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30th

UK Citizen to be Deported after Action at Netherlands Nuclear Weapon Base

Activists Arrested at Volkel Airbase

A UK citizen is to be deported from the Netherlands next Wednesday after taking part in a crime prevention action at the Volkel airbase near Eindhoven, which is used by US aircraft armed with nuclear weapons.

David Heller (24), a university lecturer from Hull who is currently working in Belgium with the For Mother Earth campaign, was one of ten activists who cut their way into the base on Wednesday 27th December. They were able to take photographs of the section of the base used by the US nuclear weapons personnel before being arrested. Also arrested was Mark Akkerman (20), a student from the Netherlands who is, like David Heller, a member of the Trident Ploughshares campaign. Mark has had a number of arrests in the UK for actions against the Trident bases on the Clyde.

Earlier the activists had gone to the local police to report a breach of the law by Netherlands government leaders - their involvement in a criminal conspiracy to commit genocide through the use of nuclear weapons. The police refused to take immediate action and the activists then saw it as their duty to undertake the crime prevention themselves. It is an open secret in the Netherlands that there are US nuclear weapons in the Volkel base. Over the years activists have collected documentary and visual evidence of this covert deployment.

David Heller said:

"They have accused the wrong people. They should have arrested the Prime Minister and Foreign minister of the Netherlands. I'm being deported because I am a threat to public order when the real threat is the nuclear weapons at Volkel."

Ironically, a Trident Ploughshares activist from the Netherlands is due to face trial at Dumbarton Sheriff Court next Thursday (4th January) for taking part in a blockade of Faslane naval base last February. In the papers calling her to court Marjan Willemsen (23), currently at Faslane Peace Camp, has been advised that if she is found guilty the court may recommend to the Home Secretary that she be deported

21st

[Tommy Sheridan Released Tomorrow](#)

21st December 2000

Tommy Sheridan Released Tomorrow

Jubilee Two Still on Remand

Tomorrow (Friday 22nd December) Member of the Scottish Parliament Tommy Sheridan will be released from Greenock Prison after serving a sentence for refusing to pay a fine imposed for his part in the "Crimebusters" blockade of Faslane naval base on 14th February.

Friends and supporters will meet Tommy outside the prison in Inverkip Road in Greenock at 8.30 a.m. tomorrow. Tommy has added his five days in Greenock to the 860 days already spent in jail by activists during the 30 months of the Trident Ploughshares campaign. There have been 782 arrests, 94 trials and a fines total of £12611.

The number of arrests is likely to increase significantly on 12th February 2001 as activists from across the UK and beyond gather at Faslane for the Big Blockade. Current indications are that over 600 people will be there to confront Trident, including six members of the Scottish parliament, one MEP and twenty-seven Scottish church ministers who have said that they will be willing to risk arrest.

Two other Trident Ploughshares activists are still in prison after their disarmament action last month at RAF Wittering. Catholic priest Martin Newell and Dutch Catholic Worker Susan van der Hijden entered a transport hangar and disarmed one of the trucks which carry Trident warheads from the bomb factory at Burghfield to Coulport in Scotland. They will be in Peterborough Crown Court on 5th January, charged with criminal damage to an estimated value of £32,000.

A Trident Ploughshares spokesperson said:

"What kind of society is it that criminalises and imprisons the folk who try to do something about illegal and inhumane weapons of mass destruction? It is shameful that among the police, the prosecution authorities, the courts and the prisons in Scotland only one person, Margaret Gimblett, has had the guts to say: 'These people have done nothing wrong.' Sadly, the rest all line up meekly to support the Trident crime."

18th

Trident Three Member Arrested

18th December 2000

Trident Three Member Arrested

Faslane Security Breached Again

A member of the Trident Three, famously acquitted by Sheriff Margaret Gimblett at Greenock in October 1999, has again been arrested for an anti-Trident action, as MSP Tommy Sheridan begins his jail sentence at Greenock prison.

Early this morning Ulla Roder (45), from Odense in Denmark, cut a hole in the perimeter fence of the Faslane naval complex on the Clyde, where the UK's Trident submarines are berthed, and made her way inside. She intended to cut through the internal fence around the Trident area but was let down by faulty bolt-cutters. She spent some hours exploring inside the complex and eventually, around 9 a.m., began to hang up the placards she had prepared. One placard said: "Peace is not just for Christmas." At this point she was approached by MOD personnel and arrested.

She was charged with malicious mischief (for cutting the fence) and with breaching the bye-laws (for being in a prohibited area) and was later released.

A Trident Ploughshares spokesperson said:

"The fact that Ulla was able to spend several hours in the north end of the Faslane complex without interference suggests that base security is still rather sloppy. Ulla's action again shows that the campaign will continue to give the illegal base no respite from direct action."

12th

Tommy Sheridan Heads for Jail on Sunday Night

12th December 2000

Tommy Sheridan Heads for Jail on Sunday Night

The Growing Tide of Civil Resistance Against Trident

This Sunday Member of the Scottish Parliament Tommy Sheridan will begin his jail sentence for refusing to pay a fine imposed on him for an anti-Trident action earlier this year.

Tommy was one of the 185 people arrested at the "Crimebusters" blockade of Faslane naval base on 14th February. He was found guilty on 14th November on a charge of breach of the peace but has made it clear all along that on principle he will not pay the £250 fine imposed on him by Justice of the Peace John McPhail.

Friends and supporters will meet outside Dumbarton Police Station at 11.30 p.m. on Sunday night (17th December), in solidarity with Tommy, before he hands himself in at midnight. The 28 days he was given ran out today but the police have agreed not to arrest him before Sunday. He is likely to serve his sentence in HMP Greenock, Gateside, Greenock, PA 16 9AH (01475 787801).

Tommy's jail term will add to the 832 days already spent in jail during the 30 months of the Trident Ploughshares campaign.

A Trident Ploughshares spokesperson said:

"This year we have seen the pressure on Trident growing and growing, with the mass blockades at Faslane in February and August, a steady spate of direct disarmament actions and many cases in the lower courts. Then came the Lord Advocate's Reference in the High Court in Edinburgh which saw the case against the UK's weapon of mass destruction put with great authority. Tommy's determination to follow through his confrontation of Trident is a sign of a growing understanding that civil resistance to this shameful thing in our midst is both legitimate and essential."

6th

Activist Found Not Guilty and Then Sent to Jail

6th December 2000

Activist Found Not Guilty and Then Sent to Jail

At Helensburgh District Court today a Trident Ploughshares activist was found not guilty on a charge of breach of the peace but was arrested immediately afterwards and taken to Greenock Prison because of an unpaid fine for a previous anti-Trident action.

Clive Fudge, from Norwich, had taken part in a blockade in November 1999 at the main gate of Coulport Armaments Depot where Trident warheads are stored. Under cross-examination by Clive the second police witness admitted he was not sure whether any traffic had been held up by the blockade. Clive argued that not only were the facts not proved but that the Fiscal's assertion that his behaviour could reasonably be expected to cause alarm, had no basis. Justice of the Peace Viv Dance found him not guilty because the evidence presented was not adequate for her to convict. A court source later explained that her decision was based on both the weak police evidence and Clive's convincing argument about the issue of alarm. Two police officers waiting just outside the court handcuffed Clive and took him away to serve his seven-day sentence.

Also today at the same court five Trident Ploughshares activists were facing breach of the peace charges arising from the Crimebusters blockade of Faslane on 14th February this year when 185 people were arrested. Marcus Armstrong (40), a counsellor from Milton Keynes, ended his powerful witness statement by telling the story of Japanese girl Sadako who began, as she lay dying from nuclear sickness after the Hiroshima bomb, to make a thousand paper cranes. When she died her classmates completed the task and her statue is now surrounded by paper cranes from all across the globe. As he spoke, Marcus placed some cranes on the table in front of him. He was found guilty and fined £100. Lyn Bliss (48), a systems analyst from Luton, told the court: "It makes a mockery of British justice that I am on trial when the people actually committing the breach of the peace, those who approve and run the Trident system, are not." She was also fined £100.

Mary Millington (52), a teacher from South Wales, told the court that she had not committed a breach of the peace. No one had been alarmed by her behaviour. After her arrest, as she waited

in a long queue in the pouring rain to be processed by the police she had watched the cars in the roadway and no one had been upset or angry -they were simply bored, resigned or amused. She called as a witness in her defence Ray Davies, a County Borough Councillor from Wales, who had also been arrested. Giving evidence, Ray said: Nuclear weapons threaten the planet. I want the planet to survive for my children and grandchildren and all the children in the world." Mary Millington was found guilty and fined £100.

Three other activists had their pleas of not guilty accepted by the court due to missing Crown witnesses.

4th

Court Veto on Peace Activists' Defence

4th December 2000

Court Veto on Peace Activists' Defence

JP Refers to Peace Activists as "You People"

In Helensburgh District Court today the Justice of the Peace (JP) fined two accused peace activists after ruling out evidence they considered essential to their defence against charges of breach of the peace.

Marcus Armstrong (40), a counsellor from Milton Keynes, had been charged after a blockade at Coulport on August 7th, and Brian Quail (62), a retired teacher from Glasgow, had been charged after the Crimebusters blockade of Faslane on 14th February.

Marcus asked the JP whether he would be allowed to cross-examine the witnesses about their knowledge of the Geneva Protocols. The JP said his usual thing was to let "you people"(sic) say what they wanted to say and only stop them if required. Marcus asked the witness a series of questions about the purpose of the base at Coulport but was stopped by the JP when he asked about the nature of the weapons. The JP said he "was not here to listen to arguments about the legality or otherwise of Trident". Marcus pointed out his whole defence was built around the circumstances of his actions -he needed a fair opportunity to explain that. The JP restated his position.

In his own testimony Marcus said that if he had intervened to prevent a kidnap he would not be charged with any crime and that the circumstances, i.e, the legality of Trident, was central to these circumstances. The JP again said he would not listen to these arguments. The rest of Marcus's statement was a strongly worded appeal to the conscience of the JP and the court. In his summing up he said: "I know, and you all know, that I have done nothing wrong." He was fined £75 with 28 days to pay. He said he would not pay.

At the outset Brian made a motion to the court for the trial to be stopped and moved to a court which could deal with it. The trial could not be fair if he was not to be allowed to explain the circumstances for his actions, as he had seen happening in Marcus' case. The legal status of Trident was crucial to his defence. JP said they should get on with the trial but Brian asked him if he was maintaining his position that the circumstances were not relevant. Should he not uphold the law? JP again insisted they got on with the trial, whereupon Brian said he would do so under duress, noting that the JP had cast doubt on the fairness of his judgment by referring in Marcus' trial to "you people".

In his own statement Brian spoke graphically about the horrors of Hiroshima and the suffering of so many down the years through the nuclear chain. He challenged the JP: "How in the name of God can you defend ruling out evidence about the nature, effects and legality of nuclear weapons?" In his cross-examination the Procurator Fiscal said, without any apparent attempt at irony, that Faslane was a dangerous place and it was essential to public safety that its smooth running continued unimpeded. In the light of his previous convictions, JP McPhail fined Brian £200

with 28 days to pay.

Trident Ploughshares comment:

"Neither Brian nor Marcus got a fair trial today. The JP seems unable to treat each case on its individual merit or to conceive the possibility that what's official might be illegal."

3rd

Trident Ploughshares Conspiracy Trial

3rd December 2000

Trident Ploughshares Conspiracy Trial

The legality of the British nuclear weapons system will be challenged in the courts once again when the trial of Sylvia Boyes and River begins in Manchester Crown Court on 8th January 2001.

In November 1999 the two members of the Midlands affinity group attempted to decommission the Trident submarine Vengeance as part of the Trident Ploughshares disarmament campaign, when it was undergoing testing in Barrow docks, prior to its commissioning into the Royal Navy.

Armed with various hand tools and spray paint, and carrying documents relating to the illegality of Trident and the damage already done by nuclear weapons, they had entered the water of the docks, but were intercepted by a patrol boat before they could swim to the submarine. They are charged with conspiracy to commit criminal damage.

By using a combination of one being represented by lawyers and the other presenting their own defence, and by using expert witnesses, the two hope to bring the widest possible range of evidence to expose the criminality of Trident.

Sylvia and River see the action, and the trial as part of their Quaker witness to peace. Sylvia says, "This country is guilty of threatened mass murder and destruction, with its deployment of trident nuclear weapons. I will not run away from this crime."

November Pensioner Jailed for Anti-Trident Action

28th November 2000

28th

Pensioner Jailed for Anti-Trident Action

A Northumbrian member of the Trident Ploughshares campaign was taken today to serve a seven-day sentence in Cornton Vale Prison after failing to pay a fine for her part in the "Crimebusters" blockade of Faslane on February 14th this year.

Joy Mitchell (67), a retired head teacher from Berwick and leader of the town's Peace Church, was appearing in Helensburgh District Court along with Joan Meredith, aged 71, a retired teacher of the deaf from Alnwick. There were two charges relating to August 1999, one of cutting the perimeter fence at Coulport (malicious mischief) and the second for blockading the main gate of the same base (breach of the peace). Joy asked the court how we could teach our children to uphold the law when their own country so flagrantly breached it. Joan told the court: " I will not sit at home knitting, pretending that it's all right when it's all wrong!" Police evidence on both

alleged incidents was muddled, inconclusive and contradictory but Justice of the Peace Tony Stirling found them both guilty on both charges, fining them a "nominal" £50 for the fence cutting and admonishing them for the blockade. Both women said they would not pay. It was at the end of her case that Joy was immediately arrested by the police and taken to prison for the unpaid fine from a previous conviction.

Earlier, in the same court, David Mackenzie (56), a former education officer with Stirling Council, was found guilty and fined £50 on a breach of the peace charge for blockading the Coulport base in November last year. David told the court he would not pay the fine and has indicated that he intends to appeal the verdict. He said: "JP Stirling heard me out with courtesy and patience but in reaching his perverse verdict he chose to ignore the facts and legal argument I presented.

The campaigners will return in numbers to Faslane on February 12th next year when they aim to close the base for a day. Members of the Scottish Parliament, 27 ministers from Scottish churches and people from all over the UK and beyond are already signed up to be there.

26th

Helping To Disarm Weapons Of Mass Destruction

26th November 2000

Helping To Disarm Weapons Of Mass Destruction

On Tuesday 28th November, two anti-nuclear campaigners from Northumberland will appear at a court in Scotland, after they attempted to cut into a nuclear weapons base on the Clyde.

Their trial comes just a week after the legality of Britain's Trident nuclear weapons has been debated in Scotland's highest court.

The two are Joy Mitchell, aged 67, a retired head teacher from Berwick and leader of the town's Peace Church, and Joan Meredith, aged 71, a retired teacher of the deaf from Alnwick. They are due to stand trial at Helensburgh District Court north of Glasgow, charged with 'malicious mischief' after they tried to cut into RNAD Coulport with bolt-cutters, in August 1999.(1) They are also charged with 'breach of the peace' for taking part in a blockade earlier the same month. They carried out both their protest actions during a Trident Ploughshares camp.(2)

Both Joan and Joy have been in court before for their anti-nuclear campaigning, Joy most recently in Helensburgh District Court on 25th October 2000 (for taking part in a blockade of Faslane in February 2000), and Joan in Alnwick Magistrates' Court on 7th August 2000 (for non-payment of a fine arising from a blockade at Faslane in May 1999). They will be using a variety of legal and moral arguments to defend their actions. Their trials come as 3 High Court judges are considering their verdicts in a top-level legal review (called a Lord Advocate's Reference) of the acquittal of 3 women at Greenock Sheriff's Court in October 1999, for damaging a Trident-related test laboratory.(3)

Speaking from her home in Berwick tonight, Joy Mitchell said, "The Lord Advocate's Reference has made legal history, with Scotland's most senior lawyers debating the legality of Trident under international law. A verdict on the issues is expected shortly after the New Year. The District Court in Helensburgh cannot hide from the debate for much longer, and will then have to consider our arguments that Trident's deployment is illegal under international law."

