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DecemberVeteran peace campaigner jailed for three months for US "missile defence" action

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Veteran peace campaigner jailed for three months for US "missile defence" action

Long-standing peace activist and member of nonviolent direct action group Trident Ploughshares Sylvia Boyes, from Keighley, was today sentenced to three months' imprisonment at HMP New Hall, West Yorkshire by Bingley Magistrates' Court. The sentence was issued for Sylvia's refusal to undertake "community punishment" for her part in an action against US "missile defence" at Fylingdales Ballistic Missile Early Warning Station in North Yorkshire on 6 August 2008, the 63rd anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima.

Sylvia was originally arrested with fellow Trident Ploughshares activist Erica Wilson as the pair attempted to hinder activities at the base. The couple had gained entry by cutting through the perimeter fence and poured red paint to symbolise the bloodshed threatened by aggressive US foreign policy and the British Government's acquiescence.

At her trial at Scarborough Magistrates' Court in October, Sylvia was found guilty of committing criminal damage. She was subsequently sentenced to 150 hours "community punishment".

Sylvia had earlier said "Since I believe that my government is acting unlawfully and immorally, I as a citizen have a duty to uphold the law and try to right a terrible wrong. Having lived all my life under the threat of nuclear mass murder and destruction I do not intend to stay silent about the dangers into which the USA and its aggressive policies is leading us."

Decision by US firm Jacobs to buy into Atomic Weapons Establishment condemned by Trident Ploughshares
18th December 2008

Decision by US firm Jacobs to buy into Atomic Weapons Establishment condemned by Trident Ploughshares

Radical anti-nuclear campaigning group Trident Ploughshares today condemned the announcement by Jacobs Engineering that it has agreed to buy from British Nuclear Fuels plc (BNFL) a one-third stake in AWE ML, the consortium which operates the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) on behalf of the Ministry of Defence. The campaigners have threatened direct action against the company.

US firm Jacobs, already a major contractor at AWE, announced its intentions on Wednesday (17 December). If the deal is confirmed, AWE ML would fall into two-thirds American ownership. The other partners comprising AWE ML are US arms giant Lockheed Martin and British firm Serco.

Daniel Viesnik from Trident Ploughshares said, "Jacobs is making a grave error choosing to invest in AWE. Trident Ploughshares reserves the right to take nonviolent direct action against the company for its role in aiding and abetting crimes against humanity and other breaches of international law and treaties due to its involvement with Trident nuclear weapons. The current multi-billion pound expansion of AWE Aldermaston represents a material breach of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and a criminal waste of taxpayers' money. All parties responsible will be held to account. Defence Secretary John Hutton must order the immediate suspension of all work relating to the maintenance and development of nuclear warheads, or face the

18th

13th Nuclear bomb-makers serenaded with revamped Christmas carols in London 13th December 2008

Nuclear bomb-makers serenaded with revamped Christmas carols in London

TEN anti-nuclear activists from Trident Ploughshares affinity group the Muriel Lesters and supporters serenaded companies involved in nuclear weapons production outside their central London offices yesterday (Friday, 12 December), dressed in white overalls marked "weapons inspector", festive hats and Christmas costumes. Demanding the suspension of work on the current and next generation of nuclear warheads at the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) sites in Berkshire, messages of peace and condemnation were humorously conveyed through the revamped verses of popular festive tunes.

In addition to the group's usual target, US arms giant and nuclear bomb-maker Lockheed Martin, visits were made to the offices of two other US firms connected to the nuclear weapons industry: Fluor and Jacobs (in Victoria and Marble Arch respectively).

In concert with the musical performances, banners and placards were displayed and information leaflets distributed to workers and passers-by. Christmas greetings were hand delivered to company representatives, reaffirming the group's key demands: that the corporations cease any involvement in nuclear weapons production without delay. As the "alternative carol service" proceeded outside the doors of Manning House (22 Carlisle Place, Victoria) - the London home of Lockheed Martin - one of the group lay down "dead" on the pavement to symbolise the victims of nuclear weapons, including those of Hiroshima, Nagasaki and any future nuclear strikes, bomb test veterans, and victims of leukaemias, lymphomas and cancers caused by exposure to radioactive discharges from AWE Aldermaston and AWE Burghfield in Berkshire, Sellafield in Cumbria, Rolls Royce Raynesway in Derby and other sites. There was some interaction with police outside this first site, and then with building security outside the second, Portland House in Victoria - the home of Fluor - but otherwise the protesters were able to operate undisturbed.

