Yorkshire CND
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Action for Peace

The Yorkshire CND Newsletter

Trident Missile Crisis

In the last four years the UK has carried out a single test of a Trident Missile. This took place on 20th June last year, and was aimed at Africa but seems to have headed for the USA. All our 'nuclear opponents' knew of the failure (they are alerted to test launches for obvious reasons) and monitored the results. People not made aware were the MPs who were to vote (a few weeks later), whether or not to devote a third of Britain's military procurement budget to developing this new system.

What should alarm us is not the targeting failure - there can be no valid target for such a weapon of mass destruction under international law - rather it is the constant disproving of the supposed 'technical infallibility' of the Trident system and total lack of transparency and parliamentary oversight of this monstrous system. This is merely the most recent of a catalogue of technical and security failings which demonstrate that rather than being the 'ultimate insurance policy' the Trident system is the greatest threat to our collective security and well-being.

A report in Private Eye gives more detail, and underlines the questionable nature of our so-called 'independent' nuclear deterrent:

'The errant missile was test-fired from HMS Vengeance as part of a US exercise off Cape Canaveral. Crucial to the exercise was the opening four days earlier of the US Strategic Weapons Systems Ashore facility at Canaveral, designed to test the new fire, launch, control and guidance systems fitted to both the UK and US Trident D5 missiles.

The fact that both HMS Vengeance and the new SWSA were under test conditions explains why the UK government's view of the test as a success, differs from the US view that it was not.

As Defence Secretary Michael Fallon told MPs,

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Rain or Shine - at Menwith Hill

This Valentine's Day, members of Yorkshire CND joined the Campaign for the Accountability of American Bases at their weekly vigil outside Menwith Hill, presenting them with a card to say that we love the work they do. Their picket has happened every Tuesday (6-7.30pm) for many years, whatever the weather. Do think about joining them, even just once - they really appreciate solidarity visits.

Yorkshire CND' giving a Valentine Card to CAAB

New CND Report

CND's report titled 'Security not Trident' examines the real security threats today and how best to deal with these complex issues. It argues that Trident could be rendered obsolete by the threat of cyber-attack or the development of underwater drones. It concludes that disarming could not only provide political leadership to the rest of the nuclear-armed states, but would be a blueprint for the rest of the world drafted by our experts and politicians. Britain disarming could even provide impetus to the UN plans for a nuclear weapons-free world. This would be the first step in Britain rethinking its approach to security with discussions on our membership of NATO and an end to our involvement in foreign wars to follow.

Inside

Report from YCND Strategy Day, upcoming Peace Camps, action at the start of the talks on a Global Ban on Nuclear Weapons, We Are Many film showing, Another Hammer Blow and more.....

Yorkshire CND AGM and Strategy Day

We held our annual general meeting in January, followed by a Strategy Session. Dave Webb was re-elected as Chair, with Christopher Butler (Shipley) as Vice-Chair, and Hugh Hubbard (Leeds) as Treasurer. Members of the Coordinating Committee for this year will be Olivia Agate (Skipton), Alasdair Beal (Leeds) Sylvia Boyes (Keighley) Charlie Fairbanks (Huddersfield) Josh Foskett (York University), Jimmy McLeod (Huddersfield) and Jonathan Wallis (Sheffield).

In view of the changing political context over the last 12 months, we felt it was essential to discuss our strategy and what our priorities ought to be as a regional office. In the past few years we have focused almost exclusively on Trident, but the disappointing result of the vote has had a much greater impact on activity among our local groups than we had anticipated. We discussed this and much more at the AGM, facilitated by Turning the Tide. We were pleased to have representatives present from across the region from South Yorkshire, East and West Yorkshire and the Dales. It was interesting to see that while people still felt strategically Trident should be a main priority, there was a degree less passion for campaigning around it than previously. Missile Defence was the second priority issue, although again, less enthusiasm for people being involved in what is often a dry issue. There was a great degree of passion and enthusiasm for an anti-nuclear day at DSEi arms fair, which was seen as combining our priorities as CND, with the passion of our grassroots activists. The day was also useful as members made clear that there were also issues that they felt we ought not to put too much time into including nuclear power (not a regional issue) and palestine solidarity (other groups should take the lead). Now the task is to build from what we learned at the Strategy Day, and try and keep the momentum we built over the last few years.