Joy and Joan are due at Helensburgh District Court on Tuesday 28th November. To contact them on the day, for news of the trial, ring mobile 07775711054. For interviews before Tuesday, ring Joy Mitchell on 01289 330351 or Joan Meredith on 01665 579291. Other contacts below.

NOTES FOR EDITORS:

(1) The Royal Naval Armaments Depot (RNAD) Coulport is situated on Loch Long, and holds the Trident warheads when they are not loaded onto the submarines, which are normally based at the Faslane naval base on the nearby Gareloch. 4 submarines are in operation, with one on active patrol 24 hours per day, armed with up to 48 100-kiloton warheads, each 8 times more powerful than the Hiroshima bomb. A conservative estimate of the number of casualties, arising from an attack using all 48 warheads against likely military targets in the Moscow area, suggests that 3 million people would be killed within 12 weeks, including 750,000 children.

(2) Trident Ploughshares is an international campaign of people committed to taking safe, non-violent direct action against Trident-related facilities, and to being accountable for their actions before the courts. There have been 775 arrests since the campaign began in 1998, with 764 days spent in prison. The next major event is in February 2001, when a coach from the region is expected to join hundreds of people at a mass blockade of Faslane.

(3) Sheriff Margaret Gimblett acquitted the 3 women, after accepting their defence that the deployment of Trident represents an illegal threat under international humanitarian law. This judgement is the subject of the Lord Advocates Reference at Edinburgh High Court, which finished hearing submissions on 17th November.

21st

Veteran Peace Campaigner Threatened with Jail

21st November 2000

Veteran Peace Campaigner Threatened with Jail

Offer to Use Fence-Cutting Skills in Community Service

Today in Gloucestershire Magistrates Court Trident Ploughshares activist Roger Franklin was told that he would be sentenced to 28 days in prison if he did not pay an outstanding compensation order and court costs.

Roger (72), of Horsley, Gloucestershire, was convicted on the 3rd of March along with three others from the Midlands affinity group of Trident Ploughshares, of causing criminal damage to the Atomic Weapons Establishment at Aldermaston. He was ordered to pay £250 towards court costs and £291 compensation for the damage. He has already attended this court for payment to be enforced. Today Roger was given a further opportunity to pay up. He has been asked to make weekly payments of £15 and could be sent to prison if he has not made the first payment by 8th December.

In a three-page statement that was read out to the court Roger commented that prison was unlikely to change his determination to continue the work of de-commissioning the UK's illegal weapons of mass destruction. He suggested community service as an option -perhaps there was some old fencing in the area that needed taken down. His experience in tackling the perimeter fences at various Trident bases and sites would stand him in good stead for that work. Roger said: "That would be a suitably Gilbertian solution."

19th

Trident Convoy Halted Twice

19th November 2000

Trident Convoy Halted Twice

A Trident warhead convoy was halted twice by protesters today as it passed through Balloch on the shores of Loch Lomond. In spite of a large police escort and the presence of the police helicopter overhead the protesters were able to stand out into the path of the articulated lorries carrying the nuclear weapons and safely bring them to a standstill.

The convoy left AWE Burghfield, where Trident warheads are assembled, on Friday morning. It stayed at Albermarle barracks near Newcastle last night and was tracked up the M74 through to Stirling and then Balloch by Scottish Nukewatchers. It is heading for RNAD Coulport where the warheads are loaded onto Trident submarines.

As the large convoy arrived at the first roundabout in Balloch two members of Scottish CND stopped it and were arrested. After safety checks it moved off again only to be halted again a few minutes later by five members of Faslane Peace Camp at the Stonymollan roundabout on the A82. It was stopped for a total of 20 minutes. There were 7 arrests - four women and three men.

A spokesperson said:

'We are hoping that the High Court in Edinburgh tell the Government that they have to take all these warheads away and dismantle them. Until then, if the MOD continue to deliver them we will continue to get in their way.'

Contact: Nukewatch - Jane Tallents 01436 679194 (Photographs available).

17th

Call to Trident Judges to Face the Obvious

17th November 2000

Call to Trident Judges to Face the Obvious

The Lord Advocate's Reference, which has reviewed the Trident Three trial, has concluded today with the judgment expected in the next four to eight weeks.

Amicus curiae Gerry Moynihan countered the Crown assertion that although the women claimed that they were responding to an imminent threat, they had not done so immediately. He gave the analogy of a person who discovers that his neighbour is a terrorist and has prepared a bomb. He asks the police to act but to no avail. He decides to act himself but does not do so during the night since that would be too risky. He breaks in next day to his neighbour's house and disarms the bomb.

Later, on behalf of Ulla Roder, Advocate Ian Anderson said that there were no cases in Scottish law which could illustrate the Maytime situation adequately. Instead he turned to an American Ploughshares case, that of Daniel Berrigan and others, which gave the court better guidance on necessity as a defence.

QC Aidan O'Neill, on behalf of Ellen Moxley, submitted that with the limited facts about Trident that the Court had had before it, it was still possible for it to find that Trident was legal but they had been given no evidence to allow them to rule that it was legal. Dealing with another Crown claim that the humanitarian principles only applied to wartime he explained that the formulation of these principles was an affirmation that basic human rights applied even in wartime. It went without saying that people had a right to life in peacetime.

A Trident Ploughshares spokesperson said: "The judges did not allow the full evidence to be presented at this hearing, but even with that restriction the basic case against Trident has come through. That case is so strong and we ask the bench to admit the obvious and rule it unlawful."

16th

Maytime Disarmer Challenges High Court to Declare Trident Illegal

16th November 2000

Maytime Disarmer Challenges High Court to Declare Trident Illegal

At the continuing hearing in the High Court in Edinburgh of the Lord Advocate's Reference, which is reviewing the trial of the Trident Three, Angie Zelter, in her second submission to the court, has issued a strong challenge to the bench to put an end to "uncomfortable fudging" and give their ruling that Trident is illegal.

Angie, surrounded by QCs and Advocates, was one of the three women who took action against the Trident barge Maytime and is now representing herself in the highest court in the land. Referring to the claim that a Trident attack could be justified as the use of reasonable force against an aggressor, she pointed out that a nuclear response was not at all like hitting a bully back on the nose. A more reasonable analogy would be standing prepared at any minute to burn down the bully's home, thus murdering the bully's family and endangering the whole neighbourhood.

In order to demonstrate the imminent danger posed by nuclear deployment she quoted extensively from a speech by General Lee Butler, former Commander in Chief of the US Strategic Command. Butler was convinced that, "We escaped the Cold War without a nuclear holocaust by some combination of skill, luck and divine intervention,..." and he pointed out that the US nuclear forces were still on hair-trigger alert. Responding to the claim that justifying the intervention of ordinary citizens would lead to anarchy she suggested that, "... far from being anarchic, it is the mark of a civilised country that its members are prepared to assist in the maintenance of good order."

She poured scorn on the concept that the practice of the nuclear states in deploying nuclear weapons weakened the case against them in international law. If that were true, the law could protect no-one from violence. Quoting at length from the ICJ Dissenting Opinion of Judge Weeramantry she showed that threat was the very essence of nuclear deterrence. She said that the ability of the court to examine the core questions properly had been seriously hindered by the failure to allow the evidence that had been presented at Greenock. That evidence had proved that the women's action had been capable of preventing crime.

In conclusion, she asked the court to make a number of statements relating to the applicability of humanitarian law to Scotland, to the right of ordinary citizens to act to uphold the law and the responsibility of members of the armed forces to obey international law re Trident.

The judges followed her submission attentively and did not interrupt. When she finished people in the public gallery stood up in salute. "She was brilliant!" said fellow Maytime disarmer Ulla Roder.

Earlier, the Crown attempted to "rubbish" Sheriff Margaret Gimblett's conduct of the Greenock case and the quality and relevance of the defence expert witnesses. QC Duncan Menzies claimed that Professor Francis Boyle and Professor Paul Rogers, expert witnesses at Greenock, had not brought any valid evidence to the court, but had relied on hearsay and press reports for their assertions. He said that Sheriff Gimblett should not have admitted them and should have left the verdict with the jury.

Menzies gave what he claimed was a hypothetical example of the legal use of Trident. If a Chinese ship armed with nuclear weapons was sailing towards New Zealand with a declared intent to fire, an ally of New Zealand could fire a nuclear weapon at the ship and this could be legal, since no innocent civilians were involved.

When the QC claimed that the existence of the Non Proliferation Treaty implied some acceptance of the legality of nuclear weapons Lord Prosser rejoined that the existence of negotiations to de-commission IRA weapons bore no implication that these weapons were legal.

The hearing is expected to conclude tomorrow with the judgement due in some weeks time.

15th

Britain Must Obey International Law on Trident

15th November 2000

Britain Must Obey International Law on Trident

In the seventh day of the hearing of the Lord Advocate's Reference of the Trident Three ruling in the High Court in Edinburgh, a Queen's Counsel has been arguing that both the British government and the British courts are bound by the principles of international law.

Aidan O'Neill, QC, appearing for Trident Three member Ellen Moxley, said that the Scotland Act and the European Convention on Human Rights ensure that all matters (including the conduct of the State) are "justiciable", i.e., that their lawfulness or otherwise are a matter for the courts, "such as to include even matters of the defence of the realm... where, as in the present case, fundamental rights issues are at stake." There is therefore no Royal Prerogative to break the law.

In a strong challenge to the High Court itself he said, "...this court has to be willing to apply the requirements of the Rule of Law against Executive action, regardless of questions of realpolitik or expediency." On the legality of Trident he demonstrated that NATO itself had acknowledged that nuclear retaliation, was central to its strategic doctrine. This threatening stance was illegal.

At the end of his submission the judges put it to him that to allow ordinary citizens to intervene as the Trident Three had was to open the door to anarchy and vigilantism. O'Neill maintained that if the states activity in question was illegal, if all other avenues of redress had been exhausted, and if the persons concerned could be reasonably sure that their actions would impede the illegal act, such intervention was justified.

A Trident Ploughshares spokesperson said: "Today Aidan O'Neill has made it even more difficult for this court to avoid its clear duty: to recognise the UK nuclear weapons system as unlawful and to acknowledge that the actions of the Trident Three were not merely justifiable but entirely praiseworthy."

14th

Scottish Parliament Member Threatened with Jail

14th November 2000

Scottish Parliament Member Threatened with Jail

In spite of a cogent defence, MSP Tommy Sheridan was threatened with 14 days in prison for his refusal to pay the £250 fine he was given today in Helensburgh District Court for his part in an anti-Trident action.

Tommy was appearing on a charge of breach of the peace connected to the "Crimebusters" blockade of Faslane naval base on 14th February, when he was one of the 185 arrested. In a skillful cross-examination of police witnesses he established that his deportment on the day had been entirely peaceful and non-threatening and that the context for his arrest was his attempt to prevent ongoing crime against international humanitarian law. When discussing the conversations he had had on the day with the arresting officers he referred to the fact that one officer had remarked that Tommy was heavier than when he had last arrested him. Tommy's explanation was that the constant rain had made his clothes heavier!

From the witness box he gave a crisp summary of the case against Trident. As a weapon of mass destruction unable to distinguish military from civilian targets Trident breached the basic principles of humanitarian law. It was common knowledge that UK nuclear weapons were actively deployed and in a constant state of readiness. This was not mere possession - it was threat and as such illegal.

When Procurator Fiscal McRae attempted to narrow the issue down to his refusal to desist from blocking the road and obstructing the traffic Tommy again set his actions in context. No breach of the peace had been committed - it was a matter of trying to prevent a crime of much greater magnitude. He went on to say, "If we don't all take a stand on this one, none of us will be left standing." Justice of the Peace John McPhail found him guilty without any explanation. When Tommy indicated he would not pay the fine the JP made it clear that if he had not paid within 28 days he would go to prison.

A Trident Ploughshares spokesperson said: "Given the deplorable track record of this court the verdict was entirely predictable. Tommy is setting a great example of responsible citizenship and we are calling on the many other MSPs who are against Trident to take a similar principled stand against lawlessness."

14th

Scottish High Court Told UK Nuclear Threat is Real

14th November 2000

Scottish High Court Told UK Nuclear Threat is Real

Nuremberg Principles Give Activists Right to Intervene

As the hearing of the Lord Advocate's Reference resumed today in the High Court in Edinburgh, Advocate John Mayer, on behalf of Trident Three member Ulla Roder, has been arguing that the women were right to intervene to try to stop Britain's ongoing nuclear crime.

All parties to the hearing accepted that the Nuremberg Principles were an established part of customary international law as had been agreed by all the judges in the Pinochet case. Mayer went on to argue that these principles, which spell out the duty of the military etc. not to obey illegal orders, by extension conveyed a right on ordinary citizens to intervene to uphold the law and protect the vulnerable. Lord Prosser pointed out that such a right was already established in the recognised defence of Necessity, though he added that some analysis of the situation was required before intervention was undertaken. Mayer pointed out that the right to intervene must be backed by objective knowledge.

Mayer also dealt with the issue of threat. Under international law, to threaten an illegal action is in itself illegal. Mayer quoted a speech in the House of Commons by the then Defence Secretary George Robertson. Robertson said that the UK's nuclear deterrent was well in place and went on to say that, "No-one should mess with us."

The hearing will resume tomorrow when Aidan O'Neill, QC, will give his submission on behalf of Ellen Moxley.

Earlier today MSP Tommy Sheridan was threatened with 14 days in prison for his refusal to pay the £250 fine he was given today in Helensburgh District Court for his part in an anti-Trident action.

13th

Surprise Faslane Peace Camp Blockade

13th November 2000

Surprise Faslane Peace Camp Blockade

Over 25 Hour Tripod Marathon

A surprise blockade of Faslane this morning was a great success.

Two tripods were put up at seven o'clock this morning by Peace Campers to successfully block the North gate. At the same time Fungus, Barbara, Mark and Roz had the South gate blocked for four

hours in a lock-on across the road.

Eventually the queues of Faslane base traffic went in (very slowly) through a small and little used gate opened between the North gate and the oil depot. Buses had to drop workers off outside the gates to walk in.

Ward from Belgium remained for sixteen hours, while Meadow stayed on his 18 foot high tripod perch for twenty-five and a half hours. It was impossible for police to pull the tripods down without risking harming the suspended activists. Earlier the police put big screens around the tripods at the North gate and the lock-on at the South gate to try and prevent them being seen from the road. A third tripod came down and gave police the slip. The tripoders were denied food and water, and there was an exclusion zone around the tripods.

Meanwhile this morning at Aldermaston 986 police were at Aldermaston prepared for a blockade or whatever. What they got was 15 TPer's packing up their muddy camp. Well guys right day, right action.....just several hundred miles out!

Teapot (just back from his stay in a Czech republic jail) was arrested for obstructing the police; Krebs for throwing a water bottle up to the people on top of the tripods; and Una for leaving the roadway when asked to by a police officer!

Meanwhile at the District Court at Helensburgh, Ian Thomson was jailed for 7 days for an unpaid fine. He should be out on Thursday.

We are preparing for Tommy Sheridan MSP in court at Helensburgh tomorrow, while the Lord Advocate's Reference resumes at the High court in Edinburgh the same day...

Correction

Trident Ploughshares would like to apologise for saying that there were 986 police officers on duty at Aldermaston on Nov 13th. There were in fact only 140; 40 from Thames Valley Police, and around 100 from the Ministry of Defence Police. We would like to thank Sgt Barrett of the Thames Valley Police Operational Support Unit for checking our website for any inaccuracies. (We note he doesn't find anything wrong with our legal arguments about Trident...)

12th

[East Anglians Arrested in Remembrance Day Action at Nuclear Weapons Factory](#)

12th November 2000

East Anglians Arrested in Remembrance Day Action at Nuclear Weapons Factory

Four East Anglian Trident Ploughshares activists were this morning arrested after cutting their way through the fence at Atomic Weapons Establishment Aldermaston, where UK nuclear weapons are manufactured and maintained. They were attempting to carry out a citizens inspection of the base, to determine for the public what goes on there, especially to investigate the illegal and life-threatening development of new forms of Trident warheads.

