

MERSEYSIDE CND

SUMMER 2021 UPDATE

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In our new age of terrifying, lethal gadgets, which supplanted so swiftly the old one, the first great aggressive war, if it should come, will be launched by suicidal little men pressing an electronic button. Such a war will not last long and none will ever follow it. There will be no conquerors and no conquests, but only the charred bones of the dead on an uninhabited planet -
[William L. Shirer](#), The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich



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Report the UK to the United Nations



CND is reporting the UK government to the United Nations for breaking international law – join us!

The UK government has announced it will increase the number of nuclear warheads in its arsenal for the first time since the Cold War. A legal opinion commissioned by CND has confirmed this is a breach of international law.

As a signatory to the UN's nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the UK has committed to working towards disarmament. Instead, it is going the other way and getting more nuclear weapons, and during a pandemic no less!

CND is reporting the UK to the President-designate of the upcoming NPT Review Conference – a significant international summit to monitor progress, or lack thereof, of the treaty.

We're hoping to collect thousands of signatures to back our cause, so please support us!

The report – and the signatures collected – will be presented to the President-designate ahead of the upcoming NPT Review Conference.

SIGN THE PETITION AT

<https://cnd.eaction.org.uk/ReportUKNPT>

Still time to Kill the Bill



In spite of huge protest from civil society, a vibrant movement on the streets, and opposition from all political parties except the Conservatives, the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill passed its Third Reading in the House of Commons.

In the end, it wasn't even close – 365 MPs voted in favour, versus 265 against. The Government had previously sounded a tactical retreat in late March over the progress of the Bill, after the outraged public response to the policing of the vigil for Sarah Everard on Clapham Common. Although thousands turned out on May Day to protest the Bill, including CND, the Government placed it back on the legislative calendar in mid-May and restricted time for debate.

The result was that the 300 page Bill was passed after less than a day of debate in the Commons, with hundreds of amendments from opposition parties not being voted on. Even some Tory MPs are unhappy with the way it was handled.

The contents of the Bill are a disaster for fundamental democratic liberties. The Bill will introduce sentences of up to ten years in prison for 'intentionally or recklessly causing public nuisance' as part of protests. Similar sentences would apply to protesters damaging statues. The Bill gives the police a host of new powers to put conditions on protests to control 'the noise generated by persons taking part'. This even applies to protest of a single person.

The Bill fits in with the wider trend that has become clear in recent months of authoritarian policy making. Prior to this Bill, last autumn's 'Spy Cops' legislation extended protection for police officers who commit crimes whilst infiltrating protest movements. Historic examples of these crimes include impregnating female activists under fake identities and planting evidence on activists. The Overseas Operations Bill, currently working its way through the House of Lords, will also extend protection to British soldiers who commit war crimes while on service abroad.

CND members and supporters across the country have actively participated in the movement to Kill the Bill. Ever since the first Aldermaston marches and the Committee of 100's sit-down protests, the British anti-nuclear movement has always seen peaceful protest and non-violent direct action as key to how we build support to abolish nuclear weapons. This Bill is partly a response to Extinction Rebellion's creative protest tactics, which have caused disruption while drawing public attention to climate change. They must be supported for their vital work, not restricted.

It is vital we continue the movement to Kill the Bill. Nothing less than our freedom to protest depends upon it – as well as the rights of other communities. If the Bill comes into law, our ability to oppose the UK's nuclear weapons will be seriously impaired.



10:45, 6th August, St. John's Gardens

Join us for speeches, poetry, music and wreath laying by Lord Mayor Cllr. Mary Rasmussen



Saturday 21st August, 19:00 - 22:00 | Liverpool Cathedral, St. James Mount

Since May this year, Liverpool Anglican Cathedral has been displaying a spectacular installation of 18,000 doves. Created by renowned artist and sculptor, [Peter Walker](#), and accompanied by a soundscape from composer David Harper, the doves stand a symbol of peace, justice and equality.

Merseyside CND has been recently contacted by Rev. Canon Dr. Ellen Loudon, Director of Social Justice and Canon Chancellor in the Diocese of Liverpool, to take part in a vigil beneath the doves. This will provide an opportunity to hear from activists who have committed their lives to peace, anti-racism, environmentalism, disability rights, gender equality and other social justice causes; to participate in an evening of worship led by cathedral clergy and the Franciscan Brothers; and to hear a short reflection given by a representative of MCND.

