

Natalie Bennett Meeting

This was the third public meeting in the series of Rethinking Security events that followed the initial discussion evenings in Bath. As before, it was organised by Bath Stop War but this time with the local Green Party as cosponsors.

Advance press publicity was, as usual, nil, despite our press release and letter to the local paper. Yet come the night we had an audience of over 100, with some people having to stand or sit on the floor. The size of the audience was gratifying thanks, no doubt, to good fliers and the fact that we had between us two large mailing lists and networks rather than one. We think that the presence of a good number of young people in the audience resulted from our growing use of social media.

As we were planning publicity we had been tipped off about the fact of the tribal antagonisms between political parties in Bath, so we were clear in our text that NB would be speaking not as representing the Green Party but as a person engaged in serious thinking on the topic and that the meeting was for people of all parties and none. That seemed to have worked. The range in the audience was pretty wide, including the full range of centre/left groups and individuals, with a good variety of ages including plenty of young people. (The young Green PPC for this constituency was Green Party co-chair for the meeting.)

Entitled 'In the age of Trump, how can the UK work for a safer world?', Natalie's talk was excellent. 'Inspiring' was a word used by several people afterwards. She not only had a broad vision of what makes people feel and be safe, connecting up a wide range of aspects of security, but she also gave a wealth of practical and significant examples of the constructive approach she was talking about. The questions were still coming thick and fast an hour after they started. They were wide-ranging and all more or less to the point. Her responses were full and interesting. We finished when we did only because we had already overrun our time.

The post-meeting buzz was extremely positive – excited even – and several people said afterwards that this coming together of two local organisations, to put on a meeting of interest to both, was a great idea. It opened up lots of possibilities for making the connections between different groups of people and, pooling ideas and perspectives, building common agendas and encouraging each other. It gives substance to the idea of progressive alliances and a movement of movements.

Bath Stop War plans to talk with Bath Welcomes Refugees to put on the Journeymen Theatre's powerfully moving production about a refugee family called The Bundle http://www.journeymentheatre.com/?page_id=19 (we hope early in July) as another joint event in the Rethinking Security process. Other suggestions are welcome.