Daniel Viesnik, 34, from northwest London said, "Christmas is a time of year when we would all do well to reflect on what we personally can do to bring about peace in the world in these increasingly troubled times. By ceasing the production and maintenance of nuclear weapons in Britain and worldwide, we may yet retain some hope for the future of the human species and life on planet Earth, despite the formidable challenges of climate change and the global proliferation of nuclear technology under the guise of the false solution of nuclear power."

Myra Garrett, from east London added, "In these challenging economic times, when even the Ministry of Defence is admitting to such a big deficit that it has to put off paying for two aircraft carriers, people are finally waking up to the reality that wasting tens of billions of pounds on nuclear weapons and submarines is not the way to go. Now is the time to scrap Trident and thereby conserve limited resources for more useful things, like health and social care, education, the environment and affordable housing."

Angela Broome from east London stated, "As the Government tries to offload its toxic assets, it's time for Jacobs and Fluor to review whether they really want to buy into the illegal, immoral and undemocratic activities of the Atomic Weapons Establishment, especially during a time of such financial hardship; and whether they want to offer themselves as possible targets for future campaigns."

November "Guilty of trying to provide a better future for the world" 15th November 2008

15th

"Guilty of trying to provide a better future for the world"

Irene Willis appeared at West Berkshire Magistrates' Court in Newbury on Friday 7 November 2008 to answer the charge of "wilfully obstructing a highway without lawful authority or excuse" at Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) Aldermaston, Berkshire, England on Monday 27 October, 2008 (during the Aldermaston Big Blockade).

In response to the charge, Irene pleaded: "Guilty of trying to provide a better future for the world"

Here is a summary of Irene's statement to the Court:

"I despair of the future I am leaving for my own three children and those of the whole world. Just one Trident nuclear warhead would cause eight to ten times the devastation of the bomb dropped on Hiroshima in August 1945, six months after I was born. I've tried every legal method of making my views known, but to no avail. I want a world where arms, of which nuclear weapons are the worst kind, no longer exist."

The Magistrates accepted Irene's plea and then heard an outline of the facts of the case from the Crown, which were not disputed by the defendant. Shortly before 7am, Irene had blocked the entrance to Tadley gate by "locking on" with a plastic tube on each arm attached to blockaders from Scotland. They lay in the road for over two hours before the police finally cut them free and arrested them. Irene was held inside the Aldermaston base for around 6 hours before eventually being taken to Slough police station. She was finally released at around 7pm, so spent 10 hours in police custody in total.

Irene, who was representing herself, was then allowed to make a fairly lengthy statement to the Court. The Magistrates fined her £80 plus £15 victim surcharge, with no order for costs. Knowing Irene, it is unlikely she will pay as she would see this as facilitating the illegal and immoral activities of the nuclear death factory that is Aldermaston.

Irene's speaking notes:

I am guilty, as I said, of wanting a world where my children and indeed the children of the whole world can live safe, secure and healthy lives, free to follow their own paths in peace without the threat of violence, of which the ultimate is nuclear weapons.

I've tried every legal method to get my voice heard: I've stood in Parliamentary and local elections, sat in council meetings as the token Green, co-ordinated meetings, attended demos, leafleted the public; yet nothing ever seems to change.

We are facing a crisis such as this planet has never faced. The world is in chaos. We have the dangers of climate change; resources are running out after we have raped this Earth for so many years; and now the economy is collapsing. Our so-called leaders are blinkered; they can and will not lead us out of this mess.

Meanwhile, at Aldermaston they go on producing these weapons of unspeakable violence. I

dread the day, as everything goes pear-shaped with this so-called civilisation of ours, that someone somewhere will actually use these weapons again.

Aldermaston is key to the development of the new Trident - a total waste of money as far as I'm concerned; money which could instead be used to create a new and better world instead of developing weapons of mass destruction. It has come to the point where all I can do to try and end this madness is sit my old body in front of the gates where this evil carries on and try to physically stop it.