Barbara Sunderland, Davida Higgin, and Peter Lanyon (all retired school teachers), and Simone Chimowitz; from East Anglia, carried with them statements of intent, stating that:

"We are doing this on Remembrance Day because the existence of Atomic Weapons establishment Aldermaston makes a mockery of the mourning for all those killed in wars and the hopes for peace being expressed today."

Meanwhile, two activists sat on top of fence posts, trying to climb into the base. Colin (20, a student of Environmental Earth Sciences at the University of East Anglia in Norwich) and Martha Scott (also from Norwich) said from their perches on top of the perimeter fence:

"We are here on Remembrance day to remember the dead of all wars, and to try actively to prevent the British Government from manufacturing illegal weapons of mass destruction, planning genocide and future wars. We must work towards peace in the future."

Trident Ploughshares activists are gathering at Aldermaston this weekend for disarmament actions against the establishment there which makes plutonium "pits" (bomb cores) for Trident warheads. The Aldermaston camp comes hot on the heels of the highly successful action at RAF Wittering in Cambridgeshire last week, when TP activists Susan van der Hijden and Martin Newell put out of action one of the trucks which carries Trident nuclear warheads to Coulport in Scotland, causing an estimated £32000 worth of damage. The pair have been remanded in jail until their trial.

11th **Remembrance Day Actions Challenge Both Ends Of The Nuclear Chain**
11th November 2000

Remembrance Day Actions Challenge Both Ends Of The Nuclear Chain

Britain's Trident nuclear weapons programme has been challenged in both England and Scotland today, as activists have cut their way through fences to highlight nuclear facilities in Berkshire and Strathclyde.

Two campaigners from Biggar in Scotland cut their way into Faslane Naval Base on the Clyde, north of Glasgow, home to Britain's four Trident submarines. Jean Oliver (41) and Douglas Shaw (50) were arrested at 11 a.m. this morning, while cutting through the fence with boltcutters. They had been trying to get through to the submarine berths at Faslane.

Meanwhile at Aldermaston in Berkshire, four campaigners from East Anglia have cut into the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE). Barbara Sunderland, Davida Higgin, and Peter Lanyon (all retired school teachers), and Simone Chimowitz were arrested at 11:30 this morning, while cutting through the high security fence at AWE Aldermaston. They had already cut through the outer chain-link fencing. Wearing white radiation suits, they intended to inspect the base, and to investigate the illegal and life-threatening development of new forms of Trident warheads. AWE Aldermaston makes the plutonium "pits" (bomb cores) for Trident warheads.

Both groups are part of the Trident Ploughshares campaign, which has organised this weekend's 'disarmament camp' at AWE Aldermaston. Campaigners from across Europe have gathered at Aldermaston, committed to taking safe and non-violent direct action against the establishment there. Those arrested at Aldermaston this morning carried with them statements of intent, saying,

"We are here on Remembrance day to remember the dead of all wars, and to try actively to prevent the British Government from manufacturing illegal weapons of mass destruction, planning genocide and future wars. We must work towards peace in the future."

These actions come the week that the High Court in Edinburgh reconvenes to consider questions about the illegality of Trident nuclear weapons under international law, arising from the acquittal in October 1999 by Sheriff Gimblett of three peace activists who had disarmed the Trident research barge 'Maytime'. They bring the number of arrests since the Trident Ploughshares campaign began in 1998 to 778, with 750 days spent in prison. Last weekend, two campaigners broke into an RAF base in Cambridgeshire, and symbolically disabled a military vehicle used to transport nuclear warheads from the Atomic Weapons Establishments in Berkshire to the submarine bases in Scotland.

A Trident Ploughshares spokesperson said, "These actions come at an exciting time for the

campaign. Not only are more people getting involved all the time, but we are at last hearing the real issues about Trident debated in the High Court in Scotland. The Remembrance Day actions show that we are committed to our disarmament work at both ends of the nuclear chain, from manufacture at Aldermaston to deployment at Faslane."

8th

Tommy Sheridan on Trial As Trident Review Restarts

8th November 2000

Tommy Sheridan on Trial As Trident Review Restarts

Call to Scottish Parliament to Recognise Importance of Trident Three Review

As Member of the Scottish Parliament Tommy Sheridan gets ready to stand trial for an anti-Trident action, the Trident Ploughshares campaign has called on MSPs to recognise the importance of the Trident Three Review.

Tommy appears at Helensburgh District Court on Tuesday 14th November on a charge of breach of the peace connected to the "Crimebusters" blockade of Faslane on 14th February when he was one of the 185 arrested. He will maintain his not guilty plea and argue that he was justified in blocking the gateway to the nuclear weapons base.

The letter to MSPs alerts the Members to the hearing of the Lord Advocate's Reference (which will resume on Tuesday 14th November) in which the ruling of Sheriff Margaret Gimblett and the legality of Trident are being examined. It asks MSPs to attend the hearing and to raise in Parliament the implications for constitutional, human rights and legal questions of direct relevance to the status and integrity of the Parliament and to the safety and welfare, not only of Scots, but of all people worldwide.

"It is ironic that Tommy Sheridan goes on trial for nuclear crime prevention in a local court on the same day as the highest court in the land resumes its examination of the case against Trident and his right, along with others, to act as a responsible citizen. It's great that Tommy puts himself on the line but Helensburgh District Court should be crammed with elected representatives on Tuesday. We need more smeddum from our leaders."

6th

Another Trident Ploughshares Activist Jailed

6th November 2000

Another Trident Ploughshares Activist Jailed

A Trident Ploughshares activist was sent to prison today after refusing to pay a fine imposed for an anti-Trident disarmament action.

Zoe Weir, (28), from Faslane Peace Camp, had been given seven more days to pay when she appeared at Helensburgh District Court on the 25th of October, although she had firmly indicated then that she had no intention of paying. Yesterday she went voluntarily to the local police station and again said she had not paid and would not pay. The police then acted on a warrant issued by the court and took her to Cornton Vale Prison in Stirling to serve seven days. Her sentence will bring to 750 the total number of days spent in prison by Trident Ploughshares activists.

A Trident Ploughshares spokesperson said: "Zoe's sentence is a good illustration of how our criminal justice system has got the whole business upside down. The British government can lie its way out of any responsibility for its leaking and dangerous nuclear submarines and so far has been able to breach international law with complete impunity on the matter of Trident. Yet there is no problem about sending Zoe to jail for challenging this immoral and illegal system."

Notes:

This Friday Trident Ploughshares activists gather at Aldermaston for disarmament action against the Atomic Weapons Establishment there which makes plutonium "pits" (bomb cores) for Trident warheads.

This Thursday Susan van der Hijden and Martin Newell will appear from custody at Peterborough Magistrates' Court. Early in the morning of Thursday last (3rd November) they got into the vehicle hangar at RAF Wittering in Cambridgeshire and disarmed a truck which is used for transporting Trident Warheads from Burghfield to Coulport in Scotland, causing an estimated £25000 worth of damage.

5th

Trident Ploughshares Activists Return To Aldermaston

5th November 2000

Trident Ploughshares Activists Return To Aldermaston

This coming weekend, 10th to 12th November, activists from the Trident Ploughshares campaign will return to the Atomic Weapons Establishment at Aldermaston in Berkshire for a weekend of disarmament activity.

The campaign's first concerted action against the site was in May this year when 53 activists were arrested for a variety of alleged offences, including cutting their way into the base and blockading the gateways. The Aldermaston camp comes hot on the heels of the highly successful action at RAF Wittering in Cambridgeshire in the early hours of Friday morning, when TP activists Susan van der Hijden and Martin Newell put out of action one of the trucks which carries Trident nuclear warheads to Coulport in Scotland, causing an estimated £25000 worth of damage.

A wide range of actions against AWE Aldermaston is expected as activists explore ways to carry out safe disarmament there. A Trident Ploughshares spokesperson said: "However mundane it may appear to the casual passer-by, Aldermaston is a key part of a nuclear weapons system that is constantly threatening us all with annihilation. It is an ongoing crime that neither the government nor the civil police are prepared to prevent. Someone has to take on that task."

On Saturday 11th November at noon, in Tadley Community Centre, Dr Rosalie Bertell, the internationally recognised expert in the area of the effects of low-level radiation, will speak on "Radiation and Health". On Sunday 12th November, from 11 a.m., at the main gate of Aldermaston, there will be a Vigil for to remember all the dead of all wars.

NOTE: Plutonium "pits" (bomb cores) are produced at AWE Aldermaston and then taken to Burghfield to be assembled into Trident warheads. A convoy of specially built articulated trucks take the warheads to RNAD Coulport where they are loaded onto Trident submarines before being deployed on operational patrol. All parts of this process have now been the target of Trident Ploughshares disarmament action.

3rd

Catholics Convert Convoy

3rd November 2000

Catholics Convert Convoy

Between 3am and 5am this morning, Catholic priest Martin Newell and Dutch Catholic Worker Susan van der Hijden, calling themselves 'Jubilee Ploughshares 2000', entered Wittering airforce base in Cambridgeshire, to enact the biblical prophecy; 'They shall beat their swords into ploughshares', by symbolically disabling the Nuclear Weapons Convoy, which transports nuclear warheads to and from British Trident submarines.

The Jubilee Ploughshares 2000 pair set out to damage this essential part of the Trident system. It follows similar acts of disarmament by other members of Trident Ploughshares, the campaign to

stop the 'ongoing criminal activity under well recognised principles of international law' which is Trident.

After entering the base, the two disabled a Trident warhead carrier, hammering inside the cab on the dashboard and on other equipment in the back of the cab. Then they painted the words "The Kingdom of God is Among You", "Drop the debt, not the bombs", and "Love is the fulfilment of the Law". They then went in search of the guards and security people in order to tell them of their actions.

In their statement they said: "We have acted in a spirit of repentance for our complicity in crime against humanity and God. We have acted to uphold the law. Through the Jubilee 2000 campaign, the church has committed herself to working for justice for the poor and the oppressed. British nuclear weapons are a central part of the chains of oppression. As Christians we have taken responsibility and acted in solidarity with the 'least of this world'."

Susan van der Hijden, who lives and works with refugees in the Netherlands, said: "I have lived with the victims of international violence for seven years, it is high time to go to the roots of the problem - the rich exploiting the poor - and Trident plays a major part in that."

Fr. Martin Newell said: "We are called to love God, do good and resist evil. Trident is a weapons system of mass-destruction worth 400 Hiroshimas. It is a choice of bread or bombs, education or elimination, healthcare or holocaust. This convoy is equipping the gas-ovens for the Holocaust of the 21st century."

Fr Martin Newell (33), born in Walthamstow, has been a Catholic priest in Canning Town, East London, for three years. He also works with homeless people.

Susan van der Hijden (31), born in Hertogenbosch, the Netherlands, has been a member of the Amsterdam Catholic Worker for seven years, where she lives and works with refugees.

Update: Susan and Martin appeared at Peterborough magistrates the following morning. The only clear charge was a mysterious one of theft, but mention was made of £25000 worth of damage to the truck. They were represented by duty solicitor Damian Willett. They made no plea for bail and a snide remark from the magistrate suggested they would not have got it anyway. They will appear again at the same court next Thursday, 9th November, when presumably the charges will have been formulated. Meanwhile Susan is in Holloway Womens Prison and Martin in Bedford Jail.

Update (9th Nov 2000): Susan van der Hijden and Martin Newell appeared in Peterborough Magistrates Court today. They were further remanded to appear in the same court on 7th December. The charge as of now is "burglary with intent to cause criminal damage". The estimate of the damage has gone up to £32,000.

October Women skip court to do an action

25th

25th October 2000

Women skip court to do an action

This morning a mast at Faslane was occupied by two members of the Faslane Peace Camp in protest at the dangers posed by the entire nuclear submarine fleet.

Zoe Weir (28) and Marjan Willemsen (23) made their way into the Garelochhead Oil Depot, part of the Faslane submarine base complex, by cutting the perimeter fence and proceeding to one of the jetties. Once there, the two climbed to the top of the 15 meter high mast and dropped two banners with the message "Trident Subs Threaten The World"

The couple were discovered at 8am and are still there an hour later. The MOD police have posted a dog handler at the bottom of the mast while they try to work out how to get the women down. Both Zoe and Marjan are due to appear at Argyll and Bute District Court today for non-payment of a fine for a previous anti-Trident protest.

Today's action was to express concerns about the safety of Britains entire nuclear powered submarine fleet. The Hunter killer nuclear-powered submarines have been recalled to check for serious defects in the nuclear reactor cooling system. Although the Trident submarines are newer they have the same basic design as the submarines that have been withdrawn.

Zoe Weir and Marjan Willemsen said

"Last week the MOD were finally forced to admit that all twelve of their hunter-killer submarines were a safety risk. If Railtrack can close the main West Coast line to do safety checks then surely the MOD should recall submarines fully armed with 100 kiloton nuclear warheads for checks immediately if there is any chance that their reactors are also faulty."

STOP PRESS

Marjan and Zoe were released by the MOD police inspite of being told they were due in court. Meanwhile the court issued a warrant for their arrest. They will present themselves to the court after the lunch break.

25th

Dutch Activist Sent To Prison

25th October 2000

Dutch Activist Sent To Prison

Student Leader Among "Crimebuster" Blockaders Fined

Today Trident Ploughshares activists who took part in the celebrated "Crimebusters" blockade of Faslane nuclear weapons base in February this year were fined and a Dutch member of Faslane Peace Camp was sent to Cornton Vale women's prison.

Marjan Willemsen (22) had been due to appear along with Zoe Weir (28), also from Faslane Peace Camp, in Helensburgh District Court this morning to explain why they had not paid fines for previous anti-Trident actions. Instead of coming to court they entered Faslane naval base by cutting a hole in the perimeter fence, climbed a lighting mast at one of the shipping berths within the base and draped from the mast banners reading: "Trident Subs Threaten The World." After being released from MOD custody at midday they appeared at the afternoon session in the court. Zoe was given

another seven days to pay while Marjan was sent straight to prison. No reason was given for the different treatment.

Appearing for their part in the celebrated blockade of Faslane naval base were Clive Fudge from Norwich, Joy Mitchell (66) a retired teacher from Berwick and Marilyn Croser (24), current President of the SRC in Glasgow University. Joy said that Trident was incompatible with God's love. Clive pointed out that the vagueness in the catch-all charge he faced, breach of the peace, was an infringement of his rights. Marilyn explained that she had acted to prevent crime and Marilyn said "this case should not have come to trial, there should be more arrests and the real criminals should be brought to trial." All three were fined £50 and all indicated that they would not pay. The fine contrasted sharply with the £300 fine dished out to Jane Tallents on Monday this week in the same court, on the same charge and in identical circumstances.

23rd

Activist to Appeal Guilty Verdict and Heavy Fine

23rd October 2000

Activist to Appeal Guilty Verdict and Heavy Fine

A Trident Ploughshares activist is to appeal against the verdict and the sentence she received at Helensburgh District Court today for taking part in a blockade of Coulport Naval Armaments Depot.

Jane Tallents (42), from Helensburgh, was appearing on a charge of breach of the peace arising from a blockade of the Trident warhead store on 22nd August 1999. She had been one of a group acting "in solidarity with victims of the nuclear chain", such as the Shoshone people of Nevada whose lands had been poisoned by nuclear bomb testing. Following a religious service at the Coulport Gate and a short and moving ceremony Jane and fellow Trident Ploughshares members had sat down in the road, preventing base traffic from entering.

Jane did not dispute the basic facts in the charge against her. She explained that she had come to live in the area because of her opposition to Trident. Britain's nuclear weapons were not a local issue merely but a global one. She challenged the court with the question: What do we do when the people we would normally turn to for help in dealing with a crime refuse to act?, causing the police officer on duty to hang his head. Giving a crisp outline of the legal case against Trident she brought in a defence of necessity, showing how the nature of Trident and her own response matched exactly the legal criteria for that defence.

Justice of the Peace Gillies, contrary to his usual tight-lipped approach to the verdict, gave a brief explanation of why he was finding her guilty. He did not believe that the possession of nuclear weapons was unlawful and said that the defence of necessity did not stand because there was no immediate danger. The accused had other avenues for pursuing her objections. He fined her £300 with 28 days to pay.

