Yorkshire CND
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Action for Peace

The Yorkshire CND Newsletter

Historic UN Vote to Ban Nuclear Weapons

It was relatively easy to miss in the UK press, the exciting news that on 27 October, the UN General Assembly's Disarmament and Security Committee voted for negotiations in 2017 on a treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons. This clearly has momentous consequences for Trident renewal, and offers the best hope for disarmament campaigners for many years.

123 UN Member states (a huge majority) voted to convene a multilateral UN conference in 2017 "to negotiate a legally binding treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination".

The main body of opposition to the proposal came from Russia, NATO states, and those heavily influenced by NATO states. While India and Pakistan abstained, North Korea voted for the ban treaty negotiations, highlighting very clearly, the countries that pose the greatest nuclear threat to the world!

The following analysis from an article by Rebecca Johnson of ICANuk underlines the importance of this vote.

'Building on the 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the new multilateral treaty will for the first time provide a comprehensive approach to prohibiting activities such as the use, deployment, production, transporting, stockpiling and financing of nuclear weapons. It will also extend the NPT's nuclear disarmament obligation by creating a clear, unequivocal legal obligation to eliminate existing arsenals that will apply to non-NPT as well as all NPT states.

If the UN First Committee vote is confirmed by the UN General Assembly in December, as is likely, the negotiations will go ahead, with sessions timetabled for March, June and July 2017 in New York. The resolution for

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Yorkshire CND AGM & Strategy Day

Saturday 21st January
11am-3pm
Swarthmore Centre,
2-7 Woodhouse Sq, Leeds LS3 1AD

All welcome - cafe on site for lunch

Our Annual General Meeting will be followed by a session looking at our campaigning strategy, facilitated by Turning the Tide.
The political context has changed dramatically during 2016, and this is an opportunity to discuss these changes and how they affect our campaigning activities. We will explore tactics and ways of moving forwards in our struggle against Trident, US Missile Defence and other areas of interest.
Deadline for nominations for Officer positions, Coordinating Committee members and resolutions: Friday 6th January. Final agenda will be published on our website Monday 9th January.

Inside

Report from Keep Space for Peace Week, visit of Hibakusha to Bradford, news on the Global Ban on Nuclear Weapons and more.....

Keep Space for Peace Week

The weather held for our Keep Space for Peace demo at Fylingdales against US Missile Defence on 1st October. It was coordinated with a simultaneous demo at USAF Croughton in Northamptonshire. We had a large marquee, disabled toilet, music from Bull the Band, lots of food and hot drinks situated at Eller Beck, and all this was appreciated by participants.
We heard from speakers including Denise Craghill, Green Councillor in York (about whose particpation an article appeared in the York News), Kate Hudson, and Norman Lynch from Veterans for Peace. Our international speaker was Konni Schmidt from the Stopp Ramstein campaign in Germany. Ramstein is the HQ of NATO's missile defence and he inspired us with his story about how the annual protest grew from several hundred to several thousand the following year. This underlined how disappointing the turn-out was on our demo, despite the fact that there were four times as many at Fylingdales as the year before.

At the gate at 'RAF' Fylingdales - 1st October

Konni Schmidt and Hibakusha speaking at Menwith Hill

Konni was in the UK for a week, and we arranged for him to hook up with several other groups on his journey through the country. Linking our campaigns together in this way certainly makes us stronger, and we hope to send a few people from Yorkshire to the demo in Ramstein next September.

Menwith Hill

As usual Campaign for the Accountability of American Bases organised a demo on the Tuesday of Keep Space for Peace Week. The presence of Konni Schmidt (see above) and also the Hibakusha from Japan (see below) added to the success of the event. Don't forget that CAAB hold a weekly demonstration at the base every Tuesday from 6-7.30pm at the main gate, and they need solidarity and support, especially throughout the cold months of Winter.

