



MANCHESTER AMNESTY GROUP NEWSLETTER

July 2014

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Campaigning

Stop Torture

26th June marked the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. AIUK held demos outside Embassies in London demanding justice for torture victims. See <http://www.amnesty.org.uk/stop-torture-day-action>.



The Manchester Group held a letter writing session in Kro Piccadilly, 16 letters were written and 52 cards signed (many at Acoustic Amnesty) on behalf of the 5 cases currently being featured as part of the campaign.



Anne attended a 'training for trainers' session at the Human rights Action Centre in London last month and will be delivering a workshop on the Stop Torture campaign at the July meeting. We also have speakers from Freedom from Torture at our August meeting.

Women's Rights - Women in Afghanistan

!WARNING!

you will face severe consequences for your work

Did you know that in Afghanistan many jobs can be dangerous for women? Being a teacher, MP, doctor, or policewoman could put you and your family at risk.

"Occupational Hazards" is a campaign focusing on the threats that many Afghan women face just for doing their jobs. Designed to get the message out at festivals, the branding is warning triangles and danger signs – offering a chance to talk to new people about the dangers of doing certain jobs in Afghanistan. There is a photo action where people are photographed with "Hazard ware" – this could be one of our campaign warning triangles, hard hat, high vis jackets – anything that illustrates hazards. For more info on this campaign, visit: <http://www.amnesty.org.uk/Afghanistan>

Ideas for how we could take part in this campaign to Marie-Louise (mlohanrahan@outlook.com).

Burma - Dr. Tun Aung.

Excellent news from the Burma country coordinator, Tony Fairman: Dr. Tun Aung 's sentence has been reduced by several years, so that he has less than one year to fulfil and he is now receiving medication and his health has improved. AI want to step up action to bring forward his release date and we will get more info to guide us in the near future. Tony also said that action by AI groups had been instrumental in achieving this.



Aung San Suu Kyi said: "If Burma is truly to be on the road to democracy we have to amend this constitution" during her recent visit to Australia. Burma's Constitution was drafted by the military junta. The referendum to approve the Constitution took place just days after Cyclone Nargis which killed 140,000 people in 2008.

There is a Change.org petition calling on Australia to ask the Burmese government to implement changes. See: http://www.change.org/en-AU/petitions/government-of-australia-support-the-constitutional-amendments-in-burma?tk=Z0W2V3tPic-tmzZdOmVQkQulnx_JMVBF4pnUKPprrnA&utm_source=petition_update&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=petition_update_email

Zimbabwe

Maggie Towse, The AIUK Zimbabwe country coordinator has sent us the report attached with this newsletter on the current situation in Zimbabwe. It is good to see that WOZA has been successful in a recent court case to improve the conditions for prisoners at Harare police station.

We will be sending a message of support to WOZA from our July meeting.

Brazil

We are in the middle of the World Cup and all eyes are on Brazil. However, police brutality has been increasing, and a new law could make peaceful protests a crime. Mass protests have led to ill-equipped police using unnecessary force on civilians. At our June meeting we took part in a photo petition under the strap line One Goal - No Violence and sent a letter asking Brazil not to turn the beautiful game ugly, and to respect human rights for all.

Group news

Acoustic Amnesty

A fine array of talent gathered at Sacred Trinity Church on the Salford/Manchester border to mark Refugee week, with the proceeds being shared by Amnesty International and Musicians without Borders. Pretty much a full house (98 tickets were sold - we had to get extra chairs out!) watched Chris Flynn, a local singer song writer open the evening, followed by Salford performance Poet Kieran King, Cavan Moran, Corwyn Ellis from Colorama, Michele Stodart from the Magic Numbers and last, but certainly not least, the evening ended with a rousing set from the Lonesome and Penniless Cowboys with many of the other performers joining in the final number.

We are very grateful to all the acts who performed free of charge, the church for letting us use their facilities and for providing a bar, all the helpers on the night (including the sound man Dave) and most of all our marvellous group member Steve Lindsay for pulling it all together using his many contacts amongst the local music scene.



Write for Rights

Don't forget the informal letter writing session this month – just turn up and put pen to paper.

Letter Writing

Sat 19th July
The Eighth Day Café, Oxford Road
2-4pm
Pens, paper and case sheets provided!

Thanks for all your donations!

Annual donations from members are vital to keep the Group going - the suggested sum is £20 if you have a wage, £3 otherwise, or whatever you can afford to give.

If you haven't yet made a contribution, contact Treasurer Sean Dunne (Sean.a.dunne@btinternet.com) and he will tell you how to get the money to him.

Pride Parade

We have taken part in the Manchester Pride Parade for quite a few years. It is a really fun event and means that we get seen by thousands of Mancunians. This year the parade is on Saturday 23rd August (August bank holiday weekend) with the theme Love is love, no matter who you love! This ties in with a lot of material that we already have (e.g. Love is a Human Right placards) and AIUK are also promising more help this year.

Laura and Simona have volunteered to get the props together but we need volunteers to walk in the parade – if you are free that day and want a really fun exhilarating experience please let Laura (barsbylaura@gmail.com) know asap.

Please consider volunteering to be in the Pride Parade

Monthly Group Meetings

Held 2nd Wednesday each month - Cross Street Chapel
7.30pm

9th July

Stop Torture Campaign Workshop – come and find out about the new campaign and explore what people think about torture.

13th August

Speakers from Freedom from Torture, including a clinician. They will be speaking on the work that FFT do and providing some information on the international picture (countries where torture is routinely used etc).

10th September

Kate Allen, AIUK Director will be coming up to meet our group.

Why not join a few of us for a pre-meeting meal just after 6. This month we will be in the bar at The Grinch on Chapel Walk. It would be good to see you there.

Other News

North West conference

The excellent one day NW AI conference will be held in Chester this year on 8th November. Get the date in your diary!

Exhibition – Central Library

The exhibition of Antonio Guerrero's paintings - I will die as I've lived (Yo me muero como vivi), will be at the Central Library from 26th June to 19th July. Antonio Guerrero is one of the 'Cuban 5' imprisoned in the USA after a trial which Amnesty did not regard as totally fair.

The 15 images form a single body of work giving glimpses of their unjust and cruel treatment during the first 17 months in the punishment block of the Miami Detention Centre known as 'the hole'. From the orange boilersuits to the iron shackles, from the single hour a day in the 'rec', to the night surveillance and the 'shakedowns', from the ingenuity in making games from bread and toothpaste to the strength of solidarity between the Five, the images are powerful. They were made by Antonio to mark their 15th anniversary in prison in September 2013, one for every year.

No Glory in War: Noble Cause or Capitalist Adventure?

The **2014 Peace History Lecture** will be given by Dr John Westmoreland, Head of History at York College and a Leading Member of the 'No Glory in War' group. It will take place in the Friends' Meeting House, Mount Street, Manchester, M2 5NS on Saturday 20th September at 2.00 to coincide with the UN's International Day of Peace.

Previous conferences and other activities can be followed on the Peace History Conference Online Hub at www.peacehistoryhub.org

Prior to the Lecture, there will also be a walk of the updated **Manchester City Centre Peace and Social Justice Trail**, which is now part of a European project including 6 other cities - Vienna, Berlin, Paris, Budapest, Turin and The Hague – www.discoverpeace.eu