

MERSEYSIDE CND

MARCH UPDATE

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A country which does not respect the rights of its own citizens will not respect the rights of its neighbours

[Andrei Sakharov](#) - Russian physicist, dissident and peace activist



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Nuclear weapons have always been immoral. Now they are illegal!

It is just over 12 months since the [United Nations Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons](#) was ratified, thus making the production, stockpiling, threat of use and use of nuclear weapons illegal. (22 January 2021)

Later this year there will be a review conference, attended by signatories, to assess the progress made so far in persuading nuclear-armed nations to disarm. The UK, as a non-signatory, is entitled to attend as an observer. Yet, so far, the Johnson Government has refused. This is in spite of two-thirds of the world's nations supporting the TPNW and a [cross-party parliamentary report](#) stating the Government should 'modify its approach' to the treaty and to look for opportunities to work with its supporters.

Along with National CND, and various other CND groups around the country, we are campaigning for the Government to change its policy and join the process of nuclear disarmament.

There are a number of ways in which MCND members can take part:

- [Write to your local MP](#) and ask them to support EDM 1072
- [Contact the Foreign Secretary](#), Liz Truss, asking her to attend the TPNW conference
- Read CND's [digital toolkit](#) and take action online
- Display [this poster](#) in your window (The office can print one out for you)

- Watch and share CND's [online meeting](#) with the President of the Conference, Alexander Kmentt

We encourage you to write to your local councillor to campaign for your council to become nuclear free, and to write to your MP to tell the government to sign the TPNW.

Cities across the world have pledged their opposition to nuclear weapons and are actively campaigning for their Governments to do the same.

In the United States on 9 December 2021 New York City Council signed up to the ICAN Cities Appeal and thus became nuclear free. and started a programme of public campaigning and education for the abolition of nuclear weapons. It is appropriate that New York should become nuclear free since this is where the nuclear bomb started in a building opposite the City Hall. (The Manhattan Project) New York City Council called on the US government to sign the TPNW.

In January 2022 the Catholic archbishop of Santa Fe in New Mexico, the state where a [nuclear bomb was first detonated](#), [sent a letter to all the parishes in his diocese calling on them to campaign for nuclear disarmament](#) and urged the United States government to support the TPNW.

Let's make the United Kingdom the next place to pledge its opposition to nuclear weapons!

STOP THE WAR IN UKRAINE

MCND Co-Chair, Peter Wilson's speech to Stop the War Meeting - Thurs. 10th March

I am a co-chair of Merseyside Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and am here to speak on behalf of CND on the issues arising from Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

CND unequivocally condemns the Russian military aggression against Ukraine and calls for an immediate ceasefire, the withdrawal of all Russian troops and a return to the negotiating table. We support sanctions and applaud those within Russia putting their lives on the line by publicly opposing the invasion.

We have all seen on television and on social media the horrendous destruction within Ukraine and the terrible plight of refugees. Anyone who was present at the recent Vigil at St Luke's and heard the testimony of those with friends and relatives in Ukraine can be in no doubt about the terrible human cost of the conflict but also of the fierce determination of the Ukrainian people to resist. Putin claims he is liberating Ukraine, or, as he puts it, de-militarising and de-nazifying it – however, as President Zelensky has pointed out, you don't win the hearts and minds of a people by smashing up their towns and villages and blowing up their schools and hospitals.

Anyone who has listened to Boris Johnson in the past few days, must be struck by the hypocrisy of the British Government, praising the courage of the Ukrainian people and pledging undying support while simultaneously treating those seeking refuge with a meanness of spirit which shames this country. CND calls on the government to be compassionate and welcoming to those fleeing from the war – the British people have made it clear that this is how they expect a civilised country to act and this government must take heed.