Pop-up Peace Camp

Plans are afoot to organise a temporary peace camp at Menwith Hill 28-30th April. Last year we took a minibus of students to visit Faslane Peace Camp (pictured). This year, we thought that as we have two extremely important US bases in our region, we would highlight their role while simultaneously offering people the opportunity to experience a peace camp. We will be offering workshops about Menwith Hill and wider peace issues, doing a base walk, cooking together, all while being a very visible opposition to the US Spy Base.

If you are interested in being involved, can offer lifts, tents (as many international students don't own them) food etc, get in touch. And the camp itself is open to all, from the most experienced peace activists/campers, to first-timers.

Coulport Disarmament Camp 2017

Scotland July 8th - 16th - Save the date!

As the Nuclear Ban Treaty Conference ends in New York Trident Ploughshares will be at the bases of Coulport and Faslane to continue our peaceful disruption of the UKs nuclear weapons system. YCND will certainly be taking some transport up there for part of the week. Put this in your diary now, and get in touch if you are interested. More info in the next issue of Action for Peace

More information

http://tridentploughshares.org/coulport-disarmament-camp-july-2017/

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'HMS Vengeance and her crew successfully tested'. Quite so. It was only after the the US-built D5 missile left its US-built missile tube, engaged its US-manufactured guidance systems and enabled its US-designed software, that its fundamental weeknesses were exposecd. The missile was in a test configuration, carrying range-safety devices, tracking systems and flight telemetry instruments provided by its manufacturer, Lockheed Martin. It was this kit that went wrong. The missile's on-board software detected a problem with telemetric directional data revealed an unnamed US source, ''the missile was diverted into the ocean to self-destruct - an automatic procedure when missile electronics detect an anomaly''.

The phrase ''automatic procedure'' is key. Other earlier ''unsuccessful'' test of the D5 missile had been terminated ''by command destruct'', or in one case ''destroyed by range-safety officers'', according to US Congressional Research Service documents. The Vengeance test was ended automatically by Lockheed Martin's software in the new, US-made Mk 6 Mod 1 missile guidance system, produced by the US Charles Stark Draper Laboratory. The lab was paid $46 million as a contractor to the strategic Systems Program based in Washington DC and $8 million by the UK for its work and its part in the test.

Clearly, once a missile leaves a submarine it is no longer under any kind of UK control, but entirely in the hands not just of the US government, but US defence companies. During a recent PR exercise on another Trident submarine, HMS Vigilant, the weapons engineer with his hand on the missile trigger admitted to hacks that: ''Once the missile has left the sumbarine there is no self-destruct button. Once it has gone from here, it is fire and forget'' - leaving the rest up to America and to fate.'

Private Eye No 1437

Prisoners for Peace Action

In December last year, we joined worldwide protests in solidarity with imprisoned Israeli conscientious objectors on International Prisoners for Peace Day. Tamar Ze'evi and Tamar Alon, aged 19, served a second term in military prison, for refusing conscription to the Israeli military due to their unwillingness to serve in an occupying army that oppresses the Palestinian people.

In solidarity with the two women we held a demonstration at Teledyne Defence in Shipley. Teledyne produce aircraft, drone and microwave weaponry components and have been given licenses to sell to Israel since at least 2010. They also sell to Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

Peace activists travelled from across Yorkshire to take part, including the Sheffield Creative Action for Peace group, who brought their beautiful quilt in memory of those killed by drones in Gaza (pictured). Others attending included Quaker groups, local activists from Shipley and the new West Yorkshire Campaign Against Arms Trade group.

