

Campaign

Our next steps

CND General Secretary **Kate Hudson** reflects on the result of last week's election.



WHAT a roller-coaster ride the election has been. We had real hope for change combined with the deeply shocking use of lies and misinformation on a massive scale. I was reminded of the worst days of the 1983 election and the terrible attacks on Michael Foot, then Labour leader, who had been a founder member of CND and had taken his party into the election on a manifesto which included unilateral nuclear disarmament. Some of us will remember the Tory propaganda from the time – the leaflets they produced

where they said CND stood for communist, neutralist and defeatist. Of course Labour didn't stand on an anti-nuclear platform in 2019, but no attempt was lost to make out that Jeremy Corbyn was a traitor, a lover of terrorists and a threat to our national security. The ascendancy of the far right within the Conservative Party is a threat to all of us, to our rights and democracy, to our diverse communities – and to peace and justice. So we have big challenges ahead.

Although the election was dominated by specific national issues, we were

determined to ensure that nuclear weapons were on the agenda – and not just as a ‘nuclear button’ question. So a big thanks to all of you who took the time to lobby your candidates on Trident and the Global Ban Treaty. Our lobby system and data collection have proved to be a useful tool for many, who have used the information we’ve collated to support their voting decisions. We now have lots of information about the views of incoming MPs and we will put it to good use over the next weeks and months.

This new Conservative government makes our work for nuclear disarmament very

We will continue to work at all levels across society and in parliament to ensure progress on scrapping Trident and cancelling its replacement.

One of our first initiatives will be to press the new government to send a top level delegation to the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference in April and May, at the UN in New York. All UK governments since 1970 have paid lip service to their Non-Proliferation Treaty disarmament commitments – but nothing is happening. Let’s hold the government to account on this – especially in this year when the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

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difficult. But we congratulate all those principled politicians across the UK who have been elected and raise the banner of peace and nuclear disarmament. The significant increase in SNP MPs at Westminster will be a strong voice on the nuclear issue, working with others in Parliamentary CND, chaired by Caroline Lucas MP.

is likely to be ratified.

Above all, we must work together across society to strengthen and renew our movement. Change comes when we are united, mobilised and determined to make a difference. Whoever is in government we will advance the cause of nuclear disarmament and ultimately we will prevail.

Spotlight

This month:
**Mid Somerset
CND**



Mid Somerset CND and Peace Group has had a busy 2019 campaigning hard for a world without nuclear weapons. The group also found time to arrange a carol-singing session over the festive period to raise money for Safe Passage, a charity which helps refugee children.

If you are a CND member or supporter who lives in the Wells and Mendip area then please get in touch by phoning 01749 870078, emailing info@midsomcnd-peacegroup.org.uk or visiting the Facebook page: facebook.com/somersetcnd/ New members and ideas very welcome!

Submarine delays

Nuclear Information Service Director **David Cullen** explains why a recently-announced delay in building submarines could have a knock-on effect on Britain's nuclear weapons system.

THE GOVERNMENT has announced that production of the fourth Astute-class submarine – HMS Audacious – is nearly 17 months behind schedule, a delay that is likely to impact on the timetable for building the Dreadnought-class submarines, which are scheduled to carry the UK's nuclear weapons system. HMS Audacious was due to be handed over to the Navy in August 2019, but due to a fault, handover is now expected to be January 2021. Astute-class submarines are nuclear-powered but conventionally armed.

The Ministry of Defence has refused to give full details of the issue, citing security concerns. Mark Francois, a member of the Defence Select Committee, called the Astute programme a 'disaster', and said that 'something went horribly wrong at Barrow and has continued to go horribly wrong for years'.

Astute submarines are being built by BAE Systems at Barrow-in-Furness, in the Devonshire Dock Hall.

The delay between the official launch of the submarine and it being submerged in the dock at

Barrow suggest that problems may have been apparent for some time. However, it seems that until recently the August 2019 date was expected to be met. It seems probable that during the delay HMS Audacious has been returned to the Devonshire Dock Hall for a faulty part to be replaced. After the submarine leaves Barrow, it will begin a series of sea trials, and there will probably be further testing and training before the submarine goes on operational deployment. The immediate consequence of the current delay will be that the Trafalgar-class submarine which HMS Audacious was due to replace, HMS Trenchant, is likely to have its service life extended further than originally planned, meaning greater maintenance costs.

There will also likely be delays to the last Astute-class submarine, which is due to be built in the space vacated by HMS Audacious in the Devonshire Dock Hall, and to the third Dreadnought-class submarine, which will be built in the same space afterwards. However, if workers and other

resources have been redirected from work on the other Astute-class submarines in order to minimise the delays to HMS Audacious, there could be knock-on delays to all the submarines currently under construction and also to the entire Dreadnought class.

The government no longer publishes in-service dates for the Dreadnought submarines, but it has been suggested that the MoD may struggle to keep the current nuclear-armed submarines at sea in the early 2030s, particularly if there are delays in building their successors. In evidence to the Defence Select Committee, Ben Wallace said that he did not know what the knock-on effects of the delay to HMS Audacious were likely to be, but he described submarine construction capacity as 'hollowed out' and said that politicians, the military and industry had all suffered from 'optimism bias'.

This is only the latest in a series of delays and issues for replacing Trident, Britain's nuclear weapons system, casting further doubt on the viability of the programme.

For a full, updated list of events, see cnduk.org/events/

Abingdon Peace Group meeting

December 17th, 8pm
The Northcourt Centre,
Northcourt Road,
Abingdon OX14 1QD
■ Contact 01235 526265 or
sallyreynolds@btinternet.com

Leeds CND meeting

January 8th, 6pm
Leeds Civic Hall, Calverley
Street, Leeds LS1 1UR
■ Contact 01274 730795 or
leedscnd@gmail.com

**London CND
New Year Social**

January 24th, 7pm
Ev Café, The Arches, 97-99
Isabella Street, London SE1 8DD
SE1 8DD

Yorkshire CND AGM

January 25th
Location TBC
■ Contact 01274 730795 or
info@yorkshirecnd.org.uk

**Leicester CND
fundraising evening**

January 28th, 7pm
Chef and Spice, 1 Andrewes
Street, Leicester LE3 5PG
■ Contact 07414 465695 or
pennywalker@riseup.net

**London Region CND
AGM and Conference**

March 7th
Location TBC
■ Contact 020 7607 2302 or
info@londoncnd.org



Peace Camps

Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp Second weekend of every month.
■ Tel: 07946 676761
info@aldermaston.net
www.aldermaston.net
[@Peace_women_AWE](https://twitter.com/Peace_women_AWE)

Faslane Peace Camp
Permanent. A814,

Shandon, Helensburgh,
Dumbartonshire G84 8NT.
■ Tel: 07376 188216
faslanepeacecamp@protonmail.com

Menwith Hill vigil
The weekly vigil is now switching days – please contact Sarah:
■ Tel: 01765 600928 or
sswift64@gmail.com