The present situation is the most serious threat to world peace and, indeed, to our very survival, for over 60 years. At the moment, it is the people of Ukraine who are paying the terrible price for this conflict. But the conflict could very easily become a much wider one and one that will affect every one of us and every community around the globe. The existential threat is of a nuclear war between NATO/US and Russia. Between them, the NATO countries and Russia have enough nuclear warheads to kill every living thing on this planet.

That is why, for the sake of all of us, this war must end, as all wars inevitably do, with negotiations, with diplomacy and with compromise. But we cannot and should not expect the Ukrainian people to engage in diplomacy, or to consider compromise

when the Russian army is attempting to pound them into submission. That is why CND calls for sanctions to be strengthened, not against the Russian people but against, what Jeremy Corbyn calls the Robber Barons who have so much power within the Russian establishment. That is why international condemnation and diplomatic isolation must be increased – not to bring the Russian government to its knees, or to force regime change, but to convince them that the costs of the invasion now far outweigh any benefits – to get them to withdraw their troops and enter meaningful negotiations in good faith.

If sanctions are to be effective, sacrifices will have to be made, particularly by the Tory Party, the City of London and the British Establishment who will have to abandon their oligarch pals and their dirty money – money which they have been shamelessly courting and exploiting over the past decades. This government's implementation of sanctions, reluctantly and in slow motion in order to give their pals time to make 'alternative arrangements', is an insult to the Ukrainian people.

And when we bring Russia to the negotiating table – what then? There is, however imperfect, a starting point, called 2015 The Minsk Agreement, agreed but never implemented by France, Germany, Russia and Ukraine to try to end the war against Russian backed separatists in Eastern Ukraine. CND is calling for that agreement to be resurrected as a basis for negotiation.

But, even before that, CND is calling for serious appreciation of Russia's history and the legitimate concerns of its people, without which there can be no lasting peace. As Britain's experience in the Second World War still influences our attitudes and prejudices today (Brexit?) Russia's bitter campaign against Nazi Germany which left 20 million dead still dominates their concept of national security and particularly their attitude to a re-armed Germany within NATO. These fears might be unfounded, and have certainly been weaponised by Putin to justify the unjustifiable, but they are real. That is why CND is calling for a commitment from NATO to halt, and even reverse their eastward expansion. That expansion of US and NATO bases into former Warsaw Pact countries has proved dangerously destabilising, contributing to Russia's feeling of being increasingly surrounded by a powerful and potentially hostile nuclear alliance. A feeling and fear that Putin has exploited ruthlessly to justify his catastrophic invasion of Ukraine and the reason Putin described Ukraine's

proposed membership of NATO as a red line.

If peace is to break out, Europe stabilised and Ukrainian sovereignty restored, the role of NATO must be a central part of any negotiation. We must question its claim to be a purely defensive alliance, citing as evidence its interventions in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya. We must question its assertion that its expansion eastwards has not been coercive but at the invitation of autonomous states. When, after the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, the US became the dominant global power, in effect the only game in town, those countries, had, in the real world, very little choice but to gravitate to NATO's nuclear alliance. Above all, we should ask why NATO is still here – why it did not disband in 1991 when its declared enemy and apparent *raison d'être*, the Soviet communist threat, ceased to exist with the collapse of the Warsaw Pact.

In 1990, Mikhail Gorbachev attended a G7 meeting in London. He was there, not as the head of an aggressive and expansionist power, but of a nation suffering the shock therapy of free market capitalism. He asked for the West's help in rescuing his country's economy and preventing its descent into what has been described as 'mafia capitalism'. He sought reconciliation not confrontation and warned of the dangers in not treating the Russian people with respect. He was rebuffed and later reported that the West "seemed to enjoy" Russia's plight. It could be said that the West's triumphalist approach contributed to Russia's descent into economic anarchy and therefore indirectly to the social and economic conditions that fuelled the rise of Vladimir Putin – a populist demagogue, stoking Russians' sense of victimhood and promising to reverse what he describes as Russia's humiliation by re-building the Russian Empire. Tragically Ukraine is now paying a terrible price for the West's failure to grasp that opportunity 30 years ago to bury the Cold War in favour of peaceful co-existence.