Jane will lodge an appeal against both the conviction and the sentence. She said: "This was a perverse verdict. The Procurator Fiscal made no attempt to rebut my defence of necessity. As for what the JP said, it's obvious that Trident is not merely possessed but actively and threateningly deployed and I did demonstrate that the threat is immediate and ever-present."

13th

Historic Nuclear Weapons Case Adjourned

13th October 2000

Historic Nuclear Weapons Case Adjourned

After five days, the hearing in the High Court in Edinburgh of the Lord Advocate's Reference of the trial and acquittal of three nuclear disarmers in Greenock last year, has been adjourned until Tuesday 14th November for five days.

Today Gerry Moynihan QC, amicus curiae, continued to apply the 1996 Opinion of the International Court of Justice to the legality of Trident. Responding to a suggestion from the bench that the ICJ statement that "nuclear weapons would be generally contrary to the rules of international law" was considerably weakened by the use of the term "generally", he argued that that word referred to possible marginal cases involving low-yield weapons. Trident was not on the margins - it was in the core - and clearly unlawful.

Advocate John Mayer, appearing for Ulla Roder whom he had successfully defended at Greenock stated that there was no such thing as mere possession of a fleet of Trident nuclear submarines, each armed with live and targeted 100 kiloton warheads. Deploying nuclear weapons means to have them in a state of readiness for war.

A Trident Ploughshares spokesperson said:

"There has been a lot of encouragement for us so far but we still do not know whether these judges are up to the challenge before them. We are pleased that Trident's status before the law is being debated in the court but there has been a great deal of nit-picking and prevarication. If a panel of three children were picked at random off the streets of Edinburgh and asked to consider whether it is right or legal to threaten to murder innocent people and whether ordinary folk have a legal right to try and stop such a crime, they would come up with the right answer in less than five minutes. Children understand that real law is based on morality.

12th

Trident Illegal, Claims QC

12th October 2000

Trident Illegal, Claims QC

Judge Refers to "Forked Tongues" of Politicians

Gerry Moynihan QC, amicus curiae with the role of providing support to Angie Zelter, who is representing herself, today continued his submission to the High Court at the hearing of the Lord Advocate's Reference which is reviewing the trial and acquittal of the 'Trident Three' in Greenock last year.

Presiding judge Lord Prosser, responding to Moynihan's argument from the 1996 Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of nuclear weapons, suggested that it would be more helpful to focus on the reasoning of the international judges rather than on the actual finding, since the latter was not easy to interpret.

Moynihan said that he was presenting a submission based on the illegality of Trident and was holding in reserve his stance that the entire Reference was incompetent on the basis of the European Convention on Human Rights. Referring to the evidence given by expert witnesses at Greenock he pointed out that Trident was a mass and indiscriminate weapon; that its most likely targets were cities such as Moscow; that it was an offensive and first strike weapon; that it had other purposes than that of ensuring the survival of Britain, it could be used to deal with "rogue states"; that it had been threatened, for example during the Gulf war.

Lord Prosser questioned the validity of the expert testimony at Greenock. Referring to the testimony of Professor Paul Rogers he suggested we could not rely, as Rogers had seemed to, on what we could read in the papers or on the "forked tongue" of politicians.

Moynihan's view was that the only reason the ICJ judges did not come out with a blanket ban on nuclear weapons was that some of them felt that a legal use of a small yield weapon against a ship at sea or an isolated military objective in a desert was a possibility. This reservation did not, of

course, apply to Trident, which was clearly illegal.

A Trident Ploughshares spokesperson said:

"It would be much more satisfactory if the Court was open to calling for expert testimony to help it on matters of fact relating to Trident. It is wholly unfair of Lord Prosser to attempt to undermine expert testimony at second hand. Why not bring Paul Rogers and the others to the Court?"

Meanwhile it has been agreed that a proper examination of the issues before the court will take longer than the five days originally allocated. At the end of tomorrow's session the Court will adjourn to a date as yet undecided.

11th [Scottish High Court Hears that Trident is a Crime](#)
11th October 2000

Scottish High Court Hears that Trident is a Crime

Today, before an attentive and engaged panel of judges at the High Court in Edinburgh, a peace activist has developed the case against the UK's Trident nuclear weapon system, pointing out its devastating effects and the fact that it is a continuing threat.

Making her submission as part of the hearing of the Lord Advocate's Reference of the 'Trident Three' trial, Angie Zelter illustrated the destructive power of a single warhead by referring to a map of Edinburgh showing military targets overlaid with the damage, death and injury that would be caused. Moving on from this grim exhibit she showed that the International Criminal Court Statute states that the preparation for war crimes is itself a war crime. It is British government policy to have a "credible deterrent". "I come back," she said "once more to the simple underlying purpose of the British nuclear deterrent - to threaten awful destruction. It is that awful destruction, that crime, which we three women were trying to prevent by our action."

Trident's unlawful status meant that members of the British government and the military personnel involved were all "international criminals subject to trial ...". Citizens had time and again attempted to have this criminality addressed through the legal system. No prosecutions had taken place - a "serious indictment of the criminal prosecution service in both England and Scotland."

In dealing with the question of the right of citizens to act to prevent crime she said: "If our action had been one of nonviolently disarming the equipment essential to the mad plans of a local drug dealer who was threatening to blow up a whole street of innocent families where his rival lived, we would probably not have been brought to trial." In concluding she said: "The nuclear crime prevention will continue whatever the outcome of the LAR but if the court is wise and courageous it will also grapple with the underlying problems arising out of the Greenock trial - that of the vital question of the illegality of Trident and how to remove it from Scotland."

Skale Eskeland, a law professor from the University of Oslo, who came to Edinburgh today specifically for the hearing said: "If the three women get the Court to come out in agreement with them, the consequences will be immense and will reach far beyond Scotland." The hearing continues.

10th ['Trident Three' Member Tells High Court Trident is Illegal](#)
10th October 2000

'Trident Three' Member Tells High Court Trident is Illegal

As the High Court in Edinburgh clarified that the hearing of the Lord Advocate's Reference would be able to debate the central question - *the legality of Trident* - one of the respondents, Angie Zelter, has already taken the debate to the heart of the matter by

demonstrating how Trident breaches the cardinal principles of international law.

Representing herself, the only lay person in the whole proceedings, Angie gave a confident presentation of the first part of her submission. She said that the proceedings would relate to whether there is a right for ordinary citizens to prevent innocent people from being murdered. She strongly refuted the Crown statement that she, Ulla Roder and Ellen Moxley were engaged in some kind of opposition or protest. They had acted to try to prevent preparations for war crimes.

Dealing with the reality of the Trident threat she said: "It was submitted at Greenock that the British Trident system is an immediate and ongoing danger to life on earth, a threat to international peace and specifically unlawful as a breach of the intransgressible rules of humanitarian law as expressed by the ICJ. I continue to submit that we are all still in imminent danger of extinction."

Angie's submission will continue tomorrow.

9th

High Court Trident Hearing Begins

9th October 2000

High Court Trident Hearing Begins

European Human Rights Issues Set Aside

On the opening day of the hearing in a busy Edinburgh High Court of the Lord Advocate's Reference of the "Trident Three" ruling in Greenock last year, the Crown has begun to put its case, arguing that the three woman did not have an adequate defence to the charge of malicious damage, on which they were acquitted.

The panel of judges have decided to set aside for the time being consideration of the issues raised by the respondents under the European Convention on Human Rights. They have opted to go into the main arguments immediately and to deal with ECHR issues as they specifically arise. Although again refusing to have the proceedings recorded they have indicated that there will be scope for addressing key issues not covered by the Lord Advocate's four questions.

For the Crown the Advocate Depute has argued that to establish a charge of malicious mischief the prosecution does not require to prove a spiteful motive for the act. By this he hopes to undermine one plank of the Greenock defence, i.e., that the women had acted without malice. He has also maintained that the defence of necessity, while applicable in principle, was unsound at Greenock because, in his view, there was no immediate danger to justify the women's action.

A Trident Ploughshares spokesperson said: The approach being taken by the Crown confirms our view that the Reference is an appeal by the back door and a way of putting the women on trial for a second time. On the other hand this gives a better chance for the real issue to be addressed - the right for ordinary citizens to try to prevent innocent people from being murdered."

4th

Local Court Seizing Up Under Pressure From Peace Activists

4th October 2000

Local Court Seizing Up Under Pressure From Peace Activists

As the Scotland's highest court prepares next week to discuss the right of citizens to take disarmament action against the UK's nuclear weapons system, an unmanageable backlog of cases against activists is threatening to completely clog up the local court which is nearest to the nuclear weapon bases on the Clyde.

Today 24 cases against Trident Ploughshares activists, including 6 trials, were before Helensburgh District Court. All the trials, including that of MSP Tommy Sheridan, were further adjourned for a variety of reasons. Two of the trials had to be rescheduled due to the lack of disability access to the

court, affecting the accused in one case and two witnesses in another case. It had been intended to hold these two trials in the nearby and accessible Victoria Halls but that building has recently suffered a collapsed ceiling. 40 trials are still in the pipeline and these only deal with the arrests as far as February this year. Reports relating to the 161 arrests at the August blockade and disarmament camp are still before the Procurator Fiscal. The backlog is in spite of the fact that the court now has three sittings per month rather than the normal single sitting.

A Trident Ploughshares spokesperson said:

"The local Procurator Fiscal has stubbornly continued to send our cases to the local court which basically cannot cope. Our cases take more time, because our defences are thoroughly prepared and presented. The issues that we raise are complex, frequently involving International Law and the European Convention on Human Rights, and neither the Procurator nor the Justices of the Peace have the necessary expertise. Lets hope that the High Court can rise to the challenge."

4th

Seven Arrests At Nuclear Weapons Base

4th October 2000

Seven Arrests At Nuclear Weapons Base

Seven peace activists have been held tonight at Coulport Naval Armaments Depot on Loch Long where the warheads for Britain's Trident nuclear missiles are stored.

Six activists, in three groups of two, cut the perimeter fence on the eastern side of the base, while the seventh cut the fence near the base's main gate. Those on the eastern side were attempting to reach the Trident High Security area but were apprehended at the perimeter.

Those arrested were: Morag Balfour (27), from Glenrothes in Scotland; Mark Akkerman (20), a student from the Netherlands; Martyn Kelly (23) a Colombian; Hisham Abdallah from Glasgow; Alex Cochrane from Glasgow; Stein Machiels and Ward Machiels, both Belgians currently living at Faslane Peace Camp. All are currently in custody within the Coulport base. This brings to 772 the number of arrests in the Trident Ploughshares campaign.

A Trident Ploughshares spokesperson said:

"This morning a Special Nuclear Materials convoy arrived at Coulport, bringing Tritium to re-equip Trident missiles there. This is yet another sign that Britain keeps its nuclear missile fleet in a state of constant readiness, which constitutes an illegal threat under international law. We will continue to do whatever we can to prevent this criminal activity."

September High Court All at Sea Over Trident Three Review

29th September 2000

High Court All at Sea Over Trident Three Review

At today's third preliminary hearing in connection with the Lord Advocate's Reference

of the "Trident Three" ruling of Sheriff Gimblett last October, the bench of High Court judges failed to respond to pleas for an open and fair procedure.

Lord Prosser did not permit Advocate Aidan O'Neill QC to develop his argument that Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights applied to the Reference, and that the respondents as a result had a right to a fair process in which they had reasonable notice of the arguments that the Crown would bring and to a reasonable opportunity to present their case under conditions that did not place them at a disadvantage.

The Court has also upheld Lord Rodger's refusal to allow the Reference proceedings to be recorded on tape. The preliminary hearing also gave no satisfactory or clear indication of how the proceedings will be conducted.

There was one crumb of comfort for the respondents. In connection with the Crown's refusal to amend the questions in the Reference, which the respondents regard as slanted and based on a flawed understanding of the original trial, he said: "When the Court has not got the questions which satisfy respondents the Court can be liberally minded about what can be discussed."

A Trident Ploughshares spokesperson said:

"We were encouraged by the second preliminary hearing but today's performance by the bench does make us wonder whether the High Court is up to the challenge. In spite of his statement last time around that he would not dodge the issues, Prosser dodged a few today. By refusing a tape recording and transcript the judges seem to be happy with a hole-in-corner affair and either don't appreciate or are deliberately ignoring the global significance of this process. Scotland deserves a decent High Court that has the professionalism and courage to take Trident on."

28th [Key Preliminary Hearing Tomorrow For Review of Trident Three Ruling](#)
28th September 2000

Key Preliminary Hearing Tomorrow For Review of Trident Three Ruling

Claim that High Court Review Breaches European Convention

A panel of judges at the High Court in Edinburgh tomorrow will hear submissions from the interested parties on vital factors relating to the Lord Advocate's Reference of the ruling of Sheriff Gimblett in Greenock last October when she acquitted three nuclear disarmers.

The activists are hoping that tomorrow's 2 p.m. preliminary hearing in the High Court of Justiciary will promote the re-phrasing of the questions set in the Reference, so that the issues central to the Greenock trial, i.e., the legality of Trident and the right of citizens to act to prevent breaches of international humanitarian law, can be dealt with. The interested parties will argue that the whole process of the Reference contradicts the European Convention on Human Rights. They hope also that a number of practical requirements will be met, such as the provision of reasonable costs to one of the women, Angie Zelter, who is representing herself.

Meanwhile the Procurator Fiscal's office in Dumbarton has again shown bizarre inconsistency in its handling of Trident Ploughshares cases. Marjan Willemsen (23), from the Netherlands, currently at Faslane Peace Camp, sought and was granted at Dumbarton Sheriff Court, without objection from the Fiscal, an adjournment of her trial on a breach of the peace charge until the High Court Ruling on the Lord Advocate's Reference is available. This is in contrast to the Fiscal's strenuous objection to such adjournments in a welter of Trident Ploughshares cases at District Court level in recent months, including the plea for adjournment by Angie Zelter of a breach of the peace trial relating to the "Crimebusters" blockade of Faslane naval base in February. Angie is now

petitioning the High Court for this adjournment.

A Trident Ploughshares spokesperson said:

"We strongly suspect that the attitude of the Dumbarton Procurator Fiscal on adjournments in the light of the upcoming Lord Advocate's Reference has been determined more by his anxiety about Ploughshares cases clogging up the local courts than by any understanding of legal process."

20th

Trident Jury Hung On Second Charge

20th September 2000

Trident Jury Hung On Second Charge

Friday Decision on Retrial

After finding them Not Guilty yesterday on one charge, the jury in the Manchester Crown Court trial of nuclear disarmers Rosie James and Rachel Wenham has been discharged after being unable to agree on the other charge.

The women were each charged with two counts of criminal damage to Trident submarine HMS Vengeance at Barrow in February 1999. Yesterday, after four hours of deliberation, the jury returned with a majority verdict of Not Guilty for both women on the second count of spray-painting "Death Machine and "Illegal" on the vessel. Today, after retiring for a total of 6 hours 13 minutes, the jury were unable to reach a verdict on the first count of hammering test equipment. The prosecution now has until 2 p.m. on Friday to state before the court whether the Crown Prosecution Service intends to ask for them to be tried again.

A spokeswoman for the women's affinity group, Aldermaston Women Trash Trident, said:

"We see this outcome as a victory. Our case clearly caused a serious dilemma for the jury and it shows that instinctive morality is alive and well. If there is a retrial it will be the third appearance in the dock for these women in this case. We believe it will be a complete waste of public money to add to the £1.5 billion already being spent this year on the Trident system."

Ms Wenham said:

"Despite the efforts of the UK government, this case has shown that the moral conscience of the British people is alive and kicking! An English jury has seen the truth about Britain's nuclear weapons system and has questioned the moral and legal legitimacy of Trident."

[Update: It actually took the CPS two weeks to decide if there was to be a retrial of Rosie and Rachel. The retrial of the century (well actually, spanning the centuries) will now take place in Manchester crown court from 3 April 2001.