So, yes, I plead guilty of having a dream: that of a peaceful world where there are no weapons; where people take responsibility for their actions; and where I no longer have to spend my time protesting and stand before the Court as a "criminal".

October Aldermaston Big Blockade Success

27th October 2008

Aldermaston Big Blockade Success

Thank you to the hundreds who came along and supported the biggest blockade of Aldermaston for many years. Thirty-three arrests were made, mostly for Obstruction of the Highway. Read more on the blog.

24th Eight Acquitted After Rolls Royce Blockade

24th October 2008

Eight Acquitted After Rolls Royce Blockade

Eight people were found not guilty by Derby Magistrates Court today. They were arrested after blocking the main gates of Rolls Royce marine power operations limited with two quarter of a ton concrete blocks for several hours in April this year. Two other protesters who blocked a second gate were found guilty.

The acquitted protesters had attached themselves to the concrete blocks which had been positioned outside the gates of the Rolls Royce plant near the centre of Derby. They were protesting against the part the factory plays in manufacturing components which are used to power Britain's Trident nuclear weapons system. The site houses a facility for turning highly enriched uranium into fuel rods as well as a nuclear reactor for testing. The Rolls Royce site is a protected site designated under the 2005 serious organised crime and police act.

The activists were all originally arrested under the serious organised crime and police act, but were subsequently charged with aggravated trespass when it transpired that the Derby police had made a mistake about the perimeter of the designated area. The activists were found not guilty after they presented evidence which showed that the Rolls Royce land they were on may form part of the public highway. The trial lasted for five days and eight of the defendants represented themselves.

Peter Lux from Norfolk who was one of the acquitted defendants, said: "Rolls Royce had painted a red line on the road around factory entrance to stop legitimate protest outside the gates but it merely led to confusion among the police and the crown prosecution service about its meaning. Their attempts to stop legitimate protests backfired and we have now been acquitted of blockading the site."

The peace action was part of a series of monthly actions by the Power Through Wind Not Weapons Campaign. If you want to be involved or want to learn more go to: www.windnotweapons.co.cc/

Campaigners to Blockade Nuclear Bomb Factory to Mark World **Disarmament Week**

Trident Ploughshares has called a major blockade of the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) at Aldermaston near Reading during UN World Disarmament Week, on Monday 27 October, from 6:30am.

The Aldermaston Big Blockade is supported by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), Block the Builders and the Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp, and aims to disrupt work on existing Trident nuclear warheads and their successors.

Hundreds of peace campaigners are expected to converge on Aldermaston in what looks set to be the biggest day of direct action against Trident in the UK since the Big Blockade of Faslane naval base in Scotland last October. On Easter Monday, around 5,000 people surrounded Aldermaston as CND marked the 50th anniversary of the first march to the base from London.

Christian CND is planning an overnight vigil at Tadley Gate from 9pm on Sunday 26 October and a daytime procession around the base on Monday in solidarity with the blockade.

Joining them will be monks and nuns from Nipponzan Myohoji, a Japanese Buddhist order strongly opposed to nuclear weapons, who plan to walk to Aldermaston from their Peace Pagoda in Milton Keynes.

In addition to calling for an end to Trident, campaigners want to highlight urgent concerns about public health and safety and environmental contamination, especially in light of recent revelations of severe flooding at AWE's nearby Burghfield site last summer and numerous other ongoing safety issues.

Daniel Viesnik from Trident Ploughshares said, "The massive expansion of AWE, continued deployment of Trident and its planned replacement are unnecessary expenses in the current financial climate and contradict and undermine the Government's stated commitment to global abolition of nuclear weapons. This is hypocritical, destabilising and in breach of the UK's disarmament obligations. Trident is a serious hazard to life, health and the environment and there can never be a lawful or moral use for it. We as concerned citizens have therefore called a peaceful blockade during World Disarmament Week to demand that the new developments are ceased and the whole Trident system taken out of service without delay. We would rather see this facility made safe so it will be fit for use for warhead decommissioning as part of a global Nuclear Weapons Convention, in line with Government proposals."