Hibakusha Visit Bradford

At the beginning of October, we were honoured to host a peace delegation from Japan, including Mr Terumi Tanaka, survivor of the Nagasaki nuclear bomb (Hibakusha). Mr Tanaka is now Secretary General of the Japan Confederation of A-and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations (Nihon Hidankyo).
At age 13, he experienced the Nagasaki A-bomb while at his home which was only 2 miles from the blast centre. He lost five of his family members instantaneously and later cremated the body of his aunt who had survived only a few days after the bombing.

Students Christine Pellens & Nao Noguchi with Rieko Asato, Shushi Kajimoto and Terumi Tanaka in the Peace Garden

Mr Tanaka presenting Clive Barrett with A-bomb exhibition at Peace Museum

On arrival in Bradford, the delegation were invited to a Bradford University Peace Society pot luck dinner, where they met many students. The following day they visited the Peace and International Relations Department at Bradford University as the Guest of Professor Caroline Hughes. Mr Tanaka gave a talk to the public and students at the University before a formal lunch attended by the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Bradford. Students then gave the delegation a tour of the University, including the Peace Garden and the Commonweal Collection. The visit to Bradford concluded with a trip to the Peace Museum, where Mr Tanaka presented trustees with an exhibition about the atomic bombings in Japan.
Later that evening, the delegation attended the demonstration at Menwith Hill - a busy and varied trip to Yorkshire.

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"taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations", which was led by Austria, Brazil, Ireland, Mexico, Nigeria and South Africa, with 57 co-sponsors, calls for the negotiations to be open to all UN Member States, which means that if consensus cannot be achieved, decisions are taken by majority.

All states will be encouraged to participate, but none will be given a veto power to block the negotiations or decisions. This makes it possible to envisage a nuclear ban treaty being delivered in time to be adopted by the United Nations at a high level meeting in 2018, as some states have already advocated.

This UN vote and next year's negotiations look set to be a huge game-changer.

UK ambassador Matthew Rowland claimed that "as long as nuclear weapons exist NATO will remain a nuclear alliance". Even in NATO countries, however, those assumptions are being questioned and criticised. Weeks before the UN vote, the Norwegian, Dutch and Belgian parliaments strongly argued for their governments not to oppose the resolution, though only the Netherlands had the courage to defy the NATO whip and abstain.

In a further development initiated by European Greens, MEPs supported a European Parliament resolution that called for EU governments to participate constructively in the proposed UN multilateral negotiations. Backed by 415 MEPs, only 124 MEPs voted against, mainly from the far right parties. Though non-binding, the EP resolution is significant for having situated efforts to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons in the context of nuclear security and nonproliferation, dismissing arguments from Russia and various NATO states that prohibiting nuclear weapons would somehow undermine nonproliferation and security.

The Japanese government's decision to vote against the UN resolution came under heavy criticism from parliamentarians, religious groups and civil society, most notably the Hibakusha survivors of the atomic bomb attacks. Despite voting against, Japan has promised to participate in the negotiations when they are convened.

Russia, whose "disturbing… rhetoric about the use of nuclear weapons and the frequency of snap nuclear exercises" was cited by the UK's Ambassador Rowland as a major reason for the UK to oppose the resolution, was on the same side as the US and UK in wanting to carry on having nuclear weapons to use, deploy and project power with. Several African and Latin American diplomats reported that Russia was especially active behind the scenes in evoking its weapons and assistance in past proxy wars in efforts to persuade their governments to oppose the multilateral disarmament negotiations.

US Ambassador Robert Wood said “How can a state that relies on nuclear weapons for its security possibly join a negotiation meant to stigmatize and eliminate them?” What, was Obama claiming to want when he advocated 'the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons' in his 2009 Prague speech? Eight years on from receiving his premature Nobel Peace Prize in 2008, Obama's policies have embedded nuclear modernization and expenditure more deeply than ever.

That's why this UN vote is so important. It moves diplomatic and legal action beyond the veto power of nuclear-dependent governments that want to keep their privileges under the NPT. They can't block the process that the UN has now launched.

Looking forward, what does this mean?

Negotiations will go ahead in 2017, unless the nuclear-armed states that are permanent members of the UN Security Council unite to derail it, which no longer appears very likely. They have a choice whether to boycott the negotiations, in the knowledge that the non-nuclear nations can bring a nuclear ban treaty into force with or without them, or participate in hope of weakening the outcome to fit their nuclear interests. But history demonstrates that even if they decide not to accede to the new treaty, the norms and prohibitions will percolate into their nuclear decision-making.

The UN vote is the product of civil society initiatives working in partnership with a core group of states on a strategy that has met its first phase objectives in six years. Over 440 organisations in 98 countries joined the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons. On 24 October, 15 Nobel Peace Laureates joined Nobel science Laureates in an open letter emphasising "need to stigmatize, prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons".

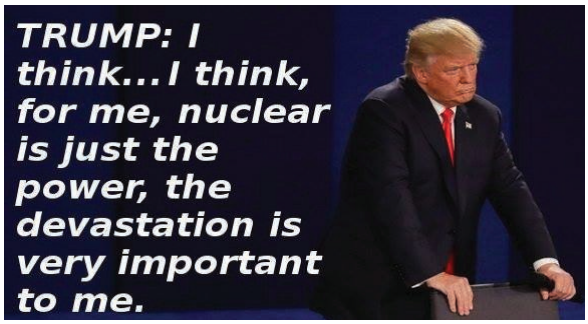
As for the UK, the nuclear ban treaty in the pipeline makes Trident renewal completely untenable. Prime Minister May may want to boycott the negotiations, but Labour Leader Jeremy Corbyn, has now appointed a Minister for Peace and Disarmament, Fabian Hamilton MP for Leeds East, who said that one of his main roles will be to participate in the UN multilateral disarmament meetings. Similarly, the Scottish government is arguing for a seat at the UN negotiations, arguing that they have special interests as a country forced to host nuclear weapons against the will of the majority of Scotland's people.

In accordance with past experience, ranging from the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the Mine Ban Treaty, and the Cluster Munitions Convention, among others, the UK's attempts to prevent negotiations going ahead will soon make way for tactics to derail, dismiss, obstruct and undermine a constructive outcome. When a nuclear prohibition treaty is concluded, however, the UK will soon sign, though without much enthusiasm, and try and save whatever they can from the Trident fiasco. And in a few years UK politicians will probably take credit for the treaty as a long-standing British objective.’

Write to Boris Johnson to urge him to support the negotiations - http://act.cnduk.org/lobby/globalban

Trump and the Nuclear Button

It is difficult not to sink into despondency and outright fear, following the election of this shocking character in the United States. Trump's position on NATO, and his emerging detente with Putin may bring us back from the brink of a new Cold War with Russia, but these are small silver linings in an extremely large cloud. His comments that other countries should acquire their own nuclear weapons, rather than relying on US protection is in danger of sparking a new round of proliferation. And a president with the temperament of Trump with his finger on the button?! To discuss this and more, come to the Strategy Session after the YCND AGM on 21st Jan (see front page). Open to all.



Could it be you?

Sarah Cartin, previously our Co-Convenor and then Treasurer has become a staff member working on finance and fundraising. This leaves a gap in our team - could you fulfil the role of Treasurer (not a big job, as Sarah will do the nuts and bolts), Secretary or CoConvenor? Get in touch for more info on the role in time for our AGM (see front page)

The Hammer Blow

It was standing room only at Andrea Needham's talk in Hebden Bridge recently on her inspiring ploughshares action in 1996, the subject of her book 'The Hammer Blow'. Around 35 people crammed into The Bookcase to hear how she and three other women stood trial for causing millions of pounds of damage to a Hawk Jet, bound for Indonesia, where the military dictatorship was wreaking genocide on the people of East Timor. The story of how they broke into the BAE base, and how eventually they were found 'not guilty' by a jury was very moving. The event was organised by Calder Valley CND. Andrea went on to speak in Bradford and Leeds the following day, and if you missed it, her book is available on the YCND website.

Evicted Chagos Islanders Denied Right to Return

Last week, the thousands of Chagos Islanders deported in 1971 to make room for a US military base, were bitterly disappointed by a Foreign Office decision not to enable their return to their homeland. Yet again, Britain has failed to take the opportunity to rectify another of its shameful imperial wrongs, despite over 40 years of campaiging, court cases, and international pressure.

Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Baroness Anelay offered an apology for the forced movement of 1,500 people and a further package of compensation to the islanders. She did not, however, acknowledge that Britain stole the Islands from Mauritius as it was about to gain independence, and relabelled them BIOT (British Indian Overseas Territories).

Anelay said the decision against resettlement had been taken on "grounds of feasibility, defence and security interests, and cost to the British taxpayer."

Ministers have agonised over the decision for years, knowing that the UK government treated the islanders disgracefully but believing it would not be possible to take the land back from the US, given the importance of the military base to the Pentagon. It is one of the largest US bases outside the country and is seen as having huge strategic importance by the US defence department.

The lease for the US base on Diego Garcia comes up for renewal at the end of this year.

Long battle

In 2000, High Court judges ruled that Chagossians could return to 65 of the islands, but not to Diego Garcia.

In 2004, the government used the royal prerogative - exercised by ministers in the Queen's name - to effectively nullify the decision.

Then in 2007, the court overturned that order and rejected the government's argument that the royal prerogative was immune from scrutiny.

However, the following year the government won an appeal, with the House of Lords ruling the exiles could not return.

In June of this year the Supreme Court - UK's highest court - upheld the 2008 House of Lords ruling, but it will not end the campaign for justice.

Constituency Lobby of MPs

As readers will be aware, nuclear warhead convoys regularly travel through Yorkshire up the A1/M1, most recently in September and October this year. We have been working with the Nukes of Hazard Project to raise awareness about this issue. In October we organised a public meeting in Wetherby, a town which lies particularly close to the convoy route, and which was one of the towns featured in the Nukes of Hazard report, written by journalist Rob Edwards, and launched in Birmingham in September.

The meeting was attended by some local people, including a school governor, concerned about potential impacts of an accident on people in the town.

We hope to organise a similar public meeting in Pontefract, another town on route, so keep an eye on our website or facebook for details. Meanwhile, CND and Nukes of Hazard have organised a Constituency Lobby of MPs on the nuclear convoys. It is scheduled for 25th and 26th November, just as Action for Peace goes to press, but it is never too late to contact your MP, as the convoys will continue to pose a threat as long as Trident continues to exist. For info on how to lobby your MP, details of the convoy route, or other info, see nukesofhazard.gn.apc.org, nukewatch.org.uk or contact the office.

Fundraiser's Column

Readers will probably be aware that unfortunately, we had to take the very difficult decision of cancelling the October Day of Dance. Our new fundraiser and finance officer, Sarah Cartin (who many of you will know as our former development worker, then our co-convenor) decided that having struggled to firm up all the workshops, there was not enough time to ensure a good attendance and hence a successful event. All the tutors were very supportive and it's all systems go for a fantastic Day of Dance in May (13th - put it in your diaries now!).

As AfP goes to print, the final preparations are being made for the Peace & Craft Fair in Saltaire, which is fully booked with stalls and promises to be as great as ever.

Upcoming in Spring is a fundraiser benefit gig with Rob Newman called 'The Brain Show' - we're just exploring venues and dates now - so keep your ears peeled for news.

Any ideas for future fundraising, please get in touch!

Green Party & Trident

Caroline Lucas MP supported the launch this month of an updated CND report called People not Trident. Molly Scott Cato, Green MEP, has launched her own report 'Devonport: From Trident Jobs to Green Employment' - which can be found online at mollymep.org.uk, and Jonathan Bartley, Joint Leader, spoke at York University on nuclear weapons and the political situation in the UK.

Nuclear Power

Hinkley Point has now been given the go-ahead by the government. This brilliant article from the NY Times underlines the continued link between nuclear power and nuclear weapons *http://s.coop/nukes*

White Poppy Remembrance

Calder Valley CND held a White Poppy wreath laying event on the 11th of the 11th at the war memorial in Hebden Bridge. With poetry, music and readings, the event was really well attended, and they hope to hold something similar again next year.