Doomsday Clock

Last month as Trump took office, the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists moved the Doomsday Clock 30 seconds closer to midnight. Humanity now is only 2½ minutes from total annihilation. It is the closest the Doomsday Clock has been to the moment of ultimate catastrophe since 1953.
The Doomsday Clock was created by scientists in 1947, after World War II, to warn the world of the nuclear dangers that lay before us.

27th March - action to mark historic date

2017 is set to be an historic year as negotiations begin at the United Nations on an international treaty to ban nuclear weapons, starting on 27th March.

However, despite the treaty negotiations receiving the backing of 120 countries, the UK voted against and has not indicated whether it will attend the talks beginning in March in New York. Other countries opposed included the USA, France, Israel and Russia. North Korea voted in favour of the ban conference. The other nuclear states (India, Pakistan and China) abstained.

CND is calling on the UK government to play a constructive role in the negotiations and has called a lobby of MPs (1st March, as Action for Peace went to press).

Very little has appeared in the media about these historic talks, and so YCND wants to shout about it with an event/stall in Bradford on the day. Contact us for more information about how to join in - all welcome.

Militarisation of Scandinavia and the Baltic Region, *by Dave Webb*

I have recently been on a speaking tour in Scandinavia after attending a conference on "Making the North a Zone of Peace", organised by the Swedish Peace Council and the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space. The idea behind the conference was to highlight the growing militarism of the Scandinavian states.

Although we often think of these countries as supporters of peace initiatives with progressive leaders, actually the governments are being persuaded to join in US/NATO military exercises and become more and more integrated into NATO military systems. These military exercises are undoubtedly designed to show Russia what the West is prepared to do to ensure access to new sea routes and new resources that become available as the Arctic ice recedes.

Last July the Swedish government signed an agreement allowing NATO to operate more easily on Swedish territory. In September, Sweden announced that it was remilitarising the Island of Gotland in the Baltic Sea between Sweden and Latvia. There are also calls for NATO to militarise the Finish Åland Islands – which have been demilitarized since the end of the Crimean War. An unofficial agreement between Denmark and the Soviet Union that Bornholm Island would not be used by NATO is also under threat.

Satellite stations in Sweden and Norway are being used for military purposes and listening posts and intelligence sharing adds to the general militarisation of the area. For example, a large percentage of Russian communications travel through Sweden and surveillance data has been shared with the NSA since 2011, including a "unique collection on high-priority Russian targets such as leadership, internal politics, and energy." In 2014, Latvia, Estonia, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, and the UK signed a memorandum to establish a StratCom Centre of Excellence in Riga, Latvia – which Sweden joined in 2015. A number of these US/NATO StratComs exist around Europe and Scandinavia and another Centre of Excellence for "Cold Weather Operations" operates in the north of Norway, near Fauske. The western governments and media continue to claim that the increase in US and NATO military activities and the establishment of bases along eastern European and Scandinavian borders is "in response to Russia's actions in Ukraine and Kaliningrad". However, Russia sees NATO and the US pushing military bases and escalating aggressive military exercises ever closer to its borders – despite past promises that it would not go there.

The twin challenges of war and climate change threaten our very existence – to ensure our survival we must adopt ways of working globally through mutual trust and cooperation. The current rapidly changing security context requires a significant international dialogue which looks increasingly unlikely at this time. The current dependence on military aggression and intervention to address international problems must be abandoned and all foreign military bases closed. There is a growing awareness of the dangers of global militarisation and a growing resistance but it will require significant international co-operation between opposition groups and some courageous and inspirational world leaders to ensure that we survive the next 50 years or so.

A longer version available at www.yorkshirecnd.org.uk

Another Hammer Blow!