We'd like to encourage all our members and supporters to attend what promises to be both an inspirational and informative evening. To book your ticket, please go to: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/vigil-for-peace-under-the-peace-doves-tickets-163638580399>

NURSES NOT NUKES PROTEST



Described by Royal College of Nursing General Secretary Pat Cullen as a 'bitter blow, the Government's recent decision to give nurses a paltry 3% pay rise shows just how wrong Downing Street's priorities are. The NHS saves countless lives on a daily basis but coming during a pandemic in which the health service has been stretched beyond precedent, it is particularly egregious.

This, of course, also comes at a time when the UK's stockpile of nuclear weapons is due to be increased by 40% and Trident is due to be renewed at a cost of £205 billion.

This is money which could fund the training and salaries of nurses, doctors, paramedics and various other medical professionals.

On 26th June Nurses not Nukes protests were held across the country, including in Liverpool, attempting to raise awareness of how the money spent on nuclear weapons could easily fund the NHS and other public services. We ask all MCND members to contact their MPs and councillors to demand the Government pay nurses and all other NHS staff the wage they deserve and earn every single day.



LIVERPOOL AGAINST THE ARMS FAIR PROTEST



On 12th and 13th October [AOC Europe](#), an arms fair dealing in electronic weapons of death and destruction is due to be held at the Arena and Convention Centre in Liverpool.

Over the past few months the campaign to have this stopped has gathered pace with peace groups, environmental organisations, trade unions and various individuals joining forces. A protest was held in the city centre attended by well over 100 people and a motion tabled before the city council by Mayor Joanne Anderson.

Further demonstrations, along with street stalls are planned, and we will inform you of these by email when we have further details.

You can voice your opposition to AOC Europe by signing the Liverpool Against the Arms Fair [petition](#), contacting your local councillor and MP. We urge all Merseyside CND members to do so and, if you get a reply, please let us know.



A FEW EARLY MEMORIES OF MERSEYSIDE CND

By Roger Stephenson

Saturday 11 December 1982

Queens Drive anti-cruise missile picket

MCND members stood at several key places on Liverpool's ring road holding placards opposing the siting of nuclear-armed cruise missiles in Britain.

I was a member of Hoylake & West Kirby CND. We agreed to stand with our placards on the **roundabout at Childwall Fiveways. There was quite a lot of traffic. We had a good response** – friendly toots and waves from a lot of the drivers.

To surround the city with a succession of anti-cruise missile protests was an excellent idea. People travelling a short distance would have seen at least one protest. Those travelling a long way would have seen several.

Background

1) December 1979: NATO decide to site nuclear - armed cruise missiles in Europe and Britain as weapons with which they could launch a first strike on the Soviet Union.

2) 27 August 1981: 36 women, some bringing their young children with them, calling themselves 'Women for Life on Earth', and 4 men set off from outside Cardiff City Hall to walk 110 miles to RAF Greenham Common near Newbury in Berkshire, where 96 of the missiles were due to be sited in 1983, to demand a televised debate on nuclear weapons with then defence secretary John Nott.

3) 5 September 1981: The women arrive at Greenham. No debate is forthcoming. Four women chain themselves to the fence. The rest set up camp outside the base. "We'll stay here for as long as it takes."

4) The Greenham women decide to surround the 9 mile perimeter fence with women - 'Embrace the Base' - on 12 December 1982, the third anniversary of NATO's decision to site cruise missiles there. (They estimated they would need 12,000. In fact, 35,000 took part in the action).

MCND also opposed cruise by being part of Cruisewatch

The idea of cruise was that the missiles would be stored in silos at Greenham (and at RA F Molesworth, Cambridgeshire where 60 were due to be sited in 1986). In times of political tension between the USA and the USSR the missiles could be loaded onto lorries from which they could be launched. These lorries would drive into the countryside somewhere they couldn't be seen by the enemy. The Greenham women kept an eye on the gates to the base and when a cruise missile lorry went out on exercise they would let Cruisewatch groups throughout the country know.

Some evenings I would get a phone call from MCND saying "Cruise is out. Can you come to St. John's Lane to give out leaflets?" I would get a train from West Kirby to Liverpool Lime Street and at the top of St John's Lane there would be a few members of MCND giving out leaflets to passers-by telling them of the nature and danger of cruise as part of the nuclear arms race. And they must be opposed.

