

STOCKPORT PEACE FORUM REPORT: year ending 31st August 2007

For AGM at 7pm on Wednesday 26th September 2007

Stockport Peace Forum continues to organise monthly meeting on subjects broadly in line with our aim to *'increase understanding of the causes of conflict and tensions ... and to bring together people and groups from all back grounds ...'*. The committee meets every eight to ten weeks to arrange the meetings and other activities. The 21 'paid-up' members of SPF may attend the AGM, stand for the committee and vote, and they receive a financial report. This annual report of activities is circulated to all 150 supporters, either by post or email. Supporters are encouraged to become members by paying an annual £5 subscription.

Meetings:

28th September 2006: Jo Bird, from Jews for Justice, spoke about the current situation in Palestine, and an Israeli 'refusenik' described the difficulties he had encountered and the need for a democratic UN.

30th October 2006: Mr Khaliq spoke about his experiences in India during the late colonial period, independence, life as an immigrant in the 1960's and the role of Muslim Welfare Centre he helped set up in Edgeley. He also spoke of the recent devastating earthquake in Kashmir.

15th November 2006: Hilary Wainwright (editor of Red Pepper) discussed the role and influence of democratic grass-roots organisations in South America, especially in Brazil, which she's visited many times.

31st January 2007: in response to the Commission on Integration and Cohesion's request for the views of local organisations, we organised a participatory meeting and compiled a report of the views expressed. This was sent to the Commission, to Stockport Council's Policy Unit, and circulated to SPF supporters.

28th March 2007: Margaret Evans from Palestinian Solidarity, showed an Israeli-made film revealing the everyday systematic harassment of Palestinians at checkpoints.

12th April 2007: Saj Karim, northwest MEP, gave a very revealing talk on the European Union perspective on the Middle East, and responded openly to questions and discussion. A report of the meeting was circulated.

29th May Marjorie Hendley introduced a discussion on the UN and the role of the UNA.

28th June Neil Endicott spoke to us about oil and conflict, particularly how Nigeria's oil wealth led to under-development

Other activities and events:

SPF stalls:

- Peace stall in Stockport precinct with Marple CND continues most Saturdays (weather permitting)
- 18th September 2006: Stall at Stockport College as part of 'Community Groups' event
- 23rd June 2007: joint stall with CND and UNA at the One World Festival in New Mills
- Stalls in Marple and Stockport to remind people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki

Demonstrations:

- The SPF banner was on the 'No Trident – Bring Troops Home' London demo on 24th Feb 2007
- Also on the national demonstration in Manchester on 23rd September 2006 and 24th June 2007
- Group members have also been to Faslane to protest against Trident

Supported organisations:

- Mayors for Peace: letter written to new Mayor of Stockport requesting she write to the Mayor of Hiroshima and Nagasaki for 6th and 8th August (which she did!)
- Affiliated to Greater Manchester Against War steering committee which meets every two months as a link organisation for community groups and organisations promoting peace in this area.
- Supported the Trades Council organised campaign against the BNP, which stood five candidates in May local elections, and aims to stand in all Stockport wards in 2008.

Letters:

- To local MPs requesting that they vote against Trident renewal.

Web-site: We now have a web-site on which this report will be available, as will information about forthcoming meetings and events: www.stockportpeaceforum.org.uk