

MERSEYSIDE CND

SUMMER UPDATE 2020

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There had been as many plagues in the world as there had been wars, yet plagues and wars always find people equally unprepared.

- Albert Camus, [The Plague](#)



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A LOCKDOWN MESSAGE

“Swords into Ploughshares”



I've been dragged into the 21st Century because of the situation we find ourselves in. I've found ZOOM.

Through it I have been able to attend meetings not only in Liverpool and London, but also New York.

Reports from the National CND council meeting and the report from the “Online World Conference - Abolish

Nuclear Weapons; Resist and Reverse the Climate Crisis; For Social and Economic Justice Confirmation” can be found on page 3. Something to read while in lockdown.

Out of this unbelievable situation we find ourselves in, we must look at the positives. This is a global situation and we can come together on this for the good of all. Nearly 9 million have signed the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons petition. We can't be on the streets but that does not mean we can't

continue our campaigning from our homes, posters displayed, letters to PM and other members of government.

Ask them how prepared is the country if nuclear weapons were to be used? If the response to CV19 is anything to go by I dread to think. The Covid-19 pandemic would compare to a Sunday School picnic. At present we have enough food and the infrastructure we need. These would cease to be available in the event of a nuclear war, alongside 100s of thousands dead and many more injured. These questions need to be asked and answered.

That brings me to another issue: “Arms Conversion”. This is possible!! we have seen what has been achieved in response to the current situation, and must pursue the future possibilities, We must strike while the iron is hot. “Swords into Ploughshares”

Barbara Hardcastle, [Wallasey CND](#) and MCND Co-Chair

COVID-19 - WARPED PRIORITIES AND PAINFUL LESSONS

Behind the Bluster

Has anyone else noticed that the government's 'campaign' to 'defeat' COVID-19 has been couched in pseudo military terms, complete with 'frontline heroes' (give them all a medal!) and the tabloid canonisation of Colonel Tom? However, all Boris Johnston's sub-Churchillian rhetoric about “winning the war” on COVID-19 and tabloid gush about NHS heroes should not be allowed to do what it is clearly intended to do - disguise the government's criminal mishandling of this pandemic. Yes, NHS frontline staff have performed heroically, but if adequate PPE had been available, they wouldn't have had to put their lives on the line in the first place. Yes, Col. Tom's effort was heroic but the NHS should not have to rely on charity.

Warped Priorities

The hard truth is in order to squander money on nuclear weapons to bolster our global image, this government wilfully ignored the priorities it itself had established in its National Security Risk Assessment by which pandemics such as COVID-19, as a tier one risk, clearly outrank the perceived tier two threat of nuclear attack. Despite this, the government has prioritised funding a new Trident nuclear £205 billion weapons system over properly funding our NHS. The inevitable result has been a chronically under resourced NHS struggling to cope and, tragically, many unnecessary deaths.

By choosing Trident over our NHS, this government has betrayed us and abdicated their responsibility to ensure we live in peace and genuine human security. No amount of Tory platitudes about our wonderful NHS can disguise this criminal negligence or deflect from their culpability.

All in this together

If this terrible pandemic teaches us anything it is that everyone of us, from every nation 'are all in this together'. COVID 19 is no respecter of race, nationality or political or religious ideology and only international scientific cooperation and trust between nations can hope to see us through.

We must stop defining our national security in terms of a military response to perceived threats from other nations. Such thinking is futile and catastrophically misguided in the face of a global pandemic. That is why CND's messages of internationalism and human welfare over weapons of mass destruction are more important than ever.

Peter Wilson, MCND Co-Chair

WORLD CONFERENCE 2020

Abolish Nuclear Weapons | Resist and Reverse the Climate Crisis | For Social and Economic Justice

On 25th April campaigners for nuclear abolition, peace, action on climate change and social justice convened online for World Conference 2020. This followed the decision, just a few months previously by the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, to move the 'Doomsday Clock' to 100 seconds to midnight and a dramatic warning from 13 Nobel Prize winners about the existential dangers posed by nuclear weapons and climate change.