It is not too late but the starting point for any peaceful settlement must be, for Russia, a withdrawal from Ukraine and respect for its sovereignty but, for the West, an honest recognition of Russia's concerns and an acceptance that NATO is part of the problem, not a solution.

We are on the brink of a nuclear confrontation which could wipe us all out. For Ukraine's sake and for the sake of all of us, we must redouble our efforts to bring Russian troops home and Russian leaders to the negotiating table.

BRUCE KENT DELIVERS LETTER FOR PEACE TO RUSSIAN EMBASSY



CND Vice-President and veteran peace activist, Bruce Kent, delivered a letter to the Russian embassy condemning Moscow's invasion of Ukraine and calling for the human rights of Russian anti-war protestors to be respected.

Accompanied by CND General Secretary Kate Hudson, he said *'We are dismayed by President Putin's public warning of 'consequences greater than any you have faced in history,' which is widely interpreted to be a reference to the use of nuclear weapons. If this was indeed the case, we condemn it in the strongest terms, and are also disturbed to hear more recent reports that Russian nuclear forces are being placed on high alert. "President Putin's order to invade Ukraine and the statement referred to above has tilted the world towards potential disaster. These actions put all of us in peril: the risk of nuclear war looms."*

In solidarity with those opposed to the war, he continued, *"We stand squarely with all those in Russia and beyond who have protested against the invasion of Ukraine"*.

You can read the [full text of the letter](#) on the Merseyside CND website.

NATO - AN ALTERNATIVE VIEW

1945 – 1955 NATO, The Warsaw Pact and The Cold War

NATO's US led nuclear armed alliance was established in 1945 as a response to the perceived threat from the Soviet Union.

In 1955, [NATO invited West Germany to join](#). In the context of [Russia's 20 million deaths in WWII](#) and the allies post war agreement that Germany should never be allowed to re-arm, NATO's action was seen by Russia as a threat to their national security. Russia reacted to the prospect of a resurgent Germany within a hostile military alliance by establishing and leading their own nuclear armed [Warsaw Pact](#) alliance, ushering in [The Cold War](#), which dominated global politics over the next 35 years.

In the words of the historian [E.P. Thompson](#) "The Cold War is now about itself. It is an on-going self-reproducing condition, to which both adversaries are addicted."

1990- 1992 The Collapse of the Soviet Union

When the [Soviet Union and The Warsaw Pact collapsed in 1991](#), so did Eastern Europe's communist command economy. Their exposure to the shock therapy of free market capitalism destroyed Russia's economic and social structures and left it at the mercy of what became known as 'Mafia Capitalism'. The subsequent anger and humiliation felt by the Russian people proved a perfect breeding ground for a hard line populist intensely nationalistic regime such as [Vladimir Putin's](#), promising to reverse what he terms Russia's humiliation by the West, by re-establishing a new Russian Empire. Tragically, that includes reviving Russia's claim on Ukraine as an integral, historic part of that empire.

A Lost Opportunity

It did not have to be that way. The West's post-cold war leaders could have seized the opportunity for peace and reconciliation offered by the collapse of communism and the Warsaw Pact, dissolved NATO and helped Eastern Europe's economies recover. They did none of those things. In July 1990, [Mikhail Gorbachev](#), Russia's premier, and a man apparently favoured by the West – [Margaret Thatcher](#) described him as "a man one can do business with" – [attended the G7 in London to ask for financial support](#) to ease the economic transition to a mixed economy. He was rebuffed and later reported that the West "seemed to enjoy" Russia's plight. It could be said that the West's triumphalist approach condemned Russia to economic and social anarchy and the rise of Putin.

