Yorkshire CND
Issue 102

Winter 2019/20

Action for Peace

The Yorkshire CND Newsletter

XR Peace in London

One of the XR Peace actions - at BAE Systems, with YCND's Sylvia Boyes

Several hundred peace activists took part in XR Peace actions in London during the October occupations and actions by the climate action group Extinction Rebellion. As outlined in the last issue of Action for Peace, Extinction Rebellion had made an effort to broaden out and make wider links by involving the peace movement, global justice movement and animal rights networks.

It was only in late summer that Angie Zelter of Trident Ploughshares, was approached to coordinate the 'peace wing' of XR. Together with Jane Tallents and other Trident Ploughshares activists, they managed to coordinate a full two weeks of peace related activities in London. The idea was to make the link between militarism and climate change, to emphasise the large military carbon 'bootprint', to put pressure on government to redirect military resources to combatting climate change, and to make clear that climate change creates war, war creates climage change.

Over the two weeks there were 57 arrests, starting with a blockade outside the Ministry of Defence on Embankment (see inset) on 7th October. The following day XR Peace rebels held a die-in at the Whitehall gate of the MoD, and again on 9th October. There were six arrests on 14th October at a blockade of BAE Systems office at 6 Carlton Gardens, when XR Peace made the link between the climate and ecological emergency and UK arms sales to Turkey and Saudi Arabia. Later the same evening five people were arrested while locked on to each other in the XR

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Vote for Peace!

As this issue goes to press we are in the middle of perhaps the most important election in a generation. In the area of nuclear weapons debate has been poor, with the Lib Dems Jo Swinson confirming that she'd readily use weapons of mass destruction and the Labour Party producing a radical manifesto that managed to ignore the UN nuclear ban treaty. On the positive side the SNP have made the issue of Trident a red-line, stating that they would be happy to support a Labour minority government on condition that nuclear weapons were removed from Scotland (and they have no-where else to go in UK waters). We have been encouraging members to engage their candidates on the issue via the CND election tool and also maintaining a list of hustings around the region.

Many Yorkshire members have been out there on the doorstep supporting sitting anti-trident MPs and candidates, whatever the result such solidarity is vital not only in getting more decent MPs in position but in building support on the issue amongst other party members and campaigners.

See: https://yorkshirecnd.org.uk/election-2019/

Yorkshire CND AGM

"Confronting extinction: militarism and the climate crisis"

Sat 25th January 2020

Speakers include: Dr Stuart Parkinson, Scientists for Global Responsibility

Nominations for positions of Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer and membership of the Coordinating Committee, and any resolutions to be received by 6th January. A full agenda and more details including location and exact timings can be found on our website www.yorkshirecnd.org.uk.

All welcome, members and non members, but only members may vote

Inside

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Peace gazebo when police tried to clear Trafalgar Square. The 17th October was a particularly busy day. Three peace activists were arrested after they glued and locked on to the doors of Leonardo UK's HQ in Great George St. Leonardo provides guidance systems for missiles used in Yemen and Syria. Later that morning, there were eight arrests at the Supreme Court entrance in defiance of the section 14 restrictions imposed several days earlier on any protest in central London. This received a lot of media, partly due to the creative T-shirts worn by those blockading, with slogans such as 'protect our rights to protest', 'End the Arms Trade', and 'Protect People & Planet' among others. Three more people were arrested later that day at a blockade of the front door of Lockheed Martin's London HQ.

CROWD FUNDER - please help!

Obviously, there are going to be significant legal costs for XR Peace resulting from those 57 arrests, including 4 of us from YCND. Although many cases resulting from the section 14 have been dropped after the High Court overturned the Section 14 imposed by the police many XR Peace arrests were for other offences and remain 'under investigation.' Funds are needed for:

* Equipment seized by police (we hope to recover some equipment as it was for legal protest including access equipment for disabled people)
* Travel fares to court appearances – many are making long journeys from other parts of the UK
* Help towards paying fines, some of which are particularly high. Angie Zelter received a £1,250 fine from her last sit and glue-on to the bamboo structure in Oxford Circus on Friday.