In Bradford, the annual Songs for Peace, this year organised by YCND, was held on Remembrance Sunday. Thanks to Tony and Rahel, whose music framed the event, and to all who attended.

Many of us have noticed the commercialisation of the British Legion's Red Poppy, and the increasing way in which wearing a red poppy has become almost compulsory. For a brilliant insight into this, and reasons to oppose it, see this article by Rob Tweedy of Veterans for Peace . http://vfpuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/my_name_is_legion-web.pdf

Labour & Trident

Despite the re-election of CND's Vice-President Jeremy Corbyn as leader of the Labour Party, the 2016 Labour Party Conference held no debate on Trident; the National Policy Forum Report supported Trident renewal; all anti-Trident resolutions at the Party Conference were ruled out of order and Emily Thornberry's Defence Review has been buried without trace.

CND's National Council will be discussing this at its meeting in December, and exploring how CND can ensure that the Labour Party does not go into the next election supporting Trident Renewal.

If you are a member of both CND and the Labour Party, you are automatically a member of Labour CND. For more info about how to get involved, see labourcnd.org.uk

Diary

25th-26th November - Constituency Lobby of MPs on nuclear warhead convoys (see inside)

26th November - Yorkshire CND Peace & Craft Fair

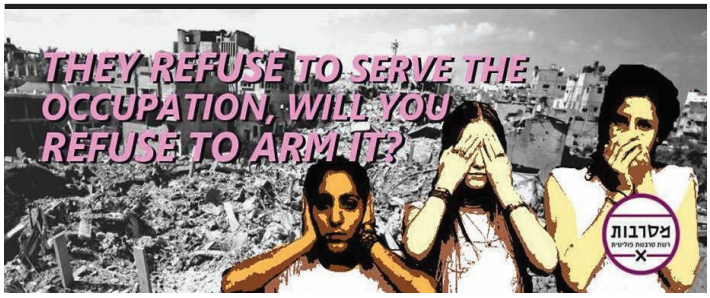
1st December - International Day of Action - Refuse to Occupy (see below)

9th December - International Human Rights Day, public meeting with Prof Paul Rogers speaking on 'Human Rights and the War on Terror' - 7.30pm-9.30pm Bradford Mechanics Institute, Kirkgate, BD1 1SZ. Organised by Bradford Amnesty International

Now until January 20th - Challenging the Fabric of Society. New Temporary Exhbition at the Bradford Peace Museum, featuring many wonderful peace banners. www.peacemuseum.org.uk

19th January - Manchester - Independence from America, US bases out! Meeting with Lindis Percy, Madlab 36-40 Edge Street, M4 1HN 7pm

21st January - Yorkshire CND Annual General Meeting and Strategy Session (see front page)



'Refuse to Occupy - International day of Action' - 1 Dec, Shipley

We are taking part in this day of action, called by תוברמת and War Resisters' International - in solidarity with Israeli women who will be imprisoned this month for refusing to take part in the occupation of Palestine. Vigils will take place outside factories around the world where arms are produced and supplied to Israel.

We will be outside Teledyne Defence, Acorn Estate in Shipley, BD17 7SW from 8-9am. Teledyne produce aircraft, drone and microwave weaponary components, and have been given licenses to supply military equipment to Israel every year since at least 2010. After the vigil we'll be holding a stall in Shipley town centre.

More info on Teledyne: https://www.caat.org.uk/resources/mapping/organisation/7328

Public Meeting on the Global Ban and the UK response

Yorkshire CND want to highlight the upcoming talks at the United Nations on a Global Ban treaty against nuclear weapons by holding a public meeting. The event will be in Leeds, sometime in February or early March, and we will be inviting Fabian Hamilton, new shadow Minister for Peace & Disarmament, as well as a representative from International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons.

Details aren't available as we go to print, but please keep an eye on our website or facebook, or contact the office in the new year.

Local CND & Peace Groups/

York University CND group - contact joshfoskett@gmail.com

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

Bradford & District - or 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

Are you subscribed to our email announcements list? A fortnightly email keeping you up to date between newsletters - cath@yorkshirecnd.org.uk

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