Rachel is glad that the retrial is going ahead and "looking forward to sharing the horrendousness of the Trident missile system with another jury", and hopes to present her own defence this time. Rosie will be represented by Vera Baird.

Bets are being taken on how much the prosecution will value the damage to the testing system at this time (in previous trials this has varied from £3,000 to almost £1 million. All proceeds will go to the AWTT trial fund - cheques payable to AWPC (Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp), c/o 30, Golwg y bryn, Pantyffordd, Neath SA10 9BY.

The winner gets the satisfaction of knowing they were right!]

19th

Trident disarmers Not Guilty on One Charge

19th September 2000

Trident disarmers Not Guilty on One Charge

Jury Still to Decide on Other Charge

The Jury at the Manchester Crown trial of peace activists Rosie James and Rachel Wenham has returned a Not Guilty verdict on one of the charges against the women and is still to reach agreement on the other.

The women have been found Not Guilty on the charge of criminal damage relating to the spray painting of peace slogans on the Trident submarine HMS vengeance in Barrow last year. The jury has still not been able to reach a verdict on the first charge relating to the damage to testing equipment on the conning tower and has been sent home for the night by Justice Humphries. The court will reconvene tomorrow at 10.30 when the jury will be sent out to deliberate further.

In the light of the fact that the women have never denied that they carried out the spray painting it would follow that the jury has decided that the women's defence was valid.

A Trident Ploughshares spokesperson said:

"We have every hope that the verdict on the other charge will also vindicate the women's action."

18th

The Jury is (Nearly!) Out - Verdict Tomorrow

18th September 2000

The Jury is (Nearly!) Out - Verdict Tomorrow

Following legal arguments, Justice Humphries today ruled that two of the Defence's three proposed legal defences (ie defences based on law - as opposed to fact), could be heard before the jury.

He ruled that the defences available within the Criminal Damage Act of necessity/duress and acting to protect property or life, could be left for the jury to decide on. The third legal defence put forward - that of preventing a greater crime (in this instance the crime of genocide and the transgression of various international laws of war) - could not be submitted to the jury. Justice Humphries justified this on his belief that the threat or use of Trident does not contravene existing English law (a debatable point given the arguments of universal jurisdiction, and the fact that both the Geneva Convention and the Genocide Act have been incorporated into English law.

Before final summing up, the court heard Rachel Wenham dispense with the services of her Barrister - Julia Dick - choosing instead to represent herself and speak to the jury directly. In a dignified address she emphasised the ever-present threat of nuclear annihilation and appealed to the jury to follow their individual consciences in accordance with the Nuremberg Principles.

Justice Humphries dismissed the jury at 15:30, he will deliver his summing up tomorrow (Tuesday) morning, leaving the jury to return a verdict later in the day.

15th

Trident: an ever present threat

15th September 2000

Trident: an ever present threat

Today at Manchester Crown Court, three witnesses gave evidence on behalf of the

defence:

Prof Paul Rodgers, Peace Studies Department, Bradford University

Angie Zelter, founder, Trident Ploughshares 2000

Rebecca Johnson, Executive Director, defence-analysis think-tank, the Acronym Institute

Angie Zelter gave evidence that the defendants, as part of the TP2000 organisation, had exhausted every available conventional remedy, before taking direct action, to seek to ensure that the British government took notice of the 1996 opinion of the International Court of Justice regarding the illegality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons. Much of today's evidence related to the immediacy of the threat of nuclear weapons: Paul Rodgers explained how the threat posed by the Trident fleet of nuclear submarines is fundamental to Britain's current nuclear posture, both within NATO and independent of it. Rebecca Johnson amplified the immediacy of the nuclear threat by describing the context of heightened international tension in the Middle East following Operation Desert Fox - immediately before the women carried out their disarmament action.

Prosecution barrister, Mr Watson, appeared particularly ineffectual when he attempted to undermine the credibility of expert witness Rebecca Johnson, by alleging that she could not remember the universities from which she had gained her numerous qualifications. Ms Johnson, who regularly provides opinions for the Foreign Office and United Nations is considered one of a very small group of experts in the world in relation to issues of nuclear non-proliferation.

The jury was dismissed at 3pm in order for the judge to take information from both the defence and prosecution on points of law. The case will resume on Monday at 10am when Justice Humphries will hear further submissions from the legal teams.

The defence case should close on Monday, with a verdict on Monday afternoon or, more likely, Tuesday.

14th

AWTT Trial - Day Three

14th September 2000

AWTT Trial - Day Three

Rosie continued giving her evidence this morning, only to be interrupted within the first five minutes, and the jury sent out, by objections from the prosecution as she started to mention reasons for the acquittal in the Hawk case. The judge agreed to let her continue after explaining to the jury that they must not see the Hawk case as a precedent. After describing how she became involved with TP, she was asked what her understanding of the law was with respect to Trident, provoking another objection from the prosecution and another exit for the jury. The judge ruled that she could continue as he hadn't ruled beliefs as irrelevant.

Rosie then explained how Trident could in no way fit in with the criteria in international humanitarian law, describing Trident as an aggressive first strike weapon used to protect Britain's economic interests. She described the steps taken by Ploughshares to lobby and enter into dialogue with the government, and outlined the imminent threat posed by Trident in terms of accidents, near misses and the possibility of deliberate use against states such as Iraq.

She then told the jury about the job of disarmament carried out in February, saying that at the end 'we had done our job and felt satisfied'. In cross examination the prosecution led her through the action again, merely asking her to confirm what she had already said. He had clearly looked at a few party manifestos to prove that voting would solve the problem, and triumphantly came

up with the solution of voting for the Green Party.

After lunch Rachel started her evidence, telling of her fear in childhood of nuclear war. Her moving description of lying in bed thinking that every plane passing over could be delivering the final bomb will strike a chord with many of us. Letters of negotiation written to the government and others were referred to. The judge cut short Rachel's description of the nature of the warheads, and her more detailed references to international law, although she was allowed to state briefly her understanding of the ICJ. She spoke inspiringly about empowering people through the action to listen to their own conscience.

There was a moment of comedy when Rachel said that German judges had taken effective direct action. The judge interrupted with laughter, saying 'not by jumping into a dock, surely? I'll have to get a wetsuit!' Rachel waited with quiet dignity while the laughter died down to explain that they had indeed taken direct action by blockading a Pershing missile base. When asked what the effect of her actions was she replied 'It worked. We stopped Vengeance sailing'. The prosecution didn't challenge that.

In cross examination the prosecutor attempted to imply that publicity had been an important factor in the action. Rachel persistently repeated that the intention was to disarm Trident, pointing out that there are easier ways to gain publicity.

After Rachel's evidence the defence asked to call Ulf Panzer (one of those German judges), but this was refused on the grounds that he could not speak about matters of law and his actions were not relevant.

Defence witnesses will be heard tomorrow at 10.30.

From her days living outside the Alvis tank factory in Coventry and her political life-changing encounters with BAe Hawk disarmers Andrea Needham and Angie Zelter, to the action she took with Rachel Wenham on 1 February 1999, Rosie presented a thoughtful and moving account of her work and life.

In reply to cross-examination regarding the Vengeance action, Rosie made it clear that she expected to be arrested, charged and tried for her actions. She said, "We were not criminals running a way from what we did; what we did was true and right and proper, and we feel no shame in taking it before a court of law".

In a case that seeks to establish that the women's action was taken in order to prevent greater crimes, Rosie James stated that "It is perfectly clear that Trident breaks every cardinal principle of international law, not to mention our gut instincts on how to behave to each other."

Despite the best efforts of the prosecution, Judge Humphries did not rule out Rosie's evidence relating to the International Court of Justice's 1996 Opinion on the legality on nuclear weapons. She went on to say that Britain's possession of the Trident nuclear weapon system was based on its economic interests rather than the defence of the nation.

From the witness box Rosie James described how on the night of their disarmament action, the women had swum in darkness across the dock at Barrow, boarded the submarine despite a full security presence, and had been able to disarm radar surveillance testing equipment before handing themselves in to security.

Rosie's co-defendant, Rachel Wenham, will appear in court and begin giving evidence this afternoon. Expert witnesses and legal arguments will be heard on Friday.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR DAY OF VERDICT

In the event of a not guilty verdict and acquittal:

This would be as significant as the acquittal of the Hawks women at Liverpool Crown Court in 1996 and of the acquittal of the three women Greenock Sheriff Court in October 1999 and would mean that the court had accepted the relevance of international law in respect of Britain's possession of nuclear weapons.

A photo-call will be held on the steps of Manchester Crown Court immediately after the court is dismissed, followed by a press conference at the Friends Meeting House, Mount Street, Manchester - this will take place two hours after the court is dismissed. Both defendants and their support team will be available for questions.

In the event of a guilty verdict:

A press conference will be held at the Friends Meeting House, Mount Street, Manchester - this will take place two hours after the court is dismissed. Representatives of the defendants will provide a written statement and will also be available for questions.

14th [We cut down the UK nuclear threat by one quarter" protester claims](#)
14th September 2000

We cut down the UK nuclear threat by one quarter" protester claims

Yesterday in Manchester Crown court Rachel Wenham took the witness stand to describe her part in the damage to the Trident nuclear submarine Vengeance.

The jury heard of her "extreme trepidation swimming in the filth infested waters" of Barrow docks to the submarine, but also of her conviction that her disarmament action was protected by international law.

Ms Wenham explained how attempts by Trident Ploughshares to enter into detailed dialogue with the British government over the legality of Trident only resulted in the group being "fobbed off" with standard answers. Questions on how the Trident system carrying 48 warheads each eight times as powerful as the Hiroshima bomb could comply with international humanitarian law were ignored.

There was amusement in court when the judge suggested that he might have to find a wetsuit, after hearing with evident surprise as Ms Wenham described the direct action taken by judges in Germany who blockaded a Pershing missile base. This and other successful actions led her to believe that individuals can help disarm weapons of mass destruction.

Asked what the effect of her action was, Rachel replied "It worked. We prevented Vengeance sailing."

13th [Court Issues Warrant to Arrest Tommy Sheridan](#)
13th September 2000

Court Issues Warrant to Arrest Tommy Sheridan

MSP Refuses to Attend "Ludicrous" Local Court

A Justice of the Peace at Argyle and Bute District Court has issued a warrant for the arrest of MSP Tommy Sheridan after he refused to attend a hearing in Helensburgh.

Tommy was arrested at the "Crimebusters" blockade of Faslane naval base on 14th February this

year and charged with breach of the peace. He has already given a not guilty plea and was due to go to trial on 4th October.

Describing the Argyle and Bute Court as "ludicrous" he refused to attend today's Intermediate Diet on the grounds that the court had no right to try him for upholding the law. He indicated his willingness to risk imprisonment by continuing to join in the work of confronting the illegality of the Trident system.

Principal Depute Procurator Fiscal Lorna Revie sought a warrant for his arrest and this was granted by JP John McPhail.

A Trident Ploughshares spokesperson said:

"It is a great encouragement to us that a Member of the Scottish Parliament is so determined to confront Trident. His decision not to appear today is perfectly valid. Over and over again the local court has shown itself incapable of dealing with the legal issues involved. It has shown consistent political bias in favour of the UK government and its illegal nuclear weapons policy."

13th

AWTT Trial - Day Two
13th September 2000

AWTT Trial - Day Two

Rosie and Rachel's trial continued today after being adjourned on Monday. Perhaps the most interesting revelation came when prosecution witness Gordon Walker, the Commissioning Project Leader for Vickers, stated in cross examination that because of 'difficulties' with the replacement test equipment, Vengeance sailed from Barrow without all the necessary tests being completed. This means that Vengeance sailed without assurance that its radar surveillance system was in full working order. The tests were completed elsewhere at a later date...

Most of the day was taken up by a cross-examination of Mr Stovell, a Racal test engineer, who has supplied one of the several contested estimates of the value of the damage. This dealt with literally almost every nut and bolt that was damaged, with Mr Stovell providing estimates of the value of damage, several times larger than that provided by an independent report commissioned by the defence. (This was commissioned after the adjournment and then abandonment of the last trial which foundered on the issue of costs.)

The defence are seeking to establish the real value of the damage - estimated according to evidence presented today at between £318,000 and £915,000 - as this will relate to the length of sentence if Rosie and Rachel were to be found guilty.

At the end of the prosecution case, extracts from Rachel's interview were read out in court. Rosie had made a 'no comment' statement.

At 3.10 the defence opened the case and Rosie was called to the witness stand, and talked in a very moving way about how she had grown up under the shadow of the bomb, and had come to realise through her own experience - including her year at the peace camp outside Alvis tank factory - that direct action was the only way to make a difference.

At this point, the prosecution stood up and - after the jury had been dismissed - made a submission regarding the possible lines of defence being pursued, and referred to Judge Openshaw's ruling on which defences could - and could not be used - at the Bread Not Bombs trial in Lancaster. This was the moment we had all been dreading, but fortunately Judge

Humphreys - at this stage at least - having heard both the prosecution and Vera Baird for the defence - stated that he was not going to take Judge Openshaw's ruling as a precedent, and that he was "not ruling anything out at this stage".

The trial resumes tomorrow at 11.am.

13th

Scottish Magistrate Refuses To Wait on High Court

13th September 2000

Scottish Magistrate Refuses To Wait on High Court

A local magistrate in Scotland has refused to take account of the upcoming Lord Advocate's Reference and adjourn trials of peace activists.

Today, in Argyle and Bute District Court in Helensburgh, Justice of the Peace John McPhail turned down an adjournment plea from five activists, including two of the Trident Three, Angie Zelter and Ellen Moxley. It is the ruling of Sheriff Gimblett at their acquittal, in October last year, on criminal damage charges relating to their disarmament of the Trident research barge "Maytime", that is the subject of the Lord Advocates' Reference (LAR). The LAR is to be held in the High Court of Justiciary from 9th October.

Angie Zelter has instructed a solicitor to appeal against the magistrate's refusal of her plea, on the basis that his decision is an "abuse of process". She has indicated that she will take the matter as far as the European Court of Human Rights. She said: "The preliminary hearing for the LAR at the High Court yesterday gave us some hope that these proceedings will be fair and will look at the real issues raised by the Gimblett judgment. The presiding Judge, Lord Prosser, said that he and his colleagues on the bench would not dodge any of the issues. In contrast we have the continuing farcical performance of a local court that refuses to admit that it is well out of its depth."

In the same court today a warrant was issued for the arrest of Member of the Scottish Parliament Tommy Sheridan. Tommy was arrested at the "Crimebusters" blockade of Faslane naval base on 14th February this year and charged with breach of the peace. He was due to go to trial on 4th October. Describing the Argyle and Bute Court as "ludicrous" he refused to attend today's Intermediate Diet on the grounds that the court had no right to try him for upholding the law.

On trial today were Marjan Willemsen (23), from the Netherlands and Ian Thomson (58). Marjan was fined £100 on a breach of the peace charge relating to a blockade of Coulport Naval Armaments Depot, where Trident warheads are stored, in August last year. Ian was fined £80 for his part in the "Crimebusters" blockade.

13th

Trident Trasher inspired by Hawks action

13th September 2000

Trident Trasher inspired by Hawks action

Today in Manchester Crown Court Rosie James made a moving statement about the openness and accountability of her actions in disarming the Trident nuclear submarine - HMS Vengeance - in February 1999.

From her days living outside the Alvis tank factory in Coventry and her political life-changing encounters with BAe Hawk disarmers Andrea Needham and Angie Zelter, to the action she took with Rachel Wenham on 1 February 1999, Rosie presented a thoughtful and moving account of her work and life.

In reply to cross-examination regarding the Vengeance action, Rosie made it clear that she

expected to be arrested, charged and tried for her actions. She said, "We were not criminals running a way from what we did; what we did was true and right and proper, and we feel no shame in taking it before a court of law".

In a case that seeks to establish that the women's action was taken in order to prevent greater crimes, Rosie James stated that "It is perfectly clear that Trident breaks every cardinal principle of international law, not to mention our gut instincts on how to behave to each other."

