

Action

December 2014



THE BRIGHTON AND HOVE AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL GROUP NEWSLETTER

Forthcoming Brighton & Hove Amnesty Group Meetings/Events

Group meetings take place on the first Thursday of each month from 8-10pm at Community Base, Queens Road, Brighton

4th December

Group meeting
And seasonal social
Please bring drinks and nibbles to share

8th January

(please note this is the 2nd Thursday of the month)
Film showing to be confirmed

5th February

Speaker from the Kurdish Community
Dr Salima Tasdemir

Letter Writing Evenings

An evening once a month to sit and write letters with fellow Amnesty members. These evenings are hosted at member's houses. All welcome, simply contact the host/hostess for details:
To resume in 2015

Monthly Collection

20th December
Contact Julian
julianwatmore@gmail.com
07583334740

Monthly Stall's

Sydney Street
Contact Jill 01273 621697

Write for Rights 2014

6th December
Friends Meeting House
Ship Street

Live reading of Even if we lose our lives

7th March 2015
New Venture Theatre



WRITE FOR RIGHTS
Send a message of hope



Saturday 6th December 2014

10–4pm

Friends Meeting House, Ship St, Brighton

Join us to write a message of hope to human rights victims worldwide

"When I feel I am left with no hope, I'll get a letter out and it will inspire me. The light of hope appears again, and confidence in myself and my ability to change things returns."

Ihar Tsikhanyuk on letters he received through Write for Rights last year

The simple act of writing a letter can make a huge difference. Whether you're contacting the authorities to pressure them to address an injustice, or writing to individuals like Ihar who have suffered human rights abuses, letting them know they are not alone in their search for justice – your messages together have the power to change lives.

Messages from people like you bring hope and comfort even in the face of the worst abuses. They can also help keep individuals safe, as sack-loads of cards are a sign to prison guards and governments that the world is watching

That's Not the Way We Do Things Here

Canon James Rosenthal, dressed as Santa Claus, arrived at Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre to distribute gifts to the children on a pre-arranged visit. Nonetheless he was turned away by the Serco security guards, under the authority of the Home Office. They also prevented him from visiting two refugee families incarcerated there (an item in the Observer 13th December 2009).

They couldn't stop the reindeer
They couldn't stop the sled
But Santa Claus they did stop
And here is what they said:

"We are the guardian angels
Of England's pleasant land
And if you dare to flout us
You have to understand
We're here to do our duty
And keep this place secure
The families inside Yarl's Wood
Should not be living here.
Your presents to the children
Could well be thought to mean
That they are welcome (which they're not)
And so: God Save the Queen!"

"Oh dear," said Santa sadly,
"I didn't understand.
I thought that children everywhere
Could have some presents, and
If this is not permitted
As I have just been told
I'd better get another job
Because I'm getting old.

I always thought that Joseph
and Mary, on that day,
Though refugees undoubtedly,
Were both allowed to stay.
And also that the presents,
Gold, frankincense and myrrh
Were given to the Son of God
In fact I'm sure they were."
The guards said: "That was Palestine,
And it was long ago,
That's not the way we do things now,
Oh look, here comes the snow!
The children of the refugees
Will get no toys today."

And Santa turned his sled around
And slowly trudged away.

David Benedictus
Christmas 2009

A few photos from our 50th anniversary stall at Brighton Station. To see all our photos take a look at <https://www.flickr.com/groups/amnestybrighton/pool>



Amnesty Brighton and Hove 50th Anniversary

Director of Amnesty and Local MP join our 50th Year Celebrations



Kate Allen (Director of Amnesty UK) and Caroline Lucas (our local MP) joined us at Brighton Train Station for our 50th Year Celebrations on Sunday 16th November. Brighton and Hove Group Chair Emma Parker says 'It was a fun event where we celebrated the hard work and commitment of our volunteers over the years. It is a great achievement to keep the group going for 50 years. Brighton and Hove is among one of the first Amnesty groups to be formed only three years after the founding of Amnesty International.'

Peter Berenson started Amnesty in 1961. The first international meeting established 'a permanent international movement in defence of freedom of opinion and religion.' Brighton and Hove were in the forefront of this new movement. Unfortunately we are not in touch with any members who were around at that time. However Emma made a splendid display of our more recent actions on a board framing our stall. For example there was the infamous pink tank which took part in the 'Pride' procession several years ago and a group of us meeting Caroline Lucas at her office with plaques about the plight of Afghani women. Some other photos were displayed on a digital notebook.

On the stall we had joining literature, the latest newsletter and Amnesty Human Rights passports (small fluorescent pink booklets with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and an introduction from Kate Allen.) There were eye - catching yellow, green and pink balloons on sticks with the Amnesty symbol of the candle wrapped in barbed wire.

Our volunteers distributed themselves around the

station with clipboards to obtain signatures for our Prisoners of Conscience. They are Menatalla Moustafa, Yusra Elkhateeb and Abrar Al - Awary, three Egyptian women from Mansoura University who have been imprisoned for peacefully protesting against the Egyptian authorities. They have 2 and 6 year sentences for this. We are sending letters and a petition to President Abdel Fattah al - Sisi of Egypt asking for immediate and unconditional release of the three women. We collected 140 signatures for the petition and 40 letters, which isn't bad considering people at the station were concentrating on their tickets and train times rather than us. In addition we talked to people about the work of Amnesty and gave out information about joining the group.

At 5pm we packed up the useful (if tatty) deck-chairs and the rest of the paraphernalia and made our way to Emma's for a brief cup of tea. Then we departed for 'Eastern Eye', a Southern Indian restaurant in London Road. We ended the day tired but replete with a delicious meal of Dhosas (huge rice pancakes filled with curry). On reflection we thought we would not be here for the next 50 year celebration but perhaps Bea and Tilly (Emma and Dan's girls) would still be working for freedom in the World in whatever way that may be.

Many thanks to all those who took part and Caroline who transported the stall items to and from the station.

Jill

Local Events Noticeboard

**Palestine Today:
Resistance through Existence**

Hamed Qawasmeh

**Friday 5th December 7.30 pm
Brighthelm Centre (Hanover Room) North Rd, Brighton**

Hamed Qawasmeh is a Palestinian activist and UN worker from Hebron where adults and children are under brutal occupation and attack by the Israeli army and settlers, as elsewhere in Palestine.

Come & hear what this brutal history and daily existence means for Palestinian resistance to the whole Israeli apartheid regime today.

BRIGHTON & HOVE AMNESTY GROUP CONTACTS

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Campaign Co-ordinators:

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Prisoner of Conscience – The Mansoura women (Egypt) Celia Stubbs—01273 593833

Security and Human Rights—Michael—michaelowenfisher@hotmail.com

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Stop Torture—Michael Fisher - michaelowenfisher@hotmail.com

My Body My Rights—Catherine 07759 271399

Tactical Campaigns—Luke lukebeale@hotmail.com

Amnesty Websites: international - www.amnesty.org AI UK -

www.amnesty.org.uk local group - www.amnesty.org.uk/brighton

Follow us on twitter @AmnestyBrighton

See our photos on Flickr—

<http://www.flickr.com/groups/amnestybrighton/pool>

Amnesty UK Human Rights Centre - Tel: 0207 0331500

