

campaign

No thanks for nukes



CND General Secretary **Kate Hudson** recaps last Friday's CND protest at Westminster Abbey.

LAST Friday the Ministry of Defence hosted a National Service of Thanksgiving in Westminster Abbey to mark 50 years of what they call 'the Continuous at Sea Deterrent'. In other words, half a century of British submarines, armed with nuclear weapons, on patrol 24/7. As you may have seen – from the wall-to-wall media coverage – there was huge public opposition to the event. The biggest boost came from the outrage amongst the clergy. Almost 200 wrote a letter to the Dean of Westminster Abbey, referencing the Church's support for nuclear disarmament: 'At a time when the United Nations has

agreed a new Treaty to ban nuclear weapons and the Church of England General Synod passed a motion calling on Christians to "work tirelessly for their elimination across the world", we believe this service sends the wrong message to the global Anglican communion.'

A high-profile media spat ensued with the Dean claiming that it was an event to thank service personnel for their dedicated work. But a CND supporter had been sent an invitation by mistake, so we knew that it was actually a thanksgiving for the so-called deterrent. The Dean's subsequent claims that it was about praying for peace didn't wash,

especially after his repeated insistence that nuclear weapons have kept the peace for 50 years.

3,500 of us wrote to the Dean urging him not to have the event in the Abbey and 1,500 wrote to the Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson urging cancellation. Of course, he was sacked before the event so he couldn't enjoy the pealing of bells and the acres of braid on show.

Around 500 protestors assembled opposite the Abbey with banners and placards, from many peace organisations. Around 200 of us engaged in a die-in and sang peace songs, while Christian CND held an alternative service nearby. Once the event had ended, the dignitaries filed out to make their way to the QE2 centre for a reception and had to pass by us, as we chanted for a good 20

minutes – not to Trident! No to War! They certainly heard the message! A short rally followed, with speeches from Bruce Kent and supporting organisations: Theresa Alessandro from Pax Christi, Lindsey German from the Stop the War Coalition, and Daniel Jakopovich from the Quakers.

The presence of Prince William – apparently he is commodore of submariners or some such title – increased the media excitement about the event, as did the first public outing of Penny Mordaunt as new Defence Secretary. For the protestors outside the Abbey this was a marvellous opportunity to raise public awareness of the issue. A big thank you to everyone who participated and congratulations for a powerful day of protest. It really was 'speaking truth to power'.

Groups Spotlight

This month:
Sydenham and Forest Hill CND



The group held their AGM last week, and discussed plans for the year ahead. One of their annual highlights is coming up on May 25th – the group's plant fair! They are also particularly active around Armistice Day, selling white poppies to the local area.

If you would like to get in touch with the group, please contact 020 8690 6117 or goteamgini@hotmail.com

Protest Trump's State Visit!

It has been confirmed that US President Donald Trump will visit the UK on a state visit from **June 3rd-5th**.

Huge protests were mobilised when Trump visited last July – an estimated 250,000 people took to the streets of London.

CND is once again part of the Together against Trump protests – see www.cnduk.org



Progress needed

CND Campaigns Officer **Sara Medi Jones** attended the NPT Preparatory Committee at the UN in New York.

IT IS impossible to ignore the world becoming a more dangerous place.

Government representatives are currently gathered at the United Nations to discuss one of the main threats we face – a new nuclear arms race. Politicians from across the world are considering the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), one of the most important nuclear weapons agreements that exists, at a two-week conference.

The basics of the NPT can be summarised as follows: states with nuclear weapons at the time the treaty was adopted agreed to get rid of their nuclear weapons, while those without agreed not to acquire them. The deal has been partially successful – only a handful of countries have developed nuclear weapons since the NPT entered into force in 1970. However, none of the nuclear weapons states have dismantled their nuclear weapons.

With CND in attendance, governments gave general opening statements last week. The UK statement was as predictable as it was disappointing, with the

government representative talking about how essential Trident remains to its security. Other issues discussed in the plenary sessions included countries' nuclear arsenals, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran, North Korea's nuclear weapons and the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces treaty.

It would be wrong to aim low for an NPT Review Conference taking place next year to formally review the treaty. It is by aiming high in the first place that the NPT was achieved.

The latter – the INF treaty – provided the subject matter for a side meeting hosted by CND in New York, as we looked at how the US is attacking the current international system by pulling out of treaties and agreements.

We were joined at our meeting by very knowledgeable speakers, including a representative from the UK embassy, who faced questions on what constitutes the 'right situation' to start disarming. It was an incredibly useful session,

which got everyone thinking about the work we as civil society need to do to highlight the current threats.

CND was also delighted to participate in another side meeting, to update fellow campaigners on developments with the Trident nuclear weapons system. Organisations from across the world are always interested to hear about CND's work.

The UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs had opened the conference, calling for 'real dialogue', yet finding common ground will not be easy if states are rigid in their positions, as has been evident so far. Regrettably there seems to be no flexibility on show by the nuclear-armed states, who are sticking to a rigid script about a 'deteriorating international situation'.

There is no excuse for inaction and it would be wrong to aim low for an NPT Review Conference taking place next year to formally review the treaty. It is by aiming high in the first place that the NPT was achieved.



Global Dangers Tour – get involved!

Upcoming dates include Leicester (May 23rd), Mid-Somerset (June 18th), Crawley (June 27th), Haringey (July 1st), Canterbury (July 5th) and Oxfordshire (September 21st).

■ For more information or if you are interested in hosting a visit – enquiries@cnduk.org or 020 7700 2393.

NFLA Scotland Spring seminar

May 10th, 12:30 noon
Dundee City Chambers, 14 City Square, Dundee DD1 3BY
■ Contact cathy.birell@glasgow.gov.uk

International Conscientious Objectors' Day – Leicester

May 15th, 6pm
Peace Walk, Leicester
■ Contact 0116 259 1053 or rachelpepa@hotmail.com

Oxford CND meeting

May 16th, 6:45pm
Oxford Town Hall, St Aldate's, Oxford OX1 1BX
■ Contact 01865 248357 or oxfordcnd@phonecoop.coop

20th Anniversary of the Millichap Peace Fund Lectures

May 21st, 7pm
Hereford Meeting House, King Street, Hereford
All welcome.

Abingdon Peace Group meeting

May 21st, 8pm
The Northcourt Centre, Northcourt Road, Abingdon
■ Contact 01235 526265 or sallyreynolds@btinternet.com

Faringdon Peace Group meeting

June 5th, 7:30pm
Friends Meeting House, Faringdon SN7 8AL
■ Contact 01367 710308 or steve.jenny@hotmail.com

Preston New Road Anti-Fracking Protest with Kate Hudson

June 10th, 12:30
Preston New Road Drill Site, Preston New Road, Preston
■ Contact 020 7700 2393 or enquiries@cnduk.org

Give Peace a Dance

June 13th, 7pm
Notting Hill Arts Club, 21 Notting Hill Gate, London
■ Contact 020 7700 2393 or information@cnduk.org

Salisbury CND AGM

June 18th, 7:30pm
Salisbury Quaker meeting house, 51 Wilton Road, Salisbury SP2 7EP
■ Contact 01722 321865

Peace Camps

Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp

Second weekend of every month.
■ Tel 07946 676761
info@aldermaston.net
www.aldermaston.net
@Peace_women_AWE

Faslane Peace Camp

Permanent. A814, Shandon, Helensburgh, Dumbartonshire G84 8NT.
■ Tel 07376 188216 or email faslanepeacecamp@protonmail.com

Menwith Hill Vigil

The weekly vigil is now switching days – please contact Sarah for details: 01765 600928 or sswift64@gmail.com