My memory of these evenings was that people were generally reluctant to take leaflets in the dark when they were hurrying home from work. However, a few did stop and talk to us. We did have some constructive conversations with some people.

The Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp with its continual presence outside the base and inventive and disruptive protests both outside and inside the base for over ten years became iconic – a great inspiration to the whole peace movement worldwide. But did they achieve nuclear disarmament?

Paul Rogers, Professor of Peace Studies, University of Bradford wrote:

"In political and strategic terms, I don't think the INF Treaty would have happened (or certainly not as early as it did) without Greenham Common as part of the wider anti-nuclear movement. It is certainly the case that the INF Treaty was far and away the most transparent and verifiable treaty of its time."

Clare Short MP:

"The Greenham women and other protestors stopped the development of a new generation of nuclear weapons in Europe and led Reagan and Gorbachev to disarmament agreements. It was a mighty achievement."

The Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty was signed by the USA and the USSR on 8 December 1987. In this both parties agreed not to use ground launched missiles with a range of 500 to 5,500 kilometres.

Therefore, it could be argued that the peace camps at Greenham and Molesworth, plus the other anti-cruise protests in Britain achieved the disarmament they were campaigning for. But this was far from complete disarmament and removal of the nuclear threat. Sea launched and air launched cruise missiles were not included in the treaty. And, of course, each side still kept and developed other nuclear weapon systems.

The treaty opens with a series of phrases stating the necessity to disarm and then outlines the categories of weapons that will be abolished.

"Conscious that nuclear war would have devastating consequences for all humankind

Guided by the objective of strengthening strategic stability

Convinced that the measures set forth in this treaty will help to reduce the risk of outbreak of war and strengthen international peace and security, and

Mindful of their obligations under Article VI under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Have agreed as follows"

"Each party shall eliminate all its intermediate range missiles and launchers of said missiles and all support structures and support equipment of the categories listed in the Memorandum of Understanding. . . ."

And "neither party shall produce or flight test any intermediate range missiles"

By the summer of 1991 the two sides together had eliminated 2,700 missiles.

After the Soviet Union collapsed Russia inherited the treaty. In 2014 US inspectors claimed they had found that Russia had started developing missiles that violated the treaty. Russia said they couldn't fly the proscribed distance.

On 2 August 2019 President Trump formally withdrew the US from the treaty, which meant they could start developing new intermediate range missiles. Because the US had withdrawn from the treaty Russia also withdrew from it.

[In fact, the US, as part of NATO, stations nuclear-armed planes in Germany. This, while not actually violating the INF Treaty, goes completely against the spirit of the treaty's preamble and threatens Russia.]

The INF Treaty is only a partial ban on nuclear weapons, but it is better than no ban and a small step towards disarmament and we must ask President Biden to return to the treaty.

JANET BENNETT



Merseyside CND was saddened to learn of the recent death of Janet Bennett. She was a passionate campaigner for social justice, peace and left-wing politics.

We would like to extend our sympathies to Janet's family and friends.

GROUPS

Wallasey

- Next meeting: 14:00, Monday 2nd August, 4 Taunton Rd, CH45
- Hiroshima/Nagasaki event with Birkenhead CND, 13:00, Sat. 7th Aug by Asda in Birkenhead
- Remember Nagasaki, 12:00, Mon 9th August, information table outside Anglican Cathedral

Birkenhead

- Working to get Mayor George Davis to sign up to Mayors for Peace and to get Wirral council to support the TPNW
- Next meetings: 17th Aug + 21st Sept, 19:30, 9 Holt Hill Terrace, Birkenhead

50 CLUB - RECENT WINNERS

Monthly Draw

Apr - John Deacon (24)

May - Alan Derrick (26)

June - Brenda Lowndes (42)

If you have won you'll be notified immediately by email. Please send your bank details to **cath.page@phonecoop.coop** if you have not already done so.

EGM

We will be holding an Extraordinary General Meeting at 14:00, 1st Sept. in Conference Room 4, LCVS to discuss the financial and campaigning future of MCND. We urge all members and supporters to attend and contribute their ideas about the best way forward for us.

For the answers to the previous newsletter's crossword please go to <https://www.mcnd.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/answers.png>

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I *would/ would not also like a new member's pack at a cost of £1.

I understand that Merseyside CND needs funds for its campaigns and donate £.....



Produced by Merseyside Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament