**

The value of Single Individual Export Licences (SIELs) issued in 2022 was more than double the 2021 level, at £8.5 billion.

Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United States were the biggest recipients, with 32%, 13.4%, and 10.1% of the value of SIELs respectively.

Licences to Saudi Arabia included £938 million worth of air-to-surface missiles, and components for bombs, such as have been regularly used in the bombing of Yemen.

Over half of the value of licences were issued for sales to countries rated "Not Free" in 2022 by Freedom House

The latest export licence figures for 2022 show that the UK arms industry is working overtime to arm some of the world's most authoritarian regimes, as well as countries engaged in armed conflict, with the UK government's full **approval. Despite its repeated claims to operate a "rigorous and robust" system of export controls, their record show a complete lack of concern for human rights or the harm caused by UK arms to civilians in conflict zones, with the interests of the arms industry almost always coming first.**

*Press Release May 2023*