Daniel Woodhouse, a Methodist minister from Leeds, and Quaker activist Sam Walton have been released on bail pending charges after breaking into BAE's Warton site in Lancashire. The pair were arrested on 29 January after entering the site in order to disarm warplanes bound for Saudi Arabia.

The aircraft are part of a multi-billion pound deal between BAE Systems and the Saudi regime, and were due to be shipped to Saudi Arabia within weeks. Their action came as a panel of UN experts warned that the devastating Saudi-led airstrikes in Yemen, which have caused a humanitarian catastrophe, may be part of "a broader policy of attrition against civilian infrastructure" which may "amount to war crimes."

On their release, the Reverend Daniel Woodhouse and Sam Walton said:

"BAE security found us just metres from war planes bound for Saudi Arabia. We're gutted that we couldn't disarm a plane and stop it being used to carry out airstrikes in Yemen. We could have saved lives by preventing Saudi war crimes in Yemen.

The UK government has blood on its hands and we need to do everything we can to stop the transfer of weapons and show these sales are illegitimate. By providing weapons and support Britain is deeply complicit in Saudi war-crimes, and it's vital that we bring an end to this immoral, abhorrent trade."

The date of their disarmament action was exacty twenty-one years after four women were arrested on the same spot for damaging a Hawk jet bound for Indonesia where it was to be used to commit genocide on East Timor.

Fundraiser's Column

The Peace & Crafts Fair is always a great opportunity to buy those really special Christmas gifts, and the last event was no exception. The Peace & Crafts Fair in November was a great success with a huge variety of unique crafts and very busy footfall throughout the day. We received excellent feedback from stallholders and visitors alike, and were very pleased to hear that people come to our event specifically for the high quality and variety of crafts on sale. The beautiful venue of Victoria Hall in Saltaire really compliments the event. Bookings will be opening for stallholders to apply for the 2017 Peace & Crafts Fair in July. Please email Sarah at sarah@yorkshirecnd.org.uk to be added to the mailing list.

The next Peace & Crafts Fair will take place on Saturday 25th November 2017.

All planning is underway for the next Day of Dance, which will take place on Saturday 13th May, at Victoria Hall, Saltaire. We have a fantastic range of dance, movement, vocal and rhythm workshops, and are pleased to welcome some new tutors this year. All booking information is on the Yorkshire CND website, at www.yorkshirecnd.org.uk so have a look and get your tickets booked!

Our fundraising events are crucial to generating the income to support our fundraising work and as always, we are very grateful to everyone who supports our events through promoting, volunteering and participating.

Sarah Cartin, fundraiser

NVDA Training for DSEi

The film showing (see next column) was partly a fundraiser for taking action against the world's largest arms fair DSEi which will once again be held in London in September. YCND is involved in organising an anti-nuclear day at the event on the Wednesday (6th September), as many of the companies involved in nuclear weapons production will be exhibiting.

On 8th April, there'll be a NonViolent Direct Action training in Bradford, facilitated by Turning the Tide. It will be at 2 Ashgrove from 11-3pm, open to everyone and free. Contact the office to book a place. We're planning further trainings in Sheffield and Leeds, see our website for more details.

We are Many

It was a full house at the Karmand Centre in Bradford for an inspiring showing of the film 'We Are Many' about the protests against the Iraq War in 2003. The event was organised by Yorkshire CND in conjunction with Momentum Bradford, Bradford Stop the War, Stand up to Racism, Just Yorkshire and MEND, and was supported by Live Cinema. Director Amir Amirani in a Q & A session after the film, said how disappointed he was that neither the BBC or Channel 4 would show the film. He hoped to get the film shown in schools as it was an important historic lesson in people power. The other speaker at the event, Salma Yaqoob, told the audience that in view of the rise of Trump and the racist right, it feels like now is the time that we must once again come together to take action as we did against the war. And if we need to take civil disobedience actions, then we shouldn't shy away from that. We agree!

Laughter Against Trident!