Despite the best efforts of the prosecution, Judge Humphries did not rule out Rosie's evidence relating to the International Court of Justice's 1996 Opinion on the legality on nuclear weapons. She went on to say that Britain's possession of the Trident nuclear weapon system was based on its economic interests rather than the defence of the nation.

From the witness box Rosie James described how on the night of their disarmament action, the women had swum in darkness across the dock at Barrow, boarded the submarine despite a full security presence, and had been able to disarm radar surveillance testing equipment before handing themselves in to security.

Rosie's co-defendant, Rachel Wenham, will appear in court and begin giving evidence this afternoon. Expert witnesses and legal arguments will be heard on Friday.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR DAY OF VERDICT

In the event of a not guilty verdict and acquittal:

This would be as significant as the acquittal of the Hawks women at Liverpool Crown Court in 1996 and of the acquittal of the three women Greenock Sheriff Court in October 1999 and would mean that the court had accepted the relevance of international law in respect of Britain's possession of nuclear weapons.

A photo-call will be held on the steps of Manchester Crown Court immediately after the court is dismissed, followed by a press conference at the Friends Meeting House, Mount Street, Manchester - this will take place two hours after the court is dismissed. Both defendants and their support team will be available for questions.

In the event of a guilty verdict:

A press conference will be held at the Friends Meeting House, Mount Street, Manchester - this will take place two hours after the court is dismissed. Representatives of the defendants will provide a written statement and will also be available for questions.

12th

LAR Hearing at Edinburgh High Court

12th September 2000

LAR Hearing at Edinburgh High Court

High Court of Justiciary, Edinburgh.

There was a hearing today to look again at some of the decisions made at the preliminary hearing for the Lord Advocates Reference by Lord Rodger. The new Judge, Lord Prosser was much more receptive and the whole tone was friendlier.

The role of the 'amicus curiae', Gerry Moynihan, appointed last time was questioned. He was there and himself asked the court for clarification. The possibility of recording the proceedings was also raised.

Angie Zelter made a motion that another question be added about the legality of Trident. There were queries about the competence of question 2 which refers to the 'possession of nuclear weapons'. Sheriff Gimblett's report makes clear that the defence in Greenock was about the threat and use of Trident NOT possession. The judge suggested that the Advocate Depute let the Lord Advocate know that he should look at his question again after reading the transcript of the last three days of the Greenock trial and the Sheriffs report. The judge seemed to agree that the 'critical question' wasn't there! Gerry Moynihan also questioned whether the Lord Advocate (as a member of the Scottish parliament) can make a Reference about something which is not devolved to the Scottish parliament ie. defence.

Most of the issues raised have been deferred to yet another hearing to be held sometime before October 9th. The judge did decide that the appointment of Gerry Moynihan was appropriate. Mr Moynihan has agreed that if his role is to look after Angies legal interests, then he has to actually talk to her!

Generally everyone seemed happier than last time.

11th

Trial of Zoe Weir and David Heller for Fence Cutting action 18th Aug 1999

11th September 2000

Trial of Zoe Weir and David Heller for Fence Cutting action 18th Aug 1999

Helensburgh District Court. Monday 11 September 2000

JP John MacPhail, PF Chris Donnelly

There were only three witnesses. The first two were civil servants who had watched Fungus (Zoe Weir), David and Krieb at the fence on the camera monitor. The third was a Quad bike driver who arrested David after seeing him cutting the fence. David asked about the effects on the base of someone cutting the fence. The witnesses couldn't say. He then showed them a document which outlines the action that base personnel should take when the intruder alarm sounds, making clear that work is disrupted. The PF looked quite disconcerted at this new evidence (especially as it had clearly come from inside the base)!

At the end of the prosecution case the PF said he wasn't seeking a conviction against Fungus (no evidence) and he was amending the charge against David to 'attempting' to damage the fence. In spite of protests from David the JP agreed to this. After lunch David put in a submission of 'no case to answer' which was rejected. He gave no evidence himself and in spite of a good analysis of how poor the evidence against him was JP MacPhail found him guilty and fined him £50 for the ATTEMPTED damage and £50 for breach of bail.

Trial of Sylvia Boyes for Fence Cutting (Aug 99) Swimming into Faslane (Aug 99) Locking-on to a bus at Coulport (Nov 99). Although it was already 4pm and there was a long list of prosecution witnesses the court decided to start this trial.

The first police witness saw Sylvia hang a banner on the fence and then cut it with bolt cutters near to the painted rocks at Faslane. The next witness saw two people in the water on the camera monitor and two boat police appeared to say they arrested her. The PF's second witness for the first charge hadn't yet arrived and he decided to give no evidence on the 3rd charge, so the PF was now only seeking a conviction for the second charge of breaking the military byelaws by swimming into the protected area.

Sylvia then refused to give evidence from the witness box saying that as a Quaker it didn't

matter where she stood to tell the truth. She then made an amazingly powerful speech about her reasons for taking action. She talked about the horror of the Dunblane massacre and the Omagh bomb and held up a book about Hiroshima and asked the court to not to ignore the crime against humanity that is Trident. She read out the UN Charter and how our Government breaks laws while demanding that others keep them.

The magistrate said he had listened patiently but he wasn't there to judge the legality of Trident. He found her guilty and fined her £100 and in anticipation of what she would say gave her 28 days to pay. Sylvia said she already owed them £150 which she hadn't paid and was refusing to leave the court until all these fines were dealt with.

Roger Franklin was then called (for a trial for theft of a police radio) and adjourned to Oct 9th with a promise that it would be dealt with one way or another then. Sylvia at this point was still sitting in the dock alongside Roger!

JP MacPhail then gathered up his papers, the clerk said 'Court rise' and they all ran out the door ignoring the fact that neither Sylvia or the four supporters present had stood up.

nb. Today's proceedings were in the newly refurbished court room in the Municipal Buildings. In spite of having no disabled access and no hearing loop the court did have the addition of running water... through the ceiling. There were occasional disturbances while the court usher and members of the public rearranged the four buckets collecting the drips!! The acoustics are better than in Victoria Halls, but there is no waiting room and the door slams loudly every time someone goes in or out.

11th

AWTT Trial - Day One

11th September 2000

AWTT Trial - Day One

Rosie and Rachel's trial for their action at Barrow last February opened today in Manchester Crown Court before Justice Humphries. A large group of supporters with colourful banners gathered outside Manchester Town Hall and marched to the court.

The jury of eight men and four women were sworn in after being asked if they or their partners worked in the nuclear or arms industry, or in the armed forces, or were members of CND or any other 'peace protest movement'. The two charges of criminal damage to radar testing equipment and to the submarine were read out. The Judge agreed to allow Rosie and Rachel out of the large cage-like dock since he agreed that there was no security danger in this case.

The prosecution opened by saying that Rosie and Rachel's intention was to cause damage to the submarine and to gain publicity for their cause. The hammer which was used on the radar equipment was passed round the jury, who were able to examine its beautiful decoration of painted trees, birds and peace symbols. The banner saying Women Want Peace was also displayed in court. The prosecution emphasised that the 'sincerity' of the defendants was not in dispute, but maintained that they had a duty not to break the law (a rather similar position to the defence!).

The first prosecution witness was the Royal Navy mechanic who accompanied the two off the boat. He agreed with the defence cross examination that it was widely publicised that Vengeance was leaving Barrow in September for the more heavily guarded Faslane. He was then questioned about National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB) guidelines on safety. He admitted that he was not very familiar with these, and that his only role in the event of a nuclear reactor leak at Barrow was to shut the hatches. When asked whether the recent events involving the Kursk and the submarine at Gibraltar had had any effect on safety measures concerning Vengeance, he replied no. Most importantly, he agreed that the submarine had been delayed in sailing after the

action, although he was 'not quite sure if it was directly because of them'. (After all, the prosecution have had eighteen months to brief him!)

Next the head of security for Marconi was questioned about his responsibility for safety in the event of a reactor leak. His sole role would be to evacuate workers to an assembly point about three quarters of a mile from the sub, and ensure that potassium iodide was distributed to workers and local people, though the mechanism for making it available to local people was unclear. He believed that the iodide was to prevent radiation sickness and cancer. He had heard of Trident Ploughshares, and agreed emphatically that members of TP often attempted to engage workers in discussion, but that so far this had not led to an end to the production of nuclear submarines.

In the afternoon more witnesses were called in an attempt to establish the cost of the damage. A witness employed by Racal was unwilling to put a total value on the equipment, changing his estimates from £82,000 for one component to £44,000.

The court adjourned until Wednesday morning, as the judge is not available tomorrow. It is likely that the prosecution will be finished on Wednesday.

4th

[Anger at Massive Fine for Peace Activist](#)

4th September 2000

Anger at Massive Fine for Peace Activist

Trident Ploughshares' campaigners have reacted angrily to the handling of a case in Helensburgh District Court in which an activist was fined £850.

Kreb Dragonrider (42), from Faslane Peace Camp, was appearing on four charges, relating to the 14th August when he cut his way into Coulpport Naval Armaments Depot. On the first charge, that he had breached the military bye-laws by going inside the base, he was fined £200, in spite of the fact that the charge sheet referred to a maximum fine of £100. There was a second charge under the bye-laws, that he remained inside the base. No one at any time asked him to leave. Fine - £200. He was also charged with vandalism in that he cut the perimeter fence. Fine - £200. His fourth charge-that he had breached bail conditions - led to a fine of £250. The sentencing took no account of the 23 days he had spent in Greenock prison.

On behalf of Kreb, solicitor Liz Ross gave a thorough defence based on International Law and Necessity, quoting the judgment of Sheriff Gimblett at Greenock last October in which she stated that the Trident Three were justified in disarming Maytime. Justice of the Peace Fraser Gillies announced his guilty verdict with no explanation.

A Trident Ploughshares spokesperson said: "However legally competent our defence and however farcical the Procurator Fiscal's contribution, the local magistrates are too frightened to challenge the status quo. Not one of them has the courage that Margaret Gimblett showed last October, when she recognised the validity of the case for the defence. JP Gillies again gave a savage sentence without the merest courtesy of an explanation."

1st

[Support for arrested councillors](#)

1st September 2000

Press Report

Support for arrested councillors

{Paisley People}

The Paisley North branch of the SNP have supported two local councillors who were

arrested during a protest at Faslane.

Councillors Derek Mackay and Lorraine Cameron were taken into custody during a protest at the nuclear submarine base earlier this month. Both councillors are expected to appear at Dumbarton Sheriff court.

However members of the constituency association have passed a motion of confidence in the Renfrewshire Councillors and praised their stance on nuclear weapons.

George Adam, convenor of the constituency said: "We are pleased to have councillors in our party that put principles before self-gain. Our branch is delighted to back Renfrew councillor Derek Mackay and Foxbar councillor Lorraine Cameron.

"Most people object to the waste that is nuclear weapons so we are happy to have hard working councillors that are willing to do something about the issue.

"They, along with the many hundreds that have been arrested at peaceful demonstrations across Scotland, have ensured that the removal of nuclear weapons from Scotland remains on the political agenda."

He added: "We believe nuclear weapons to be a waste of billions of pounds, money that could be better used in public services such as schools and hospitals. Transferring the money to people-intensive projects would create many more jobs, and would remove the threat of indiscriminate destruction of millions of people."

August More Confusion at Helensburgh District Court

30th 1st September 2000

Press Report

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30th [Another Bizarre Day In Helensburgh District Court](#)

30th August 2000

Another Bizarre Day In Helensburgh District Court

Victoria Halls, JP Mr Gillies, PF Chris Donnelly

Brian Quail's Adjustments Hearing was held in Chambers, ie a pokey little room. Brian was allowed one person to attend which was Jane. He had appealed against a previous conviction and received a Stated Case (the magistrates version of what happened at the trial and his reasons for conviction.). Brian then submitted his 'adjustments', ie things he felt were inaccurate in the Stated Case. This hearing was for the Magistrate to hear Brians adjustments and decide whether to allow them.

Brian wanted '*there to protest against nuclear weapons*' in the Stated Case to be changed to '*there to protest against the deployment of Trident*'. Chris Donnelly said that it was better to put '*the alleged deployment of nuclear weapons*'. At this point Brian and Jane nearly fell off their chairs, and Brian asked him how he could say 'alleged' with a straight face, everyone knew that Trident was 'deployed', why even the Taxi's in Helensburgh were called Trident! JP Gillies agreed to Brians wording.

26th [Support for Rosie and Rachel on Trial, 11th September 2000](#)

26th August 2000

Support for Rosie and Rachel on Trial, 11th September 2000

Excitement is mounting as the start of Rosie and Rachel's trial in Manchester on September 11th draws near. The two are charged with disarming Vengeance at Barrow in February 1999.

All supporters are welcome throughout the trial, which is expected to last two weeks or more. Basic accommodation will be available at Stockport Friends Meeting House (bring a sleeping bag and put money in basic food kitty). This is in easy reach of Manchester town centre by bus or train. If you

need a bed, ring 01639 700680.

Support actions will begin with a march from Manchester Town Hall to the Crown Court on Monday 11th September. Meet at 9am at the Town Hall. Throughout the trial there will be vigils outside the court, street leafleting, and of course vegan chocolate cake. Rosie and Rachel will be speaking about the action and their defence at 7.30pm on Tuesday 12th Sep at the Manchester Friends Meeting House on Mount St.

Come and vigil, play music, dance...

Directions to Stockport Friends Meeting House:

By train: Out of Stockport railway station turn right and then left up Railway St onto the main road, Wellington Road. Turn right. Cooper St is 8th on the left. Meeting house is at the end of this short road on the right.

By car: Off J27 of M60, onto A262 (St Mary's Way. Carry straight on over crossroads, it turns into B5465. Road bends to right and becomes Hempshaw lane. At first junction (crossroads) turn right and almost immediately first left into Cooper St. Meeting house is immediately on the left.

23rd **TP Pledger Marjan Willemsen Acquitted**

23rd August 2000

TP Pledger Marjan Willemsen Acquitted

Today at Helensburgh District Court Marjan Willemsen was acquitted on a charge of Breach of the Peace. She was arrested last November during a Faslane Peace camp action. A number of activists had locked themselves to the underneath of a base workers' bus at the north gate of the Faslane nuclear submarine base and Marjan was acting as a safety and legal observer. Police witnesses claimed that she had refused to leave the road when asked. In her own testimony Marjan pointed out that she attempted to explain to the police officers that she was in the road purely to ensure that her friend under the bus was not in any danger. Another protester, Fungus, who was one of the activists under the bus, told the court that her legal and safety observers had been able to communicate freely with her, without interference from the police. Marjan's lawyer Clare Ryan argued that she had not interfered with the police, had not blocked any traffic, her actions did not cause alarm or danger to others, and that failure to comply with a police request did not constitute Breach of the Peace. The magistrate Joe Scullion found her not guilty, saying there was doubt as to whether a Breach of the Peace had been committed.

16th **Ploughshares Activist Remanded**

16th August 2000

Ploughshares Activist Remanded

Last evening Trident Ploughshares (TP) pledger Krebs Dragonrider was remanded to Greenock Prison after being arrested five times during the TP disarmament camp at Coulport which has just ended.

Krebs (42), a robed Druid, Buddhist and Arthurian knight from Faslane Peace Camp appeared from police custody at an Argyll and Bute District Court held in a small room in a community center in Helensburgh. He had broken bail conditions which banned him from going nearer than 100 yards of the Faslane naval base and from going nearer than 250 yards from the Coulport base and had failed to appear in court for a previous trial.

He is appealing against being remanded.

Also appearing from custody were Ulla Røder (45), a peace campaigner from Odense in Denmark and member of the "Trident Three", and Marcus Armstrong (39), from Milton Keynes. Ulla had been

arrested five times during the camp and Marcus no less than seven times. Both were released on bail, one of Ulla's conditions being a ban identical to that imposed on Krieb. She is already similarly banned from the environs of Aldermaston Atomic Weapons Establishment. Officials restricted public entry to the court to 12 persons. Ulla and Marcus are also to appear on the 30th August for trial.