Musician and songwriter David Ferrard, who is traveling down from Scotland, said, "I have participated and sung at several blockades outside the gates of Faslane in Scotland, where the Trident submarines are based. I thought it was time to travel to the source of the weapons of mass destruction and show solidarity with my English neighbours."

Notes to Editor:

- 1. Trident Ploughshares is a campaign to disarm the UK Trident nuclear weapons system in a nonviolent, open, peaceful and fully accountable manner.
- 2. UN Disarmament Week 24-30 October 2008. http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/disarmament/
- 3. The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) is one of Europe's biggest single-issue peace

campaigns, with over 35,000 members in the UK. CND campaigns for the abolition of all nuclear weapons everywhere. http://www.cnduk.org

- 4. Block the Builders http://www.blockthebuilders.org.uk
- 5. Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp http://www.aldermaston.net
- 6. Faslane 365, a year-long blockade of Faslane naval base, Scotland http://www.faslane365.org
- 7. CND The Bomb Stops Here event, Easter Monday 2008 http://www.cnduk.org/aldermaston
- 8. Details of Christian CND's vigil and procession http://ccnd.gn.apc.org/events.html
- 9. Reports on severe flooding at AWE Burghfield in July 2007 and other safety issues:

SWAMPED! The devastating impact of the July 2007 floods on Britain's nuclear weapons factories, Nuclear Information Service report

Flood threat to nuclear arms site - Channel 4 News

Britain's nuclear weapons factory 'nearly overwhelmed' by flood - The Telegraph

Trident plant shut down in safety alert - The Guardian

- 10. David Ferrard's website http://davidferrard.com
- 11. In March 2007, Westminster voted in principle to retain nuclear weapons and to build new submarines from which to launch them. To date, there has been no vote in parliament on the future of warheads. However, Ministry of Defence (MoD) documents obtained by CND in July 2008 confirmed that contrary to repeated ministerial denials, the government has already made the decision to replace the warheads. CND press release
- 12. The MoD has already committed billions of pounds to a massive ongoing construction and recruitment programme at AWE, where Britain's nuclear warheads are researched, developed and maintained. AWE first outlined its expansion proposals, which it claimed would be on the scale of Heathrow Terminal 5, in its 2002 Site Development Strategy Plan. Building work commenced on the Orion laser facility in 2005 and continues to this day. Trident replacement a short chronology AWE site development strategy plan (2005 update)

16th Trial From Hiroshima Day Action at Fylingdales 16th October 2008

Trial From Hiroshima Day Action at Fylingdales

On August 6th, the anniversary of the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Sylvia Boyes and Erica Wilson, attempted to enter the Fylingdale base near the MIL STAR and SAT COM installations to prevent them operating. Unfortunately they were prevented from completing their work by the MDP.

At their trial in Scarborough magistrates court, magistrates found Sylvia Boyes and Erica Wilson guilty of Criminal Damage at Fylingdales Ballistic Missile Early Warning Station and where Star Wars in Yorkshire (along with Menwith Hill) starts.

Despite evidence of genetic damage to future generations being caused by such installations and

the evidence that Fylingdales BMEWS was to be used as part of the US Missile Defence plans the Magistrates used the reference to Hiroshima in refusing to acccept it was a serious attempt at disarmament but only one of protest.

Erica commented, that it was unfortunate that a reference to the anniversary of Hiroshima led the magistrates to use it to throw out the argument of justification for her action causation of genetic damage to future generations.

Sylvia added, the events and aftermath of the dropping of that atomic bomb on Hiroshima lead to mass murder, horrendous suffering and long term genetic damage. It is ironic that the very criminal act we were trying to prevent being repeated was used against us to find us guilty of a protest demonstration.

They were released on bail for a probation report to be made and to reappear at Scarborough magistrates court on November 13th when they will be sentenced.

August Hiroshima Day Action at RAF Fylingdales

8th August 2008

Hiroshima Day Action at RAF Fylingdales

On Wednesday 6th August, the anniversary of the destruction of Hiroshima by a US nuclear bomb in 1945, Sylvia Boyes and Erica Wilson, long-standing peace activists and members of the nonviolent direct action group Trident Ploughshares, were arrested attempting to hinder activities at the Fylingdales Ballistic Missile Early Warning Station in North Yorkshire. They were cutting the fence and using red paint to symbolise the bloodshed threatened by the US military policy.