We're super excited that political comedian Rob Newman has agreed to perform his latest thought-provoking show as a benefit for Yorkshire CND. We need to fill the Bradford Playhouse again to raise as much money as we can, so please bring all your friends and family, put the leaflet enclosed in your window or pass it on to someone else. Everyone had a great night out last time he played for us three years ago, so buy your tickets now!

Diary

1st March - Lobby of MPs to demand that the UK government play a constructive role in the negotiations against nuclear weapons at the UN

3rd March - The Future for Peace & Disarmament - Public Meeting with Fabian Hamilton MP, Shadow Minister for Peace & Disarmament. 7pm, Leeds Town Hall (Sullivan Room)

4th March - Join the NHS not Trident block on the National March to save the NHS. Assemble 12 noon Tavistock Square, London. Coaches from:

York - www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/north-yorks-coaches-to-our-nhs-march-tickets-31756716193

Calderdale - For bookings contact Jane on janerendle@yahoo.co.uk or 0795531339.

Doncaster - www.facebook.com/events/368522813509531/

Huddersfield - Coach leaves St George's Square at 06:30. handsoffhrifinance@gmail.com

Sheffield - sheffieldpeoplesassembly@gmail.com Matthew:07941 332993

11th March - Yorkshire CND's mock Trident missile comes to York city centre - contact joshfoskett@gmail.com for details

27th March - First day of UN talks for global disarmament - event in Bradford 11am (contact office for details)

5th April - showing of Shadow World, Andrew Feinstein's film on the arms trade (TBC - contact https://www.facebook.com/WestYorkshireCAAT)

8th April - NonViolent Direct Action Training Day, to prepare for taking action at DSEi and other protests. 11am-3pm, 2 Ashgrove, Bradford BD7 1BN. Contact the office to book and for more details.

28-30th April - Pop up Peace Camp near Menwith Hill, see inside for more details.

12th May - Rob Newman benefit gig at Bradford Playhouse, see enclosed leaflet and inside for details

13th May - Day of Dance Yorkshire CND fundraiser - www.dayofdance.co.uk

8-16th July - Trident Ploughshares Disarmament Camp at Coulport (see inside)

4-12th September - actions to disrupt the set up of the largest arms fair in the world, including an anti-nuclear day of action. Contact the office for more details and watch this space.

Volunteer for Yorkshire CND at Glastonbury Festival

If you can handle possible swamp-like conditions, some hard work, lots of noise, music, fun and creativity, and above all, want to raise money for CND, why not volunteer for us at Glastonbury festival this year. We run one of the property lock-ups, and also hope to have volunteers working with Workers Beer Company. Tickets sold out in 15 mintues, and we know that working with us will be popular, so we are prioritising people who have been involved with our campaign over the last year or so. Get in touch with Cath at the office asap if you are interested.

Local CND & Peace Groups/

York University CND group - contact joshfoskett@gmail.com

Rotherham CND - jon_smith@blueyonder.co.uk or phone 07952 044824

Shipley CND - Chris Butler christopherbutler1@mac.com or 07913 636036

Calder Valley - contact kathypitt725@hotmail.com or 07980 291478

Huddersfield Peace Group c/o Charlie Fairbank, fairbankcharles@gmail.com, Tel: 01484-846183

Leeds CND - contact Anna on 07503 749944 facebook.com/LeedsCND or leedscnd@gmail.com

Middlesbrough / Teesside CND - hussainsam03@gmail.com

Hull CND - Angela Needham, 07737 249461, angela_needham@homeopathy-soh.org

Keighley Peace Justice & Environment Network - contact Sylvia on 01535 596808 robinandsylvia@aol.com

Grassington & District Peace Group - Richard Hargreaves, strand@hawkswick.net

Sheffield CND - jonathanpaul.wallis@virginmedia.com http://www.sheffieldcnd.org.uk

Sheffield Creative Action for Peace (SCRAP) - Hilary 07818040982 - scraptridentnow@gmail.com

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