Marcus said: "Our frustration with the poor performance of Argyll and District Court and the Procurator Fiscal's office continues to grow. They seem unable to arrange for hearings and trials to be held in reasonable premises and the location of our hearing was only available to the public a few hours before it took place. On top of this administrative chaos they have set a trial date which does not give us anything like adequate time to prepare our defences. We will be seeking an adjournment."

Greenock Prison, 85 Old Inverkip Road, Greenock, PA16 9AH. Phone 01475 787801

14th [Biased Police Are Ignoring Crime, Say Activists](#)
14th August 2000

Biased Police Are Ignoring Crime, Say Activists

Nine More Arrests at Ploughshares Camp

As nine more activists were arrested for a variety of alleged offences the Trident Ploughshares campaign has accused Strathclyde Police of bias and of failing to deal with crime on their own patch.

The campaign acknowledges the good relationships that exist between the activists and police officers but is seeking a further step in the right direction. Their letter to the Chief Constable says:

"If Strathclyde Police officers intervene by arresting and bodily removing protesters from a blockade of a gate at Faslane or Coulport in order to allow base workers to enter that base, they are not acting impartially but have chosen to confer "lawful business" status on the Trident operation,... It is not good enough to say that Trident is a government operation or sanctioned by parliament. Many partisan actions by police in the former Yugoslavia and elsewhere in actively supporting or turning a blind eye to ethnic cleansing or murder had governmental sanction... To put it as bluntly as possible mass destruction is being planned on your patch and you seem not to be interested. We are deeply frustrated that police and legal authorities consistently turn a deaf ear to our pleas for their intervention."

Last night's arrestees were: Brian Quail (62), a retired teacher from Glasgow, Carol Kirby (35), from Oxford, David Mackenzie (56), an educational consultant from Larbert in Scotland, Jane Tallents (42), from Helensburgh in Scotland, Ulla Røder (45), a peace campaigner from Odense in Denmark and member of the "Trident Three", David Heller (24), a geographer from Hull, Georgina Smith, a longtime anti-nuclear protester from the Highlands, Niels Herre de Boer (26), from Holland, Frances Howe (21), a student from Brighton. These brought to 158 the total of arrests so far at the Trident Ploughshares disarmament camp which concludes today.

14th [They Think It's All Over...](#)
14th August 2000

They Think It's All Over...

Three Activists Get into Coulport as Ploughshares Camp Winds Up

As Trident Ploughshares (TP) activists this evening wound up their camp in Peaton Wood, happy with the progress made in two weeks of intensive activity, three of their number successfully cut their way into the high security nuclear warhead depot at Coulport.

Kreb Dragonrider (42), a robed Druid, Buddhist and Arthurian knight from Faslane Peace Camp, Ulla Røder (45), a peace campaigner from Odense in Denmark and member of the "Trident Three", and Marcus Armstrong (39), from Milton Keynes, used boltcutters to make an entrance hole in the perimeter fence. They were on the loose inside the base for some time before being apprehended. During the two-week camp Kreb has been arrested five times, Ulla five times and Marcus no less than seven times.

During the two-week period there were 27 separate disarmament actions, including blockades, climbing base perimeter fences, cutting base fences, entering security areas, swimming into a Trident submarine berth, and painting. There were a total of 161 arrests. As well as being an action camp the event provided many opportunities for activists old and new to renew their vision and commitment, to develop their skills in a whole range of areas, such as court work, the principles and practice of nonviolence, communication, boat-handling etc., and to reflect on strategies for the future.

Over 150 people attended the blockade which began the fortnight and over 60 registered for the camp which followed. Ten different countries were represented and the age range was from 6 months to 73 years. The common commitment to confront Trident was shared by activists from a wide variety of backgrounds.

A Trident Ploughshares spokesperson said: "The camp has shown the high level of commitment, skills and confidence that now exists among TP campaigners. Moreover, in our interactions with local people, the police and MOD personnel, we have detected the growing realisation that Trident is on its way out. This does not make us complacent, for the 24 hours a day, 7 day a week threat of appalling destruction still remains. The work of disarming Trident is as urgent as ever."

Attention now turns to Manchester Crown Court where Rosie James and Rachel Wenham will appear on September 11th, charged with criminal damage after damaging test equipment on board the new Trident sub HMS Vengeance in its dock in Barrow on the 1st February 1999. Their defence solicitor is the celebrated Gareth Pierce.

11th [Ploughshares Activist Given "Stay Away" Bail Conditions as Court System Creaks](#)
11th August 2000

Ploughshares Activist Given "Stay Away" Bail Conditions as Court System Creaks

A Ploughshares activist has been bailed to stay away from the nuclear weapons bases on the Clyde as the local court system struggles to cope with the pressure of cases arising from the activities of the Trident Ploughshares campaign.

At a makeshift court today in Rhu, near Helensburgh, Kreb Dragonrider (42), a practising Druid from Faslane Peace Camp, was given unusual and questionable bail conditions as he appeared from custody facing a number of charges, including most recently a charge of "Malicious Mischief" yesterday for attempting to cut the perimeter fence at the Coulport base. He has been banned from going nearer than 100 yards of the Faslane naval base and from going nearer than 250 yards from the Coulport base. The shorter distance at Faslane is because he resides at Faslane Peace Camp which is within 250 of the perimeter fence there.

Three other activists were released after appearing in court. Zoe Weir (24) from Faslane Peace Camp and Julie O'Connor from Manchester, had been held because early on Thursday morning, immediately after being released from Clydebank Police Station where they had been held after an attempted to cut the perimeter fence at Faslane, they went up to the Coulport fence to cut their way in. Morag Balfour (27) from Glenrothes was arrested yesterday for blockading the gate at Coulport. Earlier, Marjan Willemsen (23), a Dutch woman from Faslane Peace camp, was given a "Fiscal's Release"

after being held overnight in custody. She had been charged with obstructing the police as they arrested Krebs Dragonrider.

Argyll and Bute District Court is struggling to find court dates for Trident Ploughshares cases. To add to this pressure it was discovered today that the newly adapted premises for the District Court in Helensburgh will not have disabled access and cases involving disabled accused persons or witnesses will have to be held elsewhere.

A Trident Ploughshares spokesperson said: "The bail conditions set for Krebs breach the European Convention on Human Rights. Under that convention all people have a right to protest peacefully in public space. The failure of the District Court to make its premises disability friendly is another evidence of how far out of touch it is with legal and social realities."

10th **Eleven Arrests in Nagasaki Day Actions at Nuke Bases**
10th August 2000

Eleven Arrests in Nagasaki Day Actions at Nuke Bases

Eleven Trident Ploughshares activists were arrested yesterday at the UK's nuclear weapons bases on the Clyde as the 55th anniversary of the dropping of the A-bomb on Nagasaki was commemorated across the world.

At midday today five activists were arrested for blocking the road at the north gate at Faslane. Mainly members of the Adomnan affinity group, they had held a special service of worship at the gate. At the end of the service they read from the Law of The Innocents promulgated by the 7th Celtic monk Adomnan - the first clear codification of rules for the humane conduct of war. They were Barbara Sunderland (71) from Henlow, Alan Wilkie (68) and Maire-Colette Wilkie (58) from Edinburgh, Morag Balfour (27) from Glenrothes and Eric Wallace (64), from Helensburgh.

This evening veteran peace campaigner Roger Franklin (73), from Stroud, was held by MOD police after cutting a hole in the Faslane fence. Roger said: " The people of Britain and Ireland call for the decommissioning of illegal paramilitary weapons. We are calling for, and taking a hand in, the decommissioning of the illegal genocidal weapons in Britain."

Late this evening Zoe Weir (24), Krebs Dragonrider, a robed druid and practising Buddhist, Julie O'Connor, (23), and David Heller, (24), attempted to penetrate the high security weld-mesh fence that surrounds the Faslane base. They were arrested outside of the perimeter fence and charged with conduct likely to cause a breach of the peace.

The total of arrests at the camp now stands at 142.

9th **Sea Activists Penetrate Nuke Base**
9th August 2000

Sea Activists Penetrate Nuke Base

Activists marked Nagasaki day (9th August) late yesterday evening by getting onto the top secret Explosives Handling Jetty at the Royal Navy's Armaments Depot at Coulport, Loch Long.

The three activists used a small inflatable dinghy to enter the 500m Protected Area around the base and managed to dodge MOD Police boats to reach the side of the giant 153,000 tonne floating jetty.

The Explosives Handling Jetty is used to fit the Trident nuclear warheads onto missiles prior to

loading onto Trident submarines before they go on patrol.

Ten metres from the jetty, Ulla Røder, 45, jumped from the boat and avoided apprehension for over 30 minutes. Zoë Weir, 24, climbed onto a ladder on the side of the jetty after, Phill Jones, 37, managed to steer the boat alongside. The boat was then rammed by a MOD Police inflatable and started sinking.

Shortly afterwards, two other Ploughshares activists were arrested for cutting several large holes in the perimeter fence of the Faslane nuclear submarine base. Katri Silvonen, 22, and Tim Coleman, 26, used bolt cutters to cut the weld-mesh before being apprehended.

All activists were released in the early hours of this morning, except Ulla Røder who will appear later today at Helensburgh District Court. Ulla was one of the three women acquitted last November by Sheriff Margaret Gimblett in Greenock after disarming the submarine testing station in Loch Goil.

The open and accountable acts of people's disarmament continue. Words without action are meaningless. The total number arrested since this camp started is 131.

8th **Pressure for Nuclear Disarmament Intensifies at Coulport**

8th August 2000

Pressure for Nuclear Disarmament Intensifies at Coulport

Yesterday evening saw another action by six Trident Ploughshares activists at the Coulport nuclear weapons base on the shores of Loch Long, Scotland.

Sylvia Boyes a Quaker peace campaigner from Manchester in the English North West added an anti-Trident message to a notice, whilst five other activists supported her.

Yesterday at 11 p.m. Sylvia Boyes added the words "*Stamp Out Trident*" to a notice reading "*Mind How You Step*" at Coulport. This base houses the British Trident nuclear weapon arsenal. She was joined on this action by Mark Akkerman, 20, Elle Folkers, 19, both students from the Netherlands, Marcus Armstrong, 40, from Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, Barbara Maver from Edinburgh and Angie Zelter, 49, from Cromer, Norfolk. Sylvia Boyes was charged with Malicious Mischief, Barbara Maver with Obstruction and the others with Breach of the Peace. Strathclyde Police held them overnight. They will attend custody hearings this morning at Helensburgh district court and Dumbarton Sheriff Court.

Trident Ploughshares have worked intensively over the past seven days on disarmament actions. Marcus Armstrong has been arrested six times since the camp started on August 1, Elle Folkers and Barbara Maver four times, Angie Zelter and Mark Akkerman three times and Sylvia Boyes twice. Angie Zelter is one of the three women who were acquitted by Sheriff Margaret Gimblett at Greenock Court last November after disarming the submarine testing station codenamed Maytime, in Loch Goil.

"It is ironic that the management at Coulport seem so concerned with the safety of their workers while they disregard the potential victims of Trident." Said Jane Tallents of Trident Ploughshares. The open and accountable acts of people's disarmament continue. Words without action are meaningless. The total number arrested since this camp started is 126.

7th **Pressure For Nuclear Disarmament Continues at Faslane**

7th August 2000

Pressure For Nuclear Disarmament Continues at Faslane

During the early hours of this morning yet another attempt was made to board the Trident

submarine berthed at Faslane.

After a successful swim across the Loch, Ulla Roder (one of the Trident Three from Denmark) and Marcus Armstrong (who has now been arrested 5 times this camp for continual crime prevention activities) were arrested after swimming into the main security area of the base, getting through the boom and right up to the shiplift, and were only discovered by chance a few metres from the Trident. The bandit alarm was then set off. After the day of mourning and grief for Hiroshima in the ceremonies yesterday, the two said, 'We feel personally responsible to do everything we can to prevent the Trident system from being able to operate.' They were released a few hours ago.

This morning at 7.45 a.m. another blockade of the morning shift of workers began at Faslane North Gate. 'These workers, lovely as they are as individual human beings, are nevertheless aiding and abetting the preparations for mass murder and they must not be allowed to do this. We will continue to lawfully obstruct them and encourage them to shift to peace work' said one of the eight Trident Ploughshares disarmers who have been arrested so far this morning.

Yesterday the Trident Ploughshares activists had gathered at Coulport and Faslane for various ceremonies to commemorate the terrible suffering of Hiroshima after the first atomic bomb was dropped. Prayers, songs, peace cranes and vigils continued throughout the day ending with a beautiful ceremony of floating candles on the Loch at Coulport.

The open and accountable acts of people's disarmament continue. Words without action are meaningless. The total number arrested this week is already 120.

4th

Ploughshares Activists Block Gate to Warhead Depot

4th August 2000

Ploughshares Activists Block Gate to Warhead Depot

Three Trident Ploughshares activists will appear in court today after blocking the main gateway of Coulport armaments depot, the nuclear warhead store on Loch Long in Scotland, for almost six hours.

The women, Hanna Jarvinen (23) and Katri Silvonen (22), both Finnish and both currently living in Belgium, and Hanneriina Moissenen (22), from Tampere in Finland, managed to get astride the gate. Hanneriina was removed after a short time and the others perched there until removed by MOD police using a specially constructed scaffold atop a pick-up truck. Throughout their vigil they were supported by fellow activists who gave them tea, blankets, food and extra clothing.

The women are part of the Trident Ploughshares disarmament camp at Coulport which began on Tuesday with a blockade of the Faslane base. So far there have been a total of 106 arrests. Also arrested last night was Margaret Jones (51), a freelance writer from Bristol. She was charged with malicious mischief after attempting to cut the perimeter fence at Coulport and was released after a few hours in MOD custody.

In a statement the Finnish women said:

"The Trident system is not just a problem for the United Kingdom but is a threat to the whole world. That is why people from across the globe are taking part in this campaign."

3rd

Ten Arrests As Disarmers Apply Pressure

3rd August 2000

Ten Arrests As Disarmers Apply Pressure

Eight Held in "Shift to Peace Work" Demo

Today 10 Trident Ploughshares (TP) activists were arrested at Coulport Armaments Depot on Loch Long, Scotland, where the 100 megaton warheads for the UK's Trident missiles are stored, bringing to 97 the number of arrests at the TP disarmament camp.

Early in the morning a group of eight activists were held by MOD police after sitting in the roadway at the main gate of the depot. They carried placards which jointly spelled out the slogan, "Shift to Peace Work". They were:

Joan Meredith (70), retired teacher of the deaf from Alnwick, Northumberland

Angie Zelter (49), from Norfolk, one of the "Trident Three"

Davida Higgin (73), from Norwich

Joy Mitchell (67), retired headteacher, Berwick

Peter Lanyon (67), retired teacher from Suffolk

Andrew Gray (32), a librarian from County Durham

Sylvia Boyes, from Manchester

Elle, (19), a student from Amsterdam

At midday, Zoe Weir (24), and Krieb Dragonrider (42), both from Faslane Peace Camp, were arrested by the Coulport police. At midday Krieb helped Zoe climb the depot's perimeter fence at the shoreline. Zoe got several hundred yards inside the base before being apprehended.

A Trident Ploughshares spokesperson said:

"We will continue to expose and confront this store for weapons of mass and indiscriminate destruction. We are filled with a sense of shame every time we see its ugly outline."

2nd **83 Arrested yesterday on First Day of Ploughshares August Campaign**

2nd August 2000

83 Arrested yesterday on First Day of Ploughshares August Campaign

Peace Walkers To Be Officially Welcomed by Glasgow Lord Provost

The total arrest count for the first day of the Trident Ploughshares fortnight of disarmament action at the Clyde nuclear weapon bases reached 83 yesterday as two climbers came down from the tripod which had closed the south gate for 13 hours.

Police had been unwilling or unable to remove the fifteen foot high construction, made out of three long scaffolding poles. The climbers eventually descended voluntarily. The blockade began at the base's two gates at 7am.

At the north gate the beginning of the blockade was signaled by the arrival of the 30 walkers who had been on the road since June 26th from Aldermaston, where the Trident warheads are made. After a brief ceremony activists blocked the gateway by sitting down or locking on to each other. After warnings police moved in to remove, arrest and charge them. Leeds MP Harold Best and Scots writer A.L. Kennedy were present to give their support and encouragement.