The pair were highlighting the increasingly important role of the so-called RAF base in the US National Missile Defence (Star Wars) project. The satellite communications, in particular the Mil Star, are for intelligence gathering and are vital both in any nuclear war and for the US plans to put weapons in space under the guise of Missile Defence. As such Fylingdales represents a new era in global militarism.

This system protects no-one, but will put Britain, and others involved, on the frontline in future US wars. It gives the US the ability to strike without fear of retaliation. The billions of dollars so far wasted on Missile Defence could have been put to much more effective use in conflict prevention and arms control.

The pair were held overnight at Scarborough police station and charged with criminal damage. Sylvia said "Since I believe that my government is acting unlawfully and immorally, I as a citizen have a duty to uphold the law and try to right a terrible wrong. Having lived all my life under the threat of nuclear mass murder and destruction I do not intend to stay silent about the dangers into which the USA and its aggressive policies is leading us."

They pleaded not guilty at Scarborough Magistrates Court yesterday, and their next court appearance is Sept 4th.

JuneOne year since the Scottish government voted NO 19th ^{19th June 2008}

One year since the Scottish government voted NO

Today a group of 5 Trident Ploughshares activists blockaded the main gate of Faslane nuclear submarine base for one and a half hours. The roadway was closed from 6.40am until 7.45am, and unable to fully reopen until 8.15am. Traffic was turned away and had to find an alternative entrance.

One of the activists, Janet Fenton, said "We chose today because it is one year since the Scottish government voted NOT to support Gordon Brown's plan to foist illegal, immoral and unaffordable nuclear weapons on Scotland for another 50 years. Along with the majority of people in Scotland, we don't want them here or anywhere else."

The protesters said that they were at the North Gate peacefully acting to block the entrance to the nuclear submarine base to play their part as citizens of the world in stopping the deployment of nuclear weapons:

- to remind the UK Government of their obligations;
- to support the politicians and others who are willing to work to get rid of nuclear weapons;
- and to make it clear that matters of conscience are the responsibility of all concerned people, and can never be reserved.

Another activist said, "By using our hands and our bodies in this way, without causing harm to others, we hope that we can make it easy to see how it is the simple actions of ordinary people that are needed to rid the world of weapons of mass destruction."

Those arrested were: Roz Bullen, Matt Bury, Irene Willis, Janet Fenton and Penny Stone

May No case to answer for blocking illegal work on weapons of mass destruction.

19th May 2008

No case to answer for blocking illegal work on weapons of mass destruction.

People driving to work at the Atomic Weapons Establishment, Burghfield along the Mearings MoD road just after 7.0am on Monday 12th November 2007 were non-violently blocked by four Trident Ploughshares resisters lying in the road. Ray Davies, Irene Willis, Zelda Jeffers and Chris Gwyntopher maintained their blockade for over two hours. They were among 70 to 80 supporters of Block the Builders, Trident Ploughshares, CND and other peace organisations in direct non-violent resistance to the deployment and development of nuclear weapons of mass destruction at both Burghfield and Aldermaston.

On 11th December at Reading Magistrates Court, Ray Davies pleaded "guilty of trying to stop the destruction of our planet and the spread of nuclear weapons" and "guilty of trying to provide a future for his children, and for the world". He was given two years conditional discharge.

The charges against Chris Gwyntopher were dropped because the CPS considered "there is not enough evidence to provide a realistic prospect of conviction." He had planned to call Prof Nick Grief as an expert witness on the illegality of the Trident nuclear missile system and its replacement.

Irene Willis, Zelda Jeffers were still tried for trying to stop such illegal and immoral and dangerous activity at Reading Magistrates Court, on Wednesday 14th May. Irene was represented by Shauna Gillan briefed by Bindmans. The case against both was dismissed by the District Judge, as no case to answer. He accepted that the road blocked, the Mearings, was not the highway but a private road owned by the MoD. They did not wilfully obstruct the Reading Road, some 200 yards away from where they lay down and locked on. The police could have redirected the ordinary traffic to prevent any

serious delay of along the Reading Road. Zelda had made it clear that they were willfully blockading the workers from going in to make nuclear weapons. The Judge and the Clerk thought there is no binding precedent for people being convicted for unintended obstruction caused by obstruction on private land. He mentioned that the defendents were exercising a legitimate right to protest. Costs were awarded to the defendants.