The Re-invention of NATO

With the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, and with it, what [Ronald Reagan](#) had described as "[The Evil Empire](#)", NATO should have become obsolete. Instead it moved to consolidate its power, [expand its membership](#) and invent a new reason for its existence. At NATO's fiftieth anniversary conference in 1999, it

moved beyond its previous defensive role to adopt a new 'Strategic Concept' of 'out of area' – in other words offensive – operations anywhere on the Eurasian landmass. Hence NATO led or dominated interventions in [Yugoslavia](#), Afghanistan, Iraq, and [Libya](#) as well as the [presence NATO nuclear weapon in Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy and Turkey](#).

NATO Expansion

Using the US's new position as the undisputed dominant global military and economic force; in effect 'the only game in town' NATO rapidly expanded, integrating the countries of Eastern Europe and former Warsaw Pact members into its alliance. This expansion eastward of US and NATO bases, has proved dangerously destabilising, contributing to Russia's feeling of being increasingly surrounded by a powerful and potentially hostile nuclear alliance.

As early as 1982, [George Kennan](#), former US ambassador to the Soviet Union was warning of the dangers of NATO expansion, describing it as "a tragic mistake" which risked reviving the cold war unnecessarily at a time when "no one was threatening anybody else".

A Broken Promise

In 1990, the [re-unification of Germany](#) precipitated another crisis. Mikhail Gorbachev, expressing Russia's historic fear of a united and strengthened Germany, sought, and was given assurances by the West. Despite official denials, recently declassified documents show that Gorbachev was [promised that NATO would not encroach eastwards](#). In the words of then US Secretary of State, James Baker "not one inch eastwards". That this promise was not incorporated into any official treaty has allowed NATO to deny it was ever made. Despite this, NATO's eastwards expansion has fuelled a sense of betrayal – [Gorbachev accusing NATO of deliberately misleading Russia](#) – that Putin is now using to chilling effect to justify his catastrophic invasion of Ukraine.

Reaping the Whirlwind

With Russia's attempted annexation of Ukraine the cold war is at it's most dangerous for over 50 years. In a bitter irony, Russia's nuclear capability is deterring NATO from providing the sort of [military help that Ukraine desperately wants](#). The West can only provide economic sanctions, arms, moral support and limited humanitarian relief and hope that that will be enough. Meanwhile the people of Ukraine reap the whirlwind and we in the West must accept that our refusal to intervene might mean the bloody defeat of the Ukrainian people and that this might just be the price they have to pay for us to avoid the nuclear catastrophe of a Third World War.

- Peter Wilson, Merseyside CND Co-Chair

GLOBAL DAY OF ACTION FOR UKRAINE



On Sunday 6th March 350 anti-war activists from across Merseyside protested against the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the expansion of NATO as part of a Global Day of Action. MCND members, along with Stop the War Coalition activists and others, called for an immediate ceasefire and a peaceful, diplomatic resolution to the conflict.

Similar demonstrations were held across the country, including at Trafalgar Square in London, where CND General Secretary, Kate Hudson, highlighted the dangers of possible escalation. Any direct conflict between Russia and NATO would put 12,000 nuclear warheads on high-alert.

To watch short clips of the speeches in London, go to the Stop the War Coalition [Twitter page](#).

CLEO WRIGHT 02/11/26 - 25/10/2021

By Vee Wright

Cleo Wright, a veteran CND supporter, campaigner and stalwart of the Liverpool CND office, died in October 2021, just days before her 95th birthday.

Having been brought up in rural Worcestershire, Cleo moved to Liverpool in the early 1950's having been offered a job as a family support worker at the Liverpool Family Service Unit. She was met on arrival at the Unit by John Wright the volunteer handyman and by 1957 they were married, had 2 young daughters, and had moved to 15 Greenheys Road, Liverpool 8, where they lived for the next 38 years, and from where they brought up their 5 children. It was from here whilst bringing up their young family that Cleo and John hosted the local group CND meetings, and it was through this local group that Cleo met and became lifelong friends with Pat Arrowsmith.