75 years after the United Nations was founded, we are far from the humanistic, peaceful ideals enshrined in its charter. The second world war, and the horror it brought, inspired a collective rejection of Fascism. Yet we see the rise of the far-right in Hungary, Brazil and America, to name just a few nations. 75 years after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and half a century after the Non-Proliferation Treaty was signed, we see the spread and modernisation of nuclear weapons.

Yet, in crisis there is opportunity. Covid-19 has also illustrated ways in which we can prepare for the inevitable future pandemics, as well as to reverse the threats posed by nuclear weapons and the climate crisis.

- We are confronted with existential challenges: nuclear weapons and wars that can destroy the planet in short order and the creeping destruction caused by climate change, ecological devastation, and pandemic threats. Militarisation is increasing dramatically in Europe and other parts of the world.
- We are confronted by a world of enormous social injustices, massive impoverishment and a dramatically widening gap between the 1% and the 99%. One billion children go hungry every day, and the increased vulnerability of workers and the poor to the COVID-19 pandemic illustrates the abysmal inadequacies and injustices of the international system.
- We are confronted with an increasing number of authoritarian governments and the growth of far-right radicalism and fascist threats. Undemocratic, dictatorial politics increasingly influence and dominate the political climate in more and more countries around the world,

endangering the lives of minorities and migrants. Even the most fundamental democratic rights are in danger. Democracy is in a deep crisis.

- Anthropogenic climate change is becoming a daily threat to life and survival, while other ecological disasters threaten our coexistence and the shaping of the future for humans, other animals, and plants.

Yet where there are challenges, there is also resistance and a desire for fundamental change! We are part of a global, grassroots movement for peace, security, sustainability and justice. We will, therefore, continue to work tirelessly for:

- Immediate fulfilment of Article 6 of the NPT, which requires cessation of the arms race and the elimination of nuclear weapons.
- Early establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear, Chemical and Biological Weapons as agreed by the States parties to the NPT.
- Global disarmament with just transition for workers in the weapons industry and a policy of détente that reduces conflicts and favours peaceful conflict resolution is essential. Military budgets should be slashed worldwide, with those funds redirected to meet human needs and protect the environment.

We face the challenges of the globalized world of the 21st century. We know that peace is not sufficient in and of itself, but without peace, everything is at risk. Peace and justice will only be achieved through engagement of the people, working with peace and other social movements and their networks of cooperation all over the world.

We are committed to continuing our collaborations and organizing together for a better world with solidarity

We will resist and prevail!

This article is based on the statement released by World Conference organiser, Joseph Gerson.

PROTEST ONLINE AGAINST BAE

11:00, Thursday 7th May

Every year, CAAT supporters attend the Annual General Meeting of BAE Systems, the UK's biggest arms company, to hold the company's leadership to account. This year, the meeting (understandably) cannot take place as normal but, unlike many other AGMs in the same situation, BAE is hiding from any scrutiny and won't hold proceedings online either. The company will be glad to avoid awkward questions about its [£15 billion in revenue](#) from Saudi Arabia since 2015. Yet, as [Yemen faces its first coronavirus deaths](#), with a health system already devastated by five years of war, these questions are as urgent as ever.

So CAAT will be holding its own 'meeting' online to expose BAE's dodgy deals. Follow from 11am on Thursday 7 May on [CAAT's blog](#), [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#).

KINGS BAY PLOWSHARES 7

Second Anniversary Update

On 24 October 2019 The Kings Bay Plowshares 7 were found guilty for their non-violent symbolic disarmament action on 4 April 2018 inside Kings Bay Naval Base in Georgia, which houses six U.S. Trident submarines and periodically services Britain's four.

The Plowshares 7, who are Catholic, said they were following the prophet Isaiah's command to beat [swords into plowshares](#). But they were barred from citing their religious motivation and mounting a necessity defense saying that their law breaking was necessary to prevent the far greater crime of nuclear war.

At the end of the trial the judge, Lisa Godbey Wood, said it would take her 60 – 90 days to decide on their sentences. She would wait for probation reports and sentencing recommendations. These would take till sometime in January.