The day brought its own ironic twist, as many of the women on the Peace Walk from Aldermaston who had received a warm and high profile reception from West Dunbartonshire Council on their way through Clydebank, found themselves today in the police cells in the same town after being arrested at the blockade. Among those arrested were activists from Finland, Scotland, Germany, England, Wales, The Netherlands; Ulla Roder and Angie Zelter of the "Trident Three"; Ray Davies, a local councillor from Wales and Japanese monks and nuns from Milton Keynes.

Today at noon the Lord Provost of Glasgow, Alex Mosson, will give a civic reception at the City Chambers for the peace walkers. The walkers will hand over to Mr. Mosson the 1000 Japanese paper cranes, symbols of peace, which they made on the march together with their banner. These items will be exhibited at Glasgow's People's Palace.

A Trident Ploughshares spokesperson said:

"Again we have been encouraged to see so many people willing to confront this crime against humanity in such a peaceful but determined way. We feel that there is a significant shift away from complacency about Trident. There is more unease about it in official circles and more ordinary people are realising that they can do something about it. We are looking forward to continuing the good work over the next 13 days."

2nd

Trident Ploughshares Activist Jailed

2nd August 2000

Trident Ploughshares Activist Jailed

Three More Arrested at the Clyde Nuke Bases

As the Trident Ploughshares activists camped at Coulport on Loch Long in Scotland gathered themselves for renewed efforts after yesterday's blockade of Faslane naval base, one of their number was sent to prison and three others were arrested.

Jenny Gaiawyn, in her early twenties, a peace and ecological activist, was sent to Cornton Vale women's prison for seven days when she appeared at Helensburgh District Court today. Jenny, as is common with Ploughshares activists, had on principle refused to pay a fine imposed for a previous disarmament action.

This morning Marcus Armstrong (40), and Kisty Gathergood (25), a student from Oxford, were arrested and charged with breach of the peace for leafleting at the main gate of the Coulport base and refusing to move from the road when asked. Both were released within hours. Later in the afternoon Marcus returned to the same spot and sat down in the roadway, accompanied by Morag Balfour (27) from Glenrothes in Fife, who laid down. Both were quickly arrested and charged with breach of the peace. Morag was released soon after but Marcus has been held to appear in court tomorrow.

These arrests bring the total for the Ploughshares camp to 87 after two days.

1st

Ploughshares Blockade Opens Disarmament Fortnight

1st August 2000

Ploughshares Blockade Opens Disarmament Fortnight

69 Arrested At Clyde Nuke Base

69 peace activists are in police custody after a 2-hour blockade of Faslane naval base, marking the beginning of an intensive two weeks disarmament action at the Trident bases on the Clyde.

The blockade began simultaneously at the base's two gates at 7 a.m. At the south gate activists set

up a tripod made of scaffolding poles to which two climbers attached themselves. This is still in place.

At the north gate the beginning of the blockade was signaled by the arrival of the 30 walkers who have been on the road since June 26th from Aldermaston, where the Trident warheads are made. After a brief ceremony activists blocked the gateway by sitting down or locking on to each other. After warnings police moved in to remove, arrest and charge them. Leeds MP Harold Best and Scots writer A.L. Kennedy were present to give their support and encouragement.

Among those arrested were activists from Finland, Scotland, Germany, England, Wales, The Netherlands; Ulla Roder and Angie Zelter of the "Trident Three"; Ray Davis, a local councillor from Wales; Japanese monks and nuns from Milton Keynes.

A Trident Ploughshares spokesperson said:

"Again we have been encouraged to see so many people willing to confront this crime against humanity in such a peaceful but determined way. We feel that there is a significant shift away from complacency about Trident. There is more unease about it in official circles and more ordinary people are realising that they can do something about it. We are looking forward to continuing the good work over the next 14 days."

July Ploughshares Challenge to Civil Police as Blockade Looms

23rd July 2000

23rd **Ploughshares Challenge to Civil Police as Blockade Looms**

Chief Constable Asked To Uphold the Law

The nonviolent direct disarmament campaign Trident Ploughshares has issued a strong challenge to Strathclyde Police to support peace activists at the joint Scottish CND/Trident Ploughshares blockade of Faslane naval base on 1st August.

The base, 30 miles from Glasgow and home to the UK's four Trident nuclear missile submarines, is seen by the campaign as a key part of the criminal conspiracy by the British government to have in constant readiness a weapon of mass destruction that breaches the basic principles of international humanitarian law.

The letter to the Chief Constable says:

"Since our campaign began in 1998 Strathclyde Police have been professional in handling our actions

and the force has publicly supported the right to peaceful protest. Liaison with your officers over the planned blockade on August 1st has been positive and constructive. We do not take all that for granted but we are asking now for another essential step. On the 1st of August we will be upholding the law, not breaking it. We call on you to give us the support that is our due from a civilian police force with an avowed commitment to preventing crime and enforcing the law on its own patch. At the very least, so that we can maximise disruption of the illegal work of the base, you should not arrest us or move us forcibly from the scene. Ideally you will now set in motion a genuine and thorough investigation of the criminal conspiracy being perpetrated at Faslane and Coulport. It is time to act on the full implications of your professional ethos and to stop pretending that nuclear crime does not exist."

MPs John McAllion and Harold Best will join the blockade and have said they are prepared to risk arrest. Also present will be Scottish author A.L. Kennedy. She said: "Even if Trident were not both illegal and immoral, as a weapon of mass destruction it would still make no sense, politically, socially, economically or militarily. There should be no place for it in modern Scotland."

The blockade will begin at 7 a.m. on 1st August.

A more detailed briefing on the Blockade is available.

20th [Ploughshares To Blockade Faslane Again](#)
20th July 2000

Ploughshares To Blockade Faslane Again

UK's Contempt for International Law Over Trident and Diego Garcia

In a joint action with Scottish CND on 1st August Trident Ploughshares activists will blockade Faslane naval base to take their stand against the Trident nuclear weapons system.

MPs John McAllion and Harold Best and MEP Caroline Lucas (who was arrested in February's blockade of Faslane along with 184 others) will join the blockade. They have said they are prepared to risk arrest. Also present will be Scottish author A.L. Kennedy. She said: "Even if Trident were not both illegal and immoral, as a weapon of mass destruction it would still make no sense, politically, socially, economically or militarily. There should be no place for it in modern Scotland."

A Trident Ploughshares spokesperson said: "It is pertinent to note that this week in the High Court in London the British government is attempting to wash its hands of any responsibility for the dirty deal with the USA in the 1960s which saw Diego Garcia handed over to the US for an airbase, the islanders forcibly exiled to poverty in Mauritius and all in exchange for a niggardly discount on the price of Polaris, the Trident of its day. We recognise international law only when it is convenient, not when it challenges our own contempt for human life and our willingness to commit mass murder."

The blockade will begin at 7 a.m. on 1st August. Joining it will be the group of Walkers for Peace who are on their way by foot from Aldermaston, the Trident warhead factory in Berkshire. The blockade will be followed by a two week disarmament camp based at Peaton Wood in Coulport.

10th [Knee-Jerk Magistrate Accused of Contempt](#)
10th July 2000

Knee-Jerk Magistrate Accused of Contempt

Heavy Fine for Peace Activist

A peace activist was fined £250 today in Helensburgh District Court by a magistrate who gave no explanation for his dismissal of the case for the defence.

Brian Quail (61), a retired teacher and member of the Iona Community from Glasgow, was facing a charge of breach the peace, dating back to February 1999. Along with other activists at a Trident Ploughshares blockade of Faslane naval base, he had sat down in the gateway and refused to move. Brian, who defended himself, gave a powerful and coherent testimony in justification for his actions. His case was based firmly on the imperative to uphold international humanitarian law, which was clearly breached by the UK's Trident nuclear weapons.

Justice of the Peace Gillies gave no explanation for his guilty verdict, even when Brian pled with him to explain where he had gone wrong. Earlier in the case, JP Gillies had failed to intervene when a police witness, Sergeant Ogilvie of Strathclyde Police, made the astonishing claim that he was unaware that Faslane was the base for the Trident nuclear submarines, which carry missiles with 100 kiloton warheads.

A Trident Ploughshares spokesperson said:

"In failing even to explain his verdict, or to offer any refutation of Brian's careful and humbly presented argument, JP Gillies showed contempt for Brian. The credibility of the District Court in Helensburgh is at a very low ebb indeed."

Brian will appeal the verdict. He said:

"How can justice be seen to be done when the verdict is rolled out automatically, without any reference to the evidence presented?"

June Ploughshares Activist Jailed

27th 27th June 2000

Ploughshares Activist Jailed

Today a Welsh Magistrates Court sent a peace activist to prison for seven days after she had refused on principle to pay a fine and compensation order.

Helen Harris (27), a teacher from Neath, was found guilty on 19th April in Helensburgh District Court on a variety of charges relating to her part in a Trident Ploughshares disarmament action at the Clyde nuclear weapons bases in May 1999. She had been fined £150 and ordered to pay hefty compensation of £500 to the Ministry of Defence for damage to a perimeter fence. The fine was transferred to her local court.

Kate Sidford, who attended court today with Helen, said: "Helen has been adamant all along that she would not pay. She has committed no crime and punishing her for actually attempting to prevent crime is a nonsense."

A Trident Ploughshares spokesperson said: "As a campaign we have already served a total of 730 days in prison (this does not include time in police cells) and Helen has today underlined the fact that we are prepared to take on the work of disarming Trident and are determined to follow it through. Helen was acting to uphold international law and the basic human right to life. Yet another magistrates court has lined itself up feebly and unthinkingly with the lawlessness of this state."

23rd "Time To Re-Consider Nuclear Crime"

23rd June 2000

"Time To Re-Consider Nuclear Crime"

At Alnwick Magistrates' Court this morning (Friday 23rd June), a veteran peace protestor was told that she would be sent to prison for a week, for refusal to pay a fine arising from her protest against a nuclear base in Scotland. The protestor, Joan Meredith, from Alnwick in Northumberland, explained that the Trident nuclear weapons system was "illegal and immoral", and made clear that she was prepared to go to prison for her beliefs.

The fine arose from a demonstration at the Faslane naval base on the river Clyde, north of Glasgow, where Britain's Trident nuclear armed submarines are based. Joan had taken part in a blockade at the South Gate of the base, by sitting down in the road, in May 1999. The demonstration was held during a weekend camp of the "Trident Ploughshares" campaign, which is made up of people pledged to take non-violent, direct action to help disarm Trident or prevent its active deployment, and to be open and accountable for their actions.

Supporters of Joan Meredith, who is aged 70 and has 6 grandchildren, heard the court explain that they would not be sending her to prison immediately, as she has a hospital appointment on Monday morning. The clerk of the court added that she was being given extra time to allow her to re-consider paying the fine. She now has until 28th June to pay, or face being sent to prison for a week.

Andrew Gray, a spokesperson for the local Trident Ploughshares group, said, "Joan was told that she might want to 're-consider' whether to pay her fine. But from the letters she has written to the court, they should know that she has thought very carefully about this. She has done what she can to explain the most basic principles of humanity to the courts and the Ministry of Defence. Those principles say that you cannot use weapons that target civilians, and that even self-defence does not justify causing severe or long-lasting destruction to the environment: they have been part of International Law since the end of the 19th century, and are now enshrined in the Geneva Conventions. It's now time for the government to 're-consider' its deployment of Trident."

Joan said after the case, "I was fined 100 pounds for sitting in the road, while the government spends 1,500 million pounds maintaining these weapons and threatening the whole planet with destruction. I believe I have a duty to hold the government to account over Trident. I've never been in prison, but am prepared to follow this through."

The next Trident Ploughshares camp in Scotland will be from 1st August, when a group of walkers will arrive from Aldermaston in Berkshire to join hundreds of others for a blockade of the Faslane base. Local campaigners will also be at the CND demonstration to be held at Fylingdales near Whitby in Yorkshire, on 8th July.

22nd [Four Hundred Miles For Peace](#)

22nd June 2000

Four Hundred Miles For Peace

Hiroshima Flame Travels from Aldermaston to Faslane Blockade

This summer an international group of people committed to peace and nuclear disarmament will walk from Berkshire in Southern England to the Clyde estuary in Scotland, bearing with them a flame first ignited in the fires of Hiroshima 55 years ago.

The walkers will set off from Aldermaston, where the components for Britain's nuclear bombs are made, on 26th June, and will walk to Faslane, 30 miles from Glasgow, where the Trident nuclear weapon submarines are based. They will arrive at 7 a.m. on the 1st August, just in time to join the Trident Ploughshares/Scottish CND blockade of the base.

Prime movers in the walk are the nuns and monks of Nipponzan Myohoji, a small Buddhist order which has a peace pagoda in Milton Keynes and one in London. The diverse group of around 20 walkers are

already committed to the entire distance and many more will join them on the journey. The flame from the burning of Hiroshima after the dropping of the atom bomb on August 6th 1945 has been kept alive over the years and was brought to the UK this summer.

Among the walkers is Ulla Roder (45), a peace activist from Denmark and one of the "Trident Three" who disarmed "Maytime", a Trident-related research barge in Loch Goil in June last year. Ulla spent several months last year in a Scottish prison before being acquitted in Greenock Sheriff Court. She said: "We are walking to make people aware that the nuclear threat is real, because of the continuing build-up in the new nuclear weapons systems. As we go on foot we can reach people directly and in a personal way. We will make the resistance to nuclear crime visible on the roads and in the towns. We can also demonstrate peaceful alternatives by the way we live and work together as we go."

On behalf of Nipponzan Myohoji Sister Astrid said: "Military men, industrialists and scientists are fully aware of the absurdity and immorality of continuing the build-up of these arms, yet they still involve themselves in it."

Green Party MEP Caroline Lucas, who was among 185 people arrested at the blockade of Faslane on February 14th will join the walk for the 28th June and again on 1st August.

19th [Activists Breach Security At UK Star Wars Base](#)

Activists Breach Security At UK Star Wars Base

This morning (19th June) three women breached the new high security fence at the U.S. National Security Agency Space-War Spy Base at Menwith Hill in Yorkshire, which supports the new US anti-ballistic missile system (ABM).

Anne Lee, (Menwith Hill Womens Peace Campaign) from Otley, Helen John (Menwith Hill Women's Peace Campaign and Trident Ploughshares), also from Otley, and Angie Zelter (Trident Ploughshares), from Cromer in Norfolk, used bolt-croppers to get through the top security alarmed anti-intruder fence, which has been recently erected in advance of the new role the base will play. The women were arrested at approximately 10.50 am and are expected to be released shortly.

Angie Zelter said: "This base plays a key role in NATO military intelligence. Even if we get rid of Trident tomorrow, they are still planning to have new nuclear-powered weapons in space. Ballistic missile defence undermines the entire international legal order. The Americans are just running ahead without consulting anyone."

Although no open political decision has yet been made to deploy the ABM system, millions of dollars have already been spent preparing the ground base and its linked satellites for the new space-based weapons, the successor to the Star Wars project of the Reagan years. The developments breach both the Anti-Ballistic Missiles Treaty and the Outer Space Treaty.

A Trident Ploughshares spokesperson said: "Although the UK committed herself unequivocally at the recent Non-Proliferation Treaty Conference to the elimination of nuclear weapons, our government has not yet found the courage to tell the US to halt the star wars developments on British soil."

[Update: Anne Lee has not been charged but has been bailed to return to a police station. Helen and Angie have been charged with criminal damage and attempted criminal damage and are due to appear at Harrogate Magistrates Court on 11th July. They were apprehended when starting to cut an inner fence -the one around the SAT-COM (Satellite Communication Area).]

May Case Against Protester Not Proven

31st May 2000

31st Case Against Protester Not Proven

In Helensburgh District Court today Wed 31 May the case against a peace activist was found not proven after the Crown case against him was left in tatters.

Alan Wilkie (67) a retired company director from Currie, Midlothian, had been charged with breach of