Cleo's support of the anti-nuclear and anti-war movements spanned the early Aldermaston marches of the 1960s, the Greenham Common protests of the 1980s, through to the anti-war marches of the 2000s. In later years she would often be joined by other members of the family especially her 3 daughters and her grandchildren.

In 1993, 15 Greenheys Road again became a key base. This time it was as the collection point and organising base for an exhibition of women's art depicting their experiences of conflict. Called Women Remember Women in Conflict the women organisers secured agreement from the newly opened Albert Dock Company to put the exhibition on in an empty space in the docks. However no sooner was the exhibition up and open than the company objected to some of the artwork as it depicted nude women! They asked for the artwork to be removed and then threatened to shut down the whole exhibition when the organisers took down the pictures but put up a statement explaining what had happened. At this point as the curator and self appointed guardian of the original artworks Cleo refused to leave the exhibition space staging a one woman sit in and leading to the Liverpool Echo headline "Gran's Protest for Naked Art".

In 1995 Cleo left Liverpool and settled in Barmouth, from where she continued to regularly return to do her stint of volunteering in the Liverpool CND office. Eventually her dementia meant that she needed full time residential care and she spent her final 4 years back in Liverpool, where she was well looked after and enjoyed many visits and outings with family and friends. Right up until her last few months of life when her memory was completely failing her she still recognised a CND symbol!

LIVERPOOL PAX CHRISTI ASH WEDNESDAY 2022

Text: Kath Lydon | Photos: John Usher



On Ash Wednesday, March 2nd, Merseyside Pax Christi led an Annual Christian Vigil for Repentance for nuclear weapons in Liverpool City Centre. This year the event was particularly important as [Pope Francis](#) had

called for prayer and fasting on this day, in view of the ongoing tension over Ukraine. We were conscious that the risk of nuclear warfare was higher than at any time since 1945. Pax Christi supporters were joined by members of Merseyside CND, and received a message of support from [Bishop Beverley Mason](#) of Warrington.

The vigil took the form of a series of stations at locations directly associated with either war or non-violence, beginning at the steps of St Luke's bombed out church.

We began by singing: *'We'll lament of war. we'll lament of war. We will repent, we will repent. And make peace again, and make peace again.'*

At the second station we encircled the Statue of Reconciliation in Concert Square. We recited the Coventry litany of Reconciliation which is prayed every Friday in the ruins of Coventry Cathedral; we prayed that our government will repent of policies which maintain and upgrade the UK



nuclear deterrent; we lamented their refusal be part of negotiations towards multi-lateral disarmament, such as The Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (known as The Nuclear Ban). We also reminded ourselves of our responsibilities, as citizens, for these policies, and of our need for forgiveness for the times when we fail to live by Gospel values of peace and justice.

The third station was at the site of the sanctuary of the former church of St Peter's in Church St. where individuals and an image of a Trident nuclear submarine were marked with ashes. There was a reading from the recent Pastoral letter of Archbishop John Wester of Santa Fe Archdiocese, where the US has its largest repository of nuclear weapons at Albuquerque, New Mexico. In this letter Archbishop Wester describes how his views on nuclear weapons changed radically during a visit to Hiroshima with Pope Francis in 2017. He writes:

'It is the duty of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, the birthplace of nuclear weapons, to support the Treaty, while working towards universal, verifiable, nuclear disarmament.'



At Lord St, (the site of extensive bombing in World War 2) the group prayed for victims of violence throughout our war-torn world, being mindful of Ukraine, Afghanistan, Yemen, Ukraine, Afghanistan and Palestine and of individuals such as [Ava White](#), aged 12 who was fatally stabbed in Liverpool City Centre in November 2021.

Extracts were read from Pope Francis' encyclical '[Laudato Si](#)' and from the Love Letter to the Earth by the late [Thich Nat Hanh](#). We were mindful that the war in Ukraine is a wakeup call: the threat of a nuclear holocaust is the unacceptable price of dependence on the idols of nuclear weapons.