The reports were delayed, then further delayed by the outbreak of corona virus in March. Then in April, just before Easter, the judge announced that Carmen Trotta, Mark Colville and Clare Grady would be sentenced on 28 May. Fr Steve Kelly, Martha Hennessy, Liz McAllister and Patrick O'Neill on 29 May.

All the sentencing would take place in Southern District Federal Court in Brunswick, Georgia by video conference

On 23 March the Tribune & Georgian announced the first confirmed cases of Covid-19 in Camden County. That same

day the U.S. Navy announced that it had been awarded a contract for up to \$592.3 million to prepare Kings Bay Naval Base for a new generation of Trident nuclear submarines.

The plan to modernise the U.S. nuclear arsenal is projected to cost \$2 trillion.

ICAN, The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons has published a report that in 2019 the U.S. spent \$35 billion on nuclear weapons. This could have provided: 300,000 intensive care beds, 35,000 ventilators and salaries for 150,000 nurses and 75,000 doctors.

All the Plowshares 7 face long prison terms and greatly need postcards with messages of support. Of particular concern is Fr Steve Kelly who has been in jail for two years and is in poor health. His prison address is:

Stephen Kelly #015634,
Glynn County Detention Centre,
100 Sulphur Springs Road,
Brunswick GA 31520

The Kings Bay Plowshares 7's website:

kingsbayplowshares7.org

Their general email: kingsbayplowshares@gmail.com

Roger Stephenson

KINGS BAY PLOWSHARES 7 - ONLINE SEMINAR

Join a May 9th, 4 - 5pm GMT Webinar: Disarm & Divest During COVID-19

Moderated by Norman Solomon, RootsAction Co-founder, author and political columnist.

Guests include:

- Medea Benjamin, [Code Pink](#) Co-Founder, author and global activist
- [Dr. Cornel West](#), Harvard Divinity School, author, activist and social critic
- Jeremy Scahill, [The Intercept](#) Co-founder, investigative journalist and author

The Kings Bay Plowshares 7 are scheduled for sentencing on May 28 and 29 in Brunswick, GA for their nonviolent symbolic disarmament action at the largest nuclear sub-base in the world, on April 4th, 2018. Kings Bay is the Atlantic home port to a fleet of Trident submarines that contain one-quarter of the U.S. deployed nuclear weapons. Their action occurred April 4, 2018, the 50th anniversary of the assassination of the [Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.](#)

It's time to wash our hands of Trident, to demand that money should be directed towards health care for all, particularly during the COVID-19, for all future pandemics, for all human needs, and to cut funding for the military. The next generation of Trident submarines will cost \$1.2 Trillion over the next ten years. The Nobel Prize-winning International Campaign for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) has pointed out that the U.S. spent \$35.1 billion on nuclear weapons in 2019.

You can watch the Webinar Livestream, cosponsored by Code Pink, on [YouTube](#)

ICAN CITIES APPEAL

Even if you've never engaged in local politics before, it's easier than you think

The ICAN cities appeal is an attempt by the [International Campaign for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons](#) to win the support of local city and town councils for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Their backing will be vital in persuading members of Parliament that there is a political and public will to scrap Trident. Many MPs regard a pro-disarmament position as a vote-loser, but a successful appeal to local councillors will go a long way to showing them that this belief is wrong.

ICAN outlines the following simple steps you can take to make this happen:

1. Reach Out

It all begins with [contacting the Mayor](#) and local councillors. If you aren't sure what to write, then ICAN provides a [template](#) on which you can base your letter.

It's important to state why a city or town should support the appeal. For example:

- Cities and towns would suffer the most from any nuclear weapons attack, so they have a special responsibility to their citizens to take a stand;
- Networks of cities and towns are already champions in tackling the world's urgent existential challenges, including the climate emergency;
- Local politics can apply upward pressure on national legislatures by generating increased awareness about the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons among citizens and impacting national political party platforms.

- They'll be in good company! Almost [300 cities and towns](#), including many capital cities and major urban areas, have already joined the appeal.

2. Propose a Motion

It may be best to contact a sympathetic councillor who can champion your motion to the rest of the council and offer advice on the best way to proceed. . On 28th November 2018, [Manchester City Council passed a motion supporting the Treaty](#), which can be used as a template.

3. Involve the local community

A motion being voted on by the local Council can be a lengthy and often bureaucratic process and it's common to encounter some obstacles: perhaps lack of interest or political opposition. However, there are plenty of organisations which can support you. For example:

- Local Trade Unions. Check if any are affiliated to ICAN allies, the [International Trade Union Confederation](#) or [UNI Global Union](#).
- Faith Groups. Prominent supporters of the Treaty include [Religions for Peace](#), [Pax Christi UK](#), the [United Methodist Church](#) and the [Church of England](#)

4. Spread the Word

If the Council votes to support the Treaty, ask them to send a letter to the Government, and post on their social media platforms, announcing their decision.

ARMS TRADE CORRUPTION

Allegations about corruption in a £2 billion deal to supply equipment to the Saudi Arabian National Guard first surfaced in 2011, and in 2018 we heard that the Serious Fraud Office had finally requested permission to prosecute. But the Attorney General's office, whose permission is needed, has been sitting on it ever since.

In February, when a new Attorney General was appointed, [CAAT asked for your help to put the pressure](#) on – and thousands of you responded.

This week, a Parliamentary Question was asked about the progress of the case, and the Attorney General told Parliament: "that case was

one of the first matters, if not the first, to cross my desk, so it is a priority for me and I will not rest until we find an appropriate resolution."

In fact, we know that, thanks to you, this case has now 'crossed her desk' more than 3,500 times!

We'll [need to keep pushing](#) for there to be more progress but for now it's important that the government knows the issue won't go away quietly. Thank you!

Campaign Against the Arms Trade

MPS JOIN CALLS FOR GLOBAL CEASEFIRE

A number of prominent MPs have signed a letter to the Defence Secretary, Ben Wallace, urging the government to take action in response to the call from UN Secretary-General António Guterres for a global ceasefire.

Foreign Secretary, Dominic Raab, announced support for the ceasefire shortly after Guterres' statement but little action has been taken to follow it up, with an RAF bombing raid in Iraq having taken place on April 10th and continuing UK support for the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen.

Jeremy Corbyn, Caroline Lucas and Liz Savile-Roberts are amongst a growing list of MPs to have signed the letter organised by Claudia Webbe MP.

In it, they 'urge the government to be true to its word and draw up a plan to withdraw British troops from war zones'.

They go on to say that 'we believe that all governments should use this moment to end the intolerable suffering caused by global conflicts'. You can read the full statement [here](#).

Join them in calling on our government to take action by signing the ['Join the Global Ceasefire - Withdraw UK Troops'](#).

ONLINE CO-ORD MEETING

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, and consequent social distancing measures, the next Co-ord meeting will be held online via ZOOM at 14:00 on 13 May. If you are a Merseyside CND member and would like to take part, please contact andymorton@posteo.net

Details of future meetings will be sent out to members once they are finalised.

50 CLUB - RECENT WINNERS

January - John Deacon (24)

February - Ruth Mullins (40)

March - Janet Laycock (7)

April - Rita Walker (6)

Please note that despite the Merseyside CND office being closed and Co-ord not physically meeting, the 50 Club draw will continue each month. If you have won, you'll be notified immediately by email.

FUTURE EVENTS

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, Merseyside CND had been planning a number of meetings and events which, unfortunately, we've had to postpone. These included Bruce Kent speaking to the Merseyside Pensioners' Association, Wallasey CND hosting the Executive Director of Scientists for Global Responsibility, Stuart Parkinson and a fundraising folk night. We would like to assure all members and supporters that we plan for all of these to still happen once the pandemic has subsided.

At our upcoming online Co-ord meeting we will be discussing Hiroshima/Nagasaki Day and very much hope that this can go ahead as usual on 6th August.

We would like to thank all our members for your continued support.

