

# campaign



## Hiroshima and Nagasaki: never again

CND Campaigns Director **Sara Medi Jones** interviews poet Antony Owen, who has written extensively on the lasting impact of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

**O**VER THE DECADES since the US dropped nuclear bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, artists have continued to express the horror and devastation unleashed on August 6th and 9th, 1945. Indeed, culture has played an important part in keeping the memory of what happened alive.

Poet Antony Owen, from Coventry, is the author of five poetry collections, with his *The*

*Nagasaki Elder* collection inspired by atomic bomb survivors' accounts and growing up in Cold War Britain at the peak of nuclear proliferation. I asked Antony how this interest in the effects of nuclear weapons started: "It began as a child watching *Threads* which scared the hell out of me. As an adult I always felt a calling to write about nuclear weapons and conflict in general.

"Visiting Hiroshima had a massive

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impact on me. I left my shadow there with my heart. I will never forget Honkawa School, the Genbaku dome, the survivors, the friendships I made. Hiroshima changed my life but nearly took it from that abseil into the darkness I took in researching it.”

The anniversaries are an important opportunity for anti-nuclear campaigners and society more widely to reflect on the impact of nuclear weapons. Antony believes culture has an important part to play in this process. “Culture has the power to memorialise or sensationalise events so it is vital,” he says. “From the dawn of time culture has been used for both good and

nuclear bombings has a profound effect on the writer, Antony explains: “After I visited Hiroshima and met two survivors (Hibakusha) I went straight into that darkness and came back damaged emotionally requiring therapy from not only their stories but extensive research of the impact atomic weapons had and still have upon people to this day.”

But Antony remains convinced of the importance of doing this work regardless, saying “everyone should know the story of Hiroshima, because there are approximately 13,000 nuclear weapons (still in the world), each much stronger than those dropped on Japan”.

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bad so when I write I feel a profound responsibility to reflect modern times and the human experiences of conflict. When writing about the bombing upon Hiroshima and Nagasaki the perspective I grew up with was from outside the mushroom cloud not underneath it. The story kept from me and our generation was incomplete with a focus on victory and not consequences of a new nuclear age of mass proliferation of nuclear weapons.”

Writing poetry about the

“Campaigners spark debate and emotions, and writers and painters articulate and transcend those emotions,” he goes on. “The approach I take therefore is to do my bit to save my daughters’ generation from the madness of ours as she rightfully will ask me one day ‘Dad, what the hell were you doing when all this was happening?’”

■ A longer version of this interview can be read as part of CND’s online Hiroshima and Nagasaki exhibition, available on CND’s website.

## Spotlight

**This month  
Isle of Wight CND**



CND groups across the country will be commemorating the 77th anniversaries of the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. One of those groups is Isle of Wight CND, who will be marking the occasion as well as remembering all those affected by war at the Peace Tree, Coppins Bridge, Newport, Isle of Wight.

If you live on the Isle of Wight, why not join them?

■ For any queries about this event – or the wider work of Isle of Wight CND – please contact 01983 857500 or email [linda.ju.goodwin@gmail.com](mailto:linda.ju.goodwin@gmail.com), they would be delighted to hear from you!

# NPT Review Conference begins

A conference to assess the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) has opened this week. CND General Secretary **Kate Hudson** writes about why this treaty, and its Review Conferences, still matter.

**I**T'S EASY to be dismissive of the NPT and its processes: we see the disappointing headline results from its conferences and deplore the ways in which the nuclear weapons states hang on to their arsenals in spite of commitments to disarm going back decades. Many participant states have been so fed up that they went outside the NPT and negotiated the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) to try and break the logjam.

But the NPT does remain an international disarmament forum with massive participation and as such, it's important to see behind the main outcomes – or non-outcomes – and explore what else is going on. When states gather in New York in August for the delayed Review Conference, there is the possibility of movement in some areas.

Two are of particular interest to CND. Firstly the ongoing work to achieve a Middle East Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone (WMDFZ). First proposed at a

NPT conference in 1990 by Egypt and Iran, it was taken up five years later by the UK, US and Russia, and reaffirmed in 2000 and 2005; finally in 2010, practical steps towards the zone were agreed. But the path hasn't been a smooth one: two different perspectives are at odds.

Israel wants a comprehensive peace agreement with all its neighbours before discussing the zone, and the other states in the region want the zone created first to aid peace and stability. In 2018, the UN First Committee took up the issue, asking the UN Secretary-General to convene a regional conference. Since then, two conferences have taken place with dialogue and trust building as central. States parties to the NPT are urged to support this process at the review conference and ensure that a commitment to the WMDFZ is in the conference's final document.

Another area of particular importance is the AUKUS agreement and nuclear-powered submarines. This risks nuclear

proliferation, as just one nuclear-powered submarine can require up to 20 nuclear weapons' worth of highly enriched uranium. Currently it looks like Australia will use a loophole in the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards agreement, claiming that powering the vessels is not a military activity. This contradicts NPT aims to both suppress demand for nuclear weapons and to control the supply of material that could be used to produce them. States attending the NPT review conference are urged to close this loophole to stop this dangerous development.

There is work of value and importance in the detailed discussions at the NPT Review Conference. The frustration lies in the persistent blocking of potentially good outcomes by the nuclear weapons states. But I for one support continued efforts – through both treaties – to bring about change. Who knows where the last straw will be found?

### Hiroshima and Nagasaki anniversary

Each August the anniversary of the dropping of the first atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 is commemorated across the world. CND groups across the country will be marking the occasion with events, vigils, street stalls and ceremonies.

■ Take a look here to find your nearest one: <https://cnduk.org/events/>  
If you would like your event added, contact [information@cnduk.org](mailto:information@cnduk.org)

### UK nuclear policies: proliferation not disarmament – CND webinar 3 August

6:15pm-7:45pm, online.

■ To register, contact [information@cnduk.org](mailto:information@cnduk.org)

### Abingdon Peace Group meeting 16 August

8pm, online.

■ To register, contact [information@cnduk.org](mailto:information@cnduk.org)

### March from Trawsfynydd to Wylfa 4-10 September

North Wales.

■ Contact [heddwch@cndcymru.org](mailto:heddwch@cndcymru.org) for more information

### Keep Space for Peace week: march and rally at USAF Croughton 1 October

RAF Croughton NN13 5XP

■ Contact [enquiries@cnduk.org](mailto:enquiries@cnduk.org) for more info.

## Stop US nukes coming to Lakenheath

**Join CND to protest against US nuclear weapons coming to Britain.**

**Saturday, 17th September, 1-3pm**

**RAF Lakenheath, Suffolk.**

**Transport arranged from Norwich station and across the country.**

Contact [information@cnduk.org](mailto:information@cnduk.org) with any queries. See [www.cnduk.org](http://www.cnduk.org) for more information.

## Meet the staff

This month:  
**John Asquith,  
Fundraising Officer**

“As CND’s Fundraising Officer, my job is to design and manage our fundraising appeals, develop our membership recruitment programme, manage CND’s print and online advertising,

run CND’s online shop, and promote legacy giving. Essentially, everything involved in raising the funds that let us keep campaigning for a nuclear-free world.

It’s very varied work – recent highlights have included designing CND’s t-shirt for this year’s Glastonbury festival, and running our billboard campaign appeal. And best of all it means lots of contact with our members and supporters. None of what we do would be possible without you, and we’re privileged that so many of you are so generous – thank you!”