At Derby Square, and close to the Law Courts, we prayed for the success of nonviolent ways to reduce the threat of nuclear weapons. Cardinal Michael Fitzgerald read a statement from Catholic Church leaders in support of legal instruments of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, including the UN treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. This statement refers to Pope Francis' 'condemnation of the use and possession of nuclear weapons.' People were then invited to tie a ribbon to the cross in remembrance of someone who had inspired them to work for peace.



The final station was outside Liverpool Town Hall. A letter had been sent to Mayor Joanne Anderson asking that Liverpool join cities around the world, in passing a Resolution supporting the Nuclear Ban (Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.) The Vatican was the first state to ratify this treaty. In partnership with Merseyside CND, Pax Christi is campaigning for this Resolution to be adopted by councils on Merseyside.

Follow up actions: Many cities around the world support the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons e.g. Sydney, Paris, Manchester, Berlin. In December 2021 the citizens of New York succeeded in their campaign for New York City Council to support the nuclear ban, calling on the US to join the Nuclear Ban Treaty, and for the city to take on legal obligations in terms of divestment, education, and policy on nuclear issues. To support the Nuclear Ban :

Ask your MP to sign a pledge to support the nuclear ban

Ask your councillors to sign an Individual pledge in support of the ban

Ask your councillor to vote for a Resolution in support of the nuclear ban

See website <https://cnduk.org/nuclear-ban-communities/>

For more info, contact: kathrynlydon@hotmail.com or meet on Zoom and also at St. Michael's West Derby Rd Liverpool L6 5EH



First published in 1936, Peace News is the UK's only grassroots newspaper dedicated to comprehensive reporting of peace and social justice issues.

It has a proud tradition of opposing not only the most extreme forms of violence, such as war and nuclear weapons, but also racism, sexism, homophobia, inequality, government oppression and environmental destruction.

Inspired by the principles of pacifism, feminism and socialism, Peace News is an invaluable and trusted source of information for those seeking a more just and equal society.

Merseyside CND would like to encourage all its members and supporters to subscribe to Peace News by going to : <https://peacenews.info/subscribe>

50 CLUB - RECENT WINNERS

Monthly Draw

Dec - Lottie Humphreys (29)

Jan - Ruth Mullins (40)

Feb - Mark Whitfield (20)



The March draw will be made at Co-ord on Wednesday 6th April.

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.

For £5 per month you too could be a winner of £50 per month or £250/£100/£50 in the annual draw.

Thanks to all members of the 50 Club for your unwavering support. If you would like to help this vital fund raiser for Merseyside CND please contact Cathy, the Treasurer, via the office for a 50 Club membership form – 07394 810 871, merseysidecnd@gmail.com

GROUPS

Wallasey have supported various marches and events and meet monthly. Contact Barbara (barb.hardcastle@gmail.com) or Janet (janmike@care4free.net) for details of upcoming events.

Birkenhead have also been supporting the same events as Wallasey and in July Cathy Page will be speaking at a school in Manchester as part of the CND Peace Education programme.

Cathy can be contacted for details of upcoming events - cath.page@phonecoop.coop

UKRAINE CRISIS APPEAL

As the security situation allows, the Ukrainian Red Cross Society (URCS) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) will continue to respond to existing and emerging humanitarian needs.

Your donation could help provide food, water, first aid, medicine, warm clothing and shelter. <https://donate.redcross.org.uk/appeal/ukraine-crisis-appeal>

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MERSEYSIDE C.N.D. MEMBERSHIP FORM

To receive regular newsletters please complete this form and return it to the address at the top of Page 1 along with your cheque.

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I wish to *join/ rejoin Merseyside CND. Subscription rates: *waged-£5/ family-£6/ unwaged or youth (under 22) £2.

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 £.....

Please return to Merseyside CND, 151 Dale Street, Liverpool, L2 2AH



Produced by Merseyside Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament