THIS WEEK we will mark the 75th anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It is right that we continue to debate this moment in history, and in this article, CND interviews academic and author Dr Becky Alexis-Martin for a new perspective.

Becky’s background is in the natural and environmental sciences. She explains how a project on radiation emergency preparedness evolved into an interest in the nuclear weapon debate: “(My work) felt worthwhile, but while I was studying, I became more and more interested in the real-life communities who had been impacted by nuclear issues. My academic research has taken me across the world to learn about the neglected communities who are still affected by historic nuclear weapon tests. It is important to me that I wanted to amplify their voices and speak with them, rather than about them, and their experiences.”


Much of Becky’s work has been visiting places and people affected by nuclear testing. To rightfully remember these, Becky believes we need a change in our education system. As she comments: “We need to decolonise our
curriculum and present a more inclusive and global understanding of nuclear weapon testing. To rightfully remember, you must include the voices of those who have been affected.”

And of course, Hiroshima and Nagasaki are places synonymous with nuclear suffering. Becky believes “there has been a tremendous impact in terms of cultural adaptation and change. It is no surprise that both Hiroshima and Nagasaki have become cities of peace. There is a ‘never again’ attitude.”

But 75 years on, those with Hiroshima and Nagasaki in their living memories become fewer every year. Becky is concerned. “When Fat Man and Little Boy exploded in the skies over Nagasaki and Hiroshima, the immediate consequences of the bombings were very dramatic. The destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki left us with a universal and global understanding that nuclear warfare is the ultimate unthinkable harm.

“(But) populist leaders who have never personally experienced... nuclear warfare, are now in charge. They do not understand the moral and ethical significance of threatening to ‘press the nuclear button’. It’s a harmful narrative.”

We should have some cause for optimism however; Becky highlights the UN’s Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons as a positive development, with only 10 ratifications from states needed before it enters into force. Becky believes this will “create fresh impetus for action to be taken”.

“I am hopeful for a future where nuclear warfare is outlawed,” she concludes, “where it finally takes its rightful place in the history books.”

Meet the staff
This month: Alex Carlen, Campaigns Assistant

“I’m Alex and I’ve been working with CND as Campaigns Assistant since February. Due to Covid-19, my time at CND has been a little bit different than expected, with most of my time having been spent developing online resources for the purpose of e-campaigning.

One of my main focuses has been to emphasise the mutual struggle between those fighting for nuclear disarmament and those fighting for climate justice. We’ve developed a new section of our website with resources explaining the links between the different campaigns. I’ve also worked on Hiroshima and Nagasaki commemorations, as well as creating some Peace Education resources. I’ve really enjoyed my time at CND so far and feel inspired to see all the creative ways fellow activists are campaigning for disarmament across the country and around the world.”
Recently I was contacted by Colonel Ann Wright, who I first met during the massive global campaign against war on Iraq in 2003. Having served 29 years in the military and over a decade in the US State Department, Colonel Wright resigned on the eve of the invasion of Iraq. Since that time she has been active in anti-war and peace movements in the US and internationally. In 2007 she was arrested for trespassing at the Nevada Test Site.

Now Ann is applying herself to a policy question that is no less dangerous: as she says, ‘the new US military doctrine that is preparing this country for ‘major power conflict’ with China’.

Together with other eminent figures in US society, she is launching a new international peace movement to oppose this new doctrine which, she fears ‘will become a self-fulfilling prophecy unless the American people act to put the brakes on a doctrine/policy that is escalating global tensions, accelerating a new nuclear arms race and eliminating accepted international arms treaties.’

For some years now we have seen the alarming direction of US policy: manufacture and deployment of ‘usable’ nukes, withdrawal from crucial treaties and confrontation with other states, in particular China.

Colonel Wright is right to argue that there should be a ‘pivot to peace, not war’ with China, and this is something that must be taken up internationally. Because if conflict comes between the US and China, between two nuclear-armed states, the whole world will be at risk.

We need maximum global cooperation to face today’s massive challenges – climate catastrophe, pandemics, racist discrimination and economic crisis. All countries must work together and where there are differences deal with them through the appropriate international bodies.

Regrettably, here in the UK our government is falling behind the Trump administration on this matter, seemingly without question.

It is vital, in the weeks and months ahead, that we join together with those forces globally who urge mutual dialogue and diplomacy, with those who speak up for peace. We cannot stand back while a new cold war on China unfolds: the danger of it becoming a hot war is too terrible to contemplate.

**UK government lobbies US Congress on new nuclear warhead**

It has emerged that the UK government is lobbying the US Congress to back President Trump’s bid to fund controversial new nuclear warheads.

Ben Wallace, the UK defence secretary, wrote to US lawmakers in April asking them to support the request for funding. The Guardian reported that a Congressional staff member revealed they had “never had a letter of this sort before, so it was a little bit surprising”.

The UK interest stems from the fact that they are depending on US warhead technology for the replacement of Trident. CND has long-maintained that Britain’s nuclear weapons system is not independent, as it relies so heavily on US technology. As well as the warhead cooperation, Britain’s nuclear-armed missiles are leased from the US.
**Hiroshima special**
The 75th anniversaries of the nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki will be marked slightly differently from usual. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, fewer in-person events will take place but the range of online events will allow even more people to get involved than in previous years. It will also allow us to connect to others marking this day across the world, most notably in Japan.

For full information on the events and initiatives taking place, see the CND website cnduk.org/hiroshima-and-nagasaki-cnd-exhibition-events/.

**Online events**
**August 6th**
London CND event with speakers inc. Jeremy Corbyn MP
South East London CND groups event
A composition in memory of the victims – Stop the War event
The Priest’s Tale – Sands Films performance
Origami Peace Cranes Workshop by Edinburgh Peace & Justice Centre

**August 7th**
Music in memory of Hiroshima and Nagasaki – CND with Musicians for Peace and Disarmament

**August 8th**
Hiroshima and Nagasaki: Never Again – CND webinar

**August 9th**
Southampton CND event
The Bomb on my Back –

**Greater Manchester and District**
CND webinar
The Doctor’s Tale – Sands Films performance

**Oxford** – August 9th
Perth vigil – August 6th
Perth witness for peace – August 6th
Taunton – August 6th
Wimbledon – August 6th

We also encourage everyone to get involved with the Peace Wave, see cnduk.org/peacewave/. However we commemorate the 6th and 9th of August, let’s remember the victims and redouble our efforts to campaign for a world without nuclear weapons.

**Disarming Doomsday**
See article on page one for more information about the book and interview with author Dr Becky Alexis-Martin.

**Crances for Peace**
As part of CND’s work in commemorating the 75th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we have launched the CND Peace Crane challenge – will you take part?

We’re asking supporters to get sponsored by family and friends to fold origami peace cranes, to raise money to help our campaign against nuclear weapons. Everyone can take part, and you don’t need any previous experience of origami – we have a variety of guides available to help you.

Find out more: https://cranes-for-peace.raisely.com/