Get Reading reported reported, 'Speaking outside the court, Ms Jeffers, of De Beauvoir Road in London, said: "We have been told we had no case to answer, my comment would be that the nuclear establishment at Aldermaston do have a case to answer and so they should close down and do something useful."

Equally defiant, Ms Willis, of Buckland Shoeburyness in Southend-on-Sea, said: "It is a bit of a hollow victory because the nuclear weapons still exist. While the weapons still exist, we will continue to protest."

There will be a further major non violent Blockade of Atomic Weapons Establishment, Aldermaston on Monday 27th October, 2008.

April Anti Nuclear Protestors Blockade Derby Rolls Royce

28th April 2008

Anti Nuclear Protestors Blockade Derby Rolls Royce

Activists locked into concrete cylinders have blockaded Derby Rolls Royce this morning in protest at its continued production of reactor cores for the UK's nuclear deterrent Trident.

Derby protestors were joined by a dozen activists to roll two cylindrical concrete blocks into the entrance of the plant. They then locked themselves into the blocks using armtubes.

Reactor cores, made at the Derby plant, are a key part of the Trident submarine weapons system which was declared illegal in an opinion issued by Phillipe Sands OC, of Matrix chambers.

Trident Ploughshares spokesperson Malcolm Carroll, speaking today at the Raynes Way plant, said: "International law is very clear. The threat of use of nuclear weapons is illegal. It is a war crime. Under the 1950 Nuremberg Principles, companies and their employees are directly accountable for any part they play in committing war crimes and crimes against humanity.

"Trident is a weapon of mass destruction. It also breaches the Non-proliferation Treaty and the Charter of the UN, as well as such accepted legal principles as proportionality and the definitions of self-defence."

Leaflets handed to workers explained their culpability under international law, and called upon the Derby plant cease the work, and tell the government it will not help supply the next generation of nuclear weapons systems.

The blockade succeeded in excluding all traffic from the site for an hour and a half, while main gate was blockaded from 7am until 12:30. Nine people were arrested for locking on and one supporter was also arrested. All ten were released later that day on police bail (with conditions not to enter Derbyshire, except for one who lives in Derby) and are due to report back to the police next week to discover if they will be charged.

Peace Activists Expose Lockheed Martin Nuclear Weapons Maker

"We are here to expose Lockheed Martin, makers of weapons of mass destruction"

This was the explanation given to puzzled people in the vicinity of Manning House, 22 Carlisle Place, near Victoria Station between 8.0 and 9.0 on the cold morning of Monday 4th February. Manning House is the UK corporate HQ of Lockheed Martin, the largest arms manufacturer in the world and senior partner in the triumvirate of companies, two of them US owned, who run the Atomic Weapons Establishment, Aldermaston. They are developing a replacement for the Trident first strike nuclear missile system there. The contract is worth more than £5.3 billion to them. The replacement cost of Trident replacement is expected to cost £15 to £26 billion. Including running costs it may well exceed £76 billion.

Some 12 peace activist from Trident Ploughshares were distributing leaflets and carrying placards and peace flags including a large one with an arrow pointed at Manning House reading "LOCKHEED MARTIN, BOMB MAKERS". The security officers at Manning House closed the heavy doors of the building whenever the peace activists approached the main entrance. The Trident Ploughshares group have been taking non-violent action at Manning House for at least three years. They have got into the building and occupied the board room. They have hung an enormous banner from the roof saying "STOP LOCKHEED NEW NUKE BOMB MAKERS", They have blocked people from going in to continue to work on nuclear weapons by locking them selves with chains and D locks to all the entrances. All these actions have been conducted in a nonviolent manner. None of them have been arrested.

One of peace activists wore a flag saying "People need water not weapons." When they arrived to start their protest there was a pile of crash barriers on the pavement outside Manning House. They thought these might be for their benefit. It transpired that they were there to provide safety for the water company who were carrying out repairs.