

Campaign

UN to start talks on global nuclear ban

CND Campaigns Officer **Sara Medi Jones** writes about last week's historic vote in the United Nations (UN) in favour of arranging a conference on a nuclear ban treaty.

DESPITE the British government's best attempts, the United Nations last week adopted a resolution agreeing to convene a conference in March 2017 to negotiate a global nuclear ban treaty. 123 countries voted in favour, with only 38 voting against. Those opposed included the UK, the USA, France, Israel and Russia. North Korea voted in favour of the ban conference. The other nuclear states (India, Pakistan and China) abstained.

Countries including Mexico, Austria, Ireland, Brazil, Nigeria and South Africa put forward the resolution, which proposes two negotiating conferences over 20 days at the UN to conclude a new international treaty that would prohibit nuclear weapons.

While it's encouraging to see so many countries expressing the need for the world to move on from nuclear weapons, it's very disappointing to see the British government attempting to derail these vital negotiations. After all, Britain is a signatory to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty which commits us to engaging in steps to disarm.

The international community has united before to ban biological and chemical weapons, land mines and cluster bombs. As the majority of the world is covered by nuclear weapons-free zones anyway, a global ban treaty seems like the next logical step. The government that has begun replacing Trident, Britain's own nuclear



weapons system, at a cost of £205 billion, has repeatedly said it supports a multilateral approach to global abolition. So why is it opposing

what is now before us: a clear and concrete multilateral plan?

Although law, morality and mass popular will are already in favour of getting rid of nuclear weapons, the nuclear states ignore all these factors. But we cannot let the UK refuse to participate in the conference – we need to get them round the negotiating table.

Over 2000 CND supporters wrote to the Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson asking him to support the conference. Thank you to everyone who got involved – this ensured that the issue is definitely on his agenda. And now we'll be building on this campaign to make sure the UK is represented at the talks. Parliamentary CND will be writing to political parties encouraging them to send representatives to the negotiations and to the Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee asking for evidence sessions on the issue.

We now urge the British government to rethink its approach and to support and participate in the UN conference in 2017.

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament,
162 Holloway Rd,
London N7 8DQ
020 7700 2393
enquiries@cnduk.org
www.cnduk.org



Nuclear energy is not the answer

Parliamentary CND Chair **Caroline Lucas MP** writes about why the government is wrong to give Hinkley C nuclear power plant the go-ahead.

After months of speculation, and despite a hastily called review by Prime Minister Theresa May, the government has given a green light to the most expensive white elephant in British history.

The new nuclear power station proposed at Hinkley Point is no ordinary piece of infrastructure. Indeed, according to Greenpeace it will be the most costly object ever built on Earth. A large chunk of the funds for the construction will come from China as part of a deal that will see it lead on the development of another reactor in Bradwell, Essex.

EDF, an energy company owned by the French state, will stump up the rest of the construction costs. Just months after people in this country voted to ‘take back control’, ministers want to place a big part of our energy system in the hands of foreign governments.

The amount of cash for this project that is set to be provided by UK bill payers is eye-watering; with estimates revised up from £6.1bn to £29.7bn.

This is a terrible deal that has been slammed by economists and environmentalists alike for locking us into paying twice the current wholesale electricity price for 35 years.

At the heart of the problems with nuclear energy is the stark fact that there is still no solution to the nuclear waste problem. Earlier this year a terrifying exposé by the BBC revealed the risks associated with handling nuclear waste, with allegations that years of neglect have led to the nuclear-processing facility at Sellafield being ‘riddled with safety flaws’.

Every project in Europe and China using the kind of technology planned for Hinkley is facing huge cost overruns and delays. Hinkley is unlikely to provide power until the late 2020s – far too late if we’re serious about weaning ourselves off fossil fuels with the haste that’s needed.

Perhaps the most absurd aspect of this project is that fact that it’s being waved through while cheaper and cleaner alternatives are being blocked. According to the National Grid’s energy

scenarios, by 2020 small-scale distributed generation will represent a third of total capacity in the UK. But the government is now actively undermining progress.

The evidence for alternatives is clear: smart meters, home and grid-scale batteries that store and release excess renewable power, and other modern solutions would be cheaper and more efficient than building new power stations to meet extra demand during relatively short periods. The cost of wind and solar has dropped significantly, and we know that a nationwide scheme of home insulation would hugely reduce demand, keep people warm in their homes and provide jobs in every constituency for a fraction of the price of Hinkley.

Make no mistake, nuclear power will suck resources away from building the energy infrastructure we need, and threaten our climate change targets because of the snail’s pace at which it will be built. I’m urging ministers to choose a future where power is in the hands of the many, not the few.

Inspiration for the year ahead

CND General Secretary **Kate Hudson** reports back from our annual conference.

THIS YEAR'S annual CND conference took place in Manchester in the historic Mechanics Institute. The packed hall received a rousing welcome from veteran local peace campaigner Betty Tebbs, a stalwart of the movement who has been a great personal inspiration to me.

Our conference this year served a double purpose: the first day dedicated to our democratic process, including leadership elections, reports of work and policy decisions for the year ahead; and the second to discuss and share peace campaigning methods for these turbulent political times that we face.

The first day was rich in debate, sometimes heated – as befits the importance of the challenges we face – but always constructive. ‘How to campaign to Stop Trident replacement after the parliamentary vote?’ was the central question. Wide-ranging discussion included so-called ‘deterrence’, jobs, technological developments, legal obligations and the illegitimacy of imposing nuclear weapons on Scotland.

Other topics included making specific reference to the global nuclear ban treaty in our strategic objective on global abolition; opposing nuclear power and new build at Hinkley, and mobilising against NATO at its forthcoming summit in Brussels in 2017.

In our leadership elections Dave Webb was endorsed as continuing Chair, and Linda Hugl continues as Treasurer. They are joined by two new vice-chairs, Hannah Tweddell from Bristol CND, and Carol Turner from London Region CND. Daniel Blaney continues as a vice-chair. We were delighted to receive video messages from two of our vice-presidents: Caroline Lucas MP and Jeremy Corbyn MP.

The second day was kicked off by a panel discussion on ‘Campaigning techniques – what works?’ with contributions from Kat Hobbs from CAAT, Ben Sellers who ran the Jeremy for Leader social media campaign, Rebecca Long-Bailey, one of the local MPs and Sean Morris from Nuclear-Free Local

Authorities. Numerous workshop sessions followed, with lively engagement and a real sense of getting hands-on with the challenges we face.

After the conference closed, participants were treated to a highly enjoyable historical/political tour of Manchester, led by local CND activist Steve Roman. In short, it was a weekend full of crucial campaigning discussion and diverse political and cultural delights!

A big thank you is due to Greater Manchester and District CND for hosting the event and all the work they put in. And we hope to see many of you next year – it’s an event not to be missed!

**Up to £60 donation
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8th November

Unfinished Business: London Guantánamo demonstration

6-8pm, outside the US Embassy, Grosvenor Square, London. Join the London Guantánamo Campaign's demonstration on the US Presidential Election Day.

■ For more info contact london.gtmo@gmail.com.

13th November

'Humanity in the midst of war' – Remembrance Day Lecture

3pm, Imperial War Museum, Lambeth Road, London. Organised by the Movement for the Abolition of War, this Remembrance Day lecture will be delivered by Vickie Hawkins, General Director of Médecins Sans Frontières. Free entry – everyone welcome.

■ For more information contact 020 3397 3019.

24th November

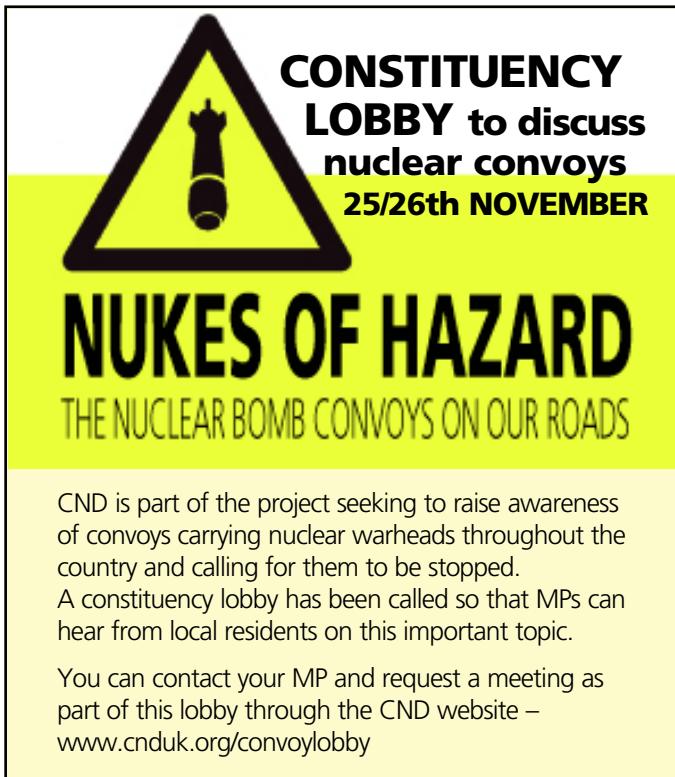
No War! No Austerity!

London Youth and Student CND conference. 6:30pm-9pm, The Venue, Student Central, Malet St, London. London Youth and Student CND will be debunking the lies of Tory austerity and uniting activists to carry the anti-war message across schools and campuses.

26th November

Lucas Plan 40th Anniversary Conference

9am-5pm, Birmingham



CND is part of the project seeking to raise awareness of convoys carrying nuclear warheads throughout the country and calling for them to be stopped. A constituency lobby has been called so that MPs can hear from local residents on this important topic. You can contact your MP and request a meeting as part of this lobby through the CND website – www.cnduk.org/convoylobby

Voluntary Service Council,
138 Digbeth, Birmingham.
CND is sponsoring a
conference celebrating the

40th anniversary of the Lucas
Plan and looking at its
relevance for the future.
■ info@breakingtheframe.org.uk

Peace Camps

Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp

Second weekend of every
month.

■ Tel: 07946 676761
info@aldermaston.net
www.aldermaston.net
@Peace_women_AWE

■ Tel 01436 820901
faslanepeacecamp@hotmail.com

Menwith Hill Women's Peace Camp

■ Contact Yorkshire CND for
details: 01274 730795 or
info@yorkshirecnd.org.uk

Menwith Hill vigil

Every Tuesday 6-7.30pm.
■ For more info contact
Sarah – 01765 600928 or
sswift64@gmail.com