See xrpeace.org for details of the crowdfunder website

Yorkshire CND at XR Peace - Cath's story

I never made an actual decision to join XR Peace; I was caught up in the maelstrom that is Angie Zelter. One minute I was in a meeting about blockading DSEi, the next we were discussing the finer details of using Yorkshire CND's mock Trident missile to block the MoD on Embankment on 7th October.

YCND's lock-on on Embankment

I hadn't previously been involved in XR as I had little time and some misgivings about their strategy which there isn't space to fully go into here (see Peace News for similar views).

Notwithstanding my reluctance to be a number among the arrestees (I've been arrested many times, so I don't fear that, but I admit to finding court cases boring and inconvenient), I'm not convinced that a strategy based on increasing arrest numbers is sensible. The whole process including court and fines etc drains energy, relies on a certain amount of privilege, and added to other issues with XR's strategy, makes it problematic.

However, these political objections were subsumed not just by the energy of XR Peace, but by my overriding motivator: solidarity. My comrades are on the streets in what feels like a last ditch attempt to stop climate change. I may disagree with the detail, but do I carp on the sidelines about the best tactics or the correct political standpoint, or do I heave a big sigh, roll my eyes a bit, and join the fray?

So with little preparation, I found myself towing our 12 foot prop on a trailer through the dark streets of central London at 6am on a Monday morning, with our little group from YCND. I despise towing at the best of times, and this wasn't the best of times. At least, I thought to myself, this would be our missile's last blast, and I'd never have to tow the thing again. Expecting to be pulled over at any moment, it was a shock to arrive pretty close to the MoD, and even more of a shock to see the road already blocked by XR Peace. Being geographically challenged, we had had barely any communication with anyone else from XR Peace prior to the day. Our luck ran out with yards to go, stopped at a red light, and already clocked by police. I had to decide whether to run the light, and for a serial rebel, I'm very obedient when it comes to traffic regulations. Luckily, matters were taken out of my hands when my passengers jumped out, unhitched the missile and locked on to it. And still the light was red. My vision of driving off into the sunrise melted away when I was instructed to step out of the vehicle madam, and at 6.38am became, as far as I'm aware, the first arrest of the October rebellion.

I spent the rest of my time in London trying to work out where my car was, and how to get it back. I gave up finally, and returned home. I was eventually reunited with my car (happily minus the missile trailer) 15 days later, minus Matt's laptop (but that's another story).

Several weeks later, I've had time to reflect. As one banner read, climate change causes wars, and wars cause climate change, and that is a maxim that needs greater attention, something I feel the actions of XR Peace over the fortnight in London achieved.

I remain deeply uncomfortable about the political strategy and some messaging of XR. As an atheist, the language of impending apocalypse, fear, death, grief, guilt and sacrifice makes me want to run a mile, and I will never love the police. But I have to doff my hat to the scale of XR's ambition, and their success thus far - always a winner when it comes to movement building! I also applaud XR's willingness to own their mistakes, and engage with other groups and with constructive criticism.

The first day of the rebellion saw four arrested from Yorkshire CND for Conspiracy to Cause a Public Nuisance and Obstruction of the Highway, as with the later arrests we've yet to be charged and our cases remain pending investigation

This article appears in Peace News 2636-7

Progress on the TTPNW

Just last week, on 25th November, Antigua and Barbuda became the 34th state to ratify the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (often referred to by peace campaigners as the Global Ban). We have reported on this in these pages often since September 2017 when the treaty was first negotiated. With 42 other states having signed, and expected to ratify in the not too distant future, the Treaty is well on its way to the 50 ratifications required for the Treaty to enter into force, thereby making nuclear weapons effectively illegal.

What is special about the TPNW is that it is the first treaty that requires all its signatories to "never… develop, produce, manufacture, possess or stockpile nuclear weapons." This is in contrast to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) that entered into force in 1970, which divides countries into two classes: nuclear-weapon states and non-nuclear-weapon states, with different obligations for each.

Of course, none of the Nuclear Weapons States have signed the Treaty. But as the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, which won the 2017 Nobel Prize for peace, has argued, "History shows that the prohibition of certain types of weapons facilitates progress towards their elimination. Weapons that have been outlawed by international treaties are increasingly seen as illegitimate, losing their political status."

We can all do our bit to support the Treaty, not least by getting our local MPs to sign the parliamentary pledge, or if prior to the election asking our local candidates whether they would sign if elected.

See www.yorkshirecnd.org.uk for more info

Songs for Peace 2019

Photo: Neil Terry

It was so lovely to see such a fantastic turn-out at this year's Songs for Peace in Bradford on Remembrance Sunday. Over a hundred people raised their voices against militarism and war, and several groups laid white poppy wreathes. We listened to peace-loving songs by two different choirs, singers from Settle and Silsden, led by Janet Russell, and for the first time at Songs for Peace, the rabble-rousing Commoner's Choir. Tony and Rahel then led all of us singing together some of the regular favourites.
We were pleased to welcome Bishop Toby, who said how delighted he was that this event happens in Bradford, how important it is to the town, how crucial to promote a peaceful city that is open and welcoming to all, and where racist and nationalistic sentiment isn't welcome.
The German Church was packed to the rafters afterwards, as we all went back for hot soup and drinks to warm us up.
We hope that the event continues to go from strength to strength, so we'll see you next year.

Calder Valley CND White Poppy Event

Calder Valley CND always hold a white poppy wreath laying ceremony on the 11th of the 11th. As this year it fell on a Monday, we held a candlelit ceremony in the early evening. Or at least we tried to; it was raining so heavily that candles struggled to stay alight! We managed a reading, a poem and a piece of music before having to call it a day as all our papers disintegrated and our feet got wet. As someone commented though, this was a walk in the park compared to what the troops went through, or what people who are suffering in war zones right now have to deal with.

Pope condemns nuclear weapons

Anti-nuclear weapons campaigners have welcomed Pope Francis' recent call for a world free of nuclear weapons. Speaking during visits last month to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Pope described even the possession of nuclear weapons as "immoral".
"This ought to put an end to the ambiguity, which has lasted for generations, coming from the bishops of the nuclear armed states, about nuclear deterrence. The very possession of nuclear weapons, as well as the threat of their use, is to be firmly condemned", said Bruce Kent, vice president of CND
Referring to Trident, he added that, "the hierarchy of this country is well placed to take a lead, since we are in the process now of spending over £200 billion on a new generation of nuclear armaments". He called on Britain to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. This was endorsed by Archbishop Malcolm McMahon of Liverpool and National President of Pax Christi, who has called on the British government to sign "and be part of a future built on just international relationships and the common good of all humanity".

The UK and the Militarisation of Space

by Dave Webb

In just a few decades outer space has become of the utmost importance for global commercial, political and military interests. The military now depend heavily on satellites for communication, navigation, surveillance, reconnaissance and the command, control and targeting of missiles and drone operations.

On the 18th July 2019, Penny Mordaunt, the Defence Secretary at that time, outlined a new £30 million space programme for the MoD involving the development of small satellites. The work will be supported by Artemis, a new transatlantic team involving UK and US defence personnel. The UK and US have worked closely together on a range of military and intelligence programmes for years. The UK also specialises in miniature satellites through Surrey Satellite Technology Limited (SSTL), founded in 1985. In 2005 Elon Musk's SpaceX company bought a 10% share and in 2008 the EADS Astrium group purchased another 80%. SSTL has captured 40% of the global small satellite market and the MoD has paid them over £4 million to develop Carbonite 2, a small, low-orbit satellite launched in 2018 to provide high-resolution reconnaissance for intelligence gathering. Small satellite systems are cheap to launch and difficult to detect, making them useful for covert operations. The US already suspects Russia of using them for "unusual activities" in space. Artemis will probably be launched from a dedicated small-satellite launcher at the new Cornwall Space Hub at Newquay airport, or maybe the one being developed at Sutherland in Scotland.

The UK will also be the first partner to join Operation Olympic Defender, a US-led international coalition aimed at deterring "hostile actions by rivals." Mordaunt announced that "today we show the sky is no longer the limit for our Armed Forces" and that Joint Forces Command will become Strategic Command and will coordinate the war-fighting domains: Air, Land, Sea, Cyber and Space. This echoes Trump's Space Command, activated in 2019 as a precursor to his Space Force. Mordaunt talked of facing up to "evolving threats" from "hostile actors in space" by working more closely with "international allies through Five Eyes, NATO and now Operation Olympic Defender."

'Five eyes' refers to the intelligence services of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the UK and the US. Shortly after World War II the UK and US signed up to an intelligence sharing agreement called UKUSA, described by Edward Snowden as a "supra-national intelligence organisation that does not answer to the known laws of its own countries". Originally established to share intelligence on the Soviet Union, information gathering has since grown exponentially, intercepting electronic communications via satellites and tapping into fibre optic cables. One major collection centre is the NSA Spy Base Menwith Hill. The alliance has grown to at least 35 countries and uses 88 locations in US embassies and consulates around the world eavesdropping on foreign embassies, communications centres, and government installations.

All this, plus Trump's plans to weaponise space and the decision by the NATO Summit in London (see elsewhere in this issue) to develop a policy for warfighting in space, represent a huge threat to international security and civil liberties. They threaten the 1967 Outer Space Treaty (OST) which declares that outer space should be "the province of all mankind" and space activities should be carried out "for the benefit and in the interests of all countries". Many of the 132 signatory states are now deploying military satellites and the US, Russia, China and India have also tested anti-satellite weapons. If a vital satellite should malfunction at a time of international tension and another nation is blamed – it could result in a nuclear exchange.

Some politicians have spoken against it but no major UK political party has fully understood the importance of stopping a space arms race. There *are* attempts to prevent the further militarisation of space. Every year a resolution calling for "International Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space" is adopted at the UN General Assembly. Russia and China also introduce an annual resolution on a treaty for the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, to prevent any nation from gaining a military advantage in space. The resolution is overwhelmingly adopted - except by the US who vote against and Israel, who abstain. Others are suspicious and frustrated that no progress can be made until the most powerful country in space agrees. It may therefore be up to us through such organisations as the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space, of which YCND is a part. The annual 'Keep Space for Peace Week' (see report on actions in Yorkshire this year) highlights the need to demilitarise thinking about outer space. See www.space4peace.org.

This article is taken from a longer paper to be printed in "Transform – A Journal of the Radical Left" in January 2020.

New 4 minute film made for Keep Space for Peace week about Fylingdales and its role in the militarisation of space.

Made by Yorkshire CND, and featuring a Yorkshireman, a pint, some sheep, and a CND flag!

Check it out on our website

No to Trump, No to NATO

As Action for Peace goes to press, protests are happening against the NATO conference in London, attended by Donald Trump. The NATO summit will be a crucial opportunity for our movement to oppose Trump's nuclear warmongering and highlight the dangerous role NATO, as a nuclear alliance, plays in raising international tensions.

On 30th November there was a counter summit, The New World Disorder' organised by CND, Stop the War, and No to War, No to NATO network. On Tuesday 3rd December there will be a No to Trump No to NATO demo. NHS doctors and nurses will be amongst those leading the march. Blocs include Hands off Latin America, NHS Not for Sale, Palestine, JC4PM, Stand up to Racism, No to Erdogan - No to NATO. Speakers include Owen Jones, Tariq Ali, Brian Eno, Medea Benjamin, Lindsey German (Stop the War), Kate Hudson (CND), Laura Parker (Momentum), Izzy Warren (UKSCN), Ollie Vargas (Friends of Bolivia) and many more.

Fundraising Round-up

Photo: Neil Terry

We're all just about recovered from the mammoth Peace & Craft Fair. It might have been damp and miserable outside, but it didn't put people off coming, and the atmosphere inside was fantastic. We think around 870 paying adults attended, plus the volunteers, musicians and stallholders, plus loads of children, probably attracted by the circus skills and face-painting.

Our CND volunteers did an absolutely sterling job, especially on the cafe. We were run off our feet all day, so huge thanks to them. Thanks must also go to Keith Lander who coordinates the music programme, as the live music is such a great feature of the Fair.

We've had fantastic feedback from the stallholders, many of whom have commented that this is one of their most successful fairs of the year, and some campaigns who said that they get more people involved at the Peace Fair than at all other events during the year put together. Thanks to all the stallholders, especially those who donated gifts for the tombola.

The next one is scheduled for 28th November 2020 - put it in your diary now, and please consider volunteering to help on the day. A few hours washing up goes a long way!

Volunteer needed

Advance notice for the Day of Dance 2020 - put 9th May in your diaries with more info to follow. We're looking to expand our group of volunteers who coordinate the Day of Dance. In particular we're looking for someone who could do some computer based admin in the Yorkshire CND office. If this could be you, please contact cath@yorkshirecnd.org.uk or call 01274 730795 if you can help.

Diary

Vigil at Menwith Hill 6pm-7.30pm. Mostly every Tuesday, but advise to contact them before you go up there. 01765 600928 / 07902 173148.

12th December - as if you needed reminding, this is the day when you get the chance to vote for the party you think are most likely to oppose war and nuclear weapons!

6th January-28th January - 'Our Greenham Common' - Calder Valley CND's exhibition at Hebden Bridge Town Hall.

8th January - Next Meeting of Leeds CND 6pm Leeds Civic Hall: Leeds CND 6pm, Leeds Coalition Against War 7pm

25th January - Yorkshire CND AGM, Mill Hill Chapel, City Square Leeds. See front page for more information.

3rd February - deadline for applying for the job with Yorkshire CND (see below for more information).

9th May - advance notice for our big fundraising event, the Day of Dance

Join our Campaigning Team at Yorkshire CND!

Yorkshire CND is recruiting a part-time campaigns / development worker to join our small but busy office in Bradford.

The position will be two and half days a week, job sharing with Matt Fawcett and the successful candidate should live in Yorkshire.

For more information about the job description, person specification, and how to apply, please look at our website www.yorkshirecnd.org.uk. Both Cath and Matt are also happy to speak to anyone on the phone who is interested in finding out more. 01274 730795.

The deadline for applications is Monday 3rd February 2020.

Greenham Common Exhibition

Calder Valley CND for Peace & Justice are building on the success of their Greenham Common exhibition last year, and putting on an expanded version in Hebden Bridge Town Hall. 'Our Greenham Common' is focused on the memories and memorabilia of local people who were involved in some way in Greenham Common.

The opening evening will be January 6th, and it will run until 27th January. If anyone (particularly local or localish to Calder Valley) has anything they would like to contribute, contact cath@yorkshirecnd.org.uk or on 07980 291478 prior to 12th December.

Local CND & Peace Groups/

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 or Huddersfield Quakers - Robin Bowles at cara@cooptel.net

Leeds CND - contact Dave on 07717 606189 facebook.com/LeedsCND or leedscnd@gmail.com

Leeds Coaltion Against War - Meetings will be twice a month, on the first and third Wednesdays, 7pm, Leeds Civic Hall info@anbeal.co.uk

Keighley Peace Justice & Environment Network - email Ada at a.whitaker@gmx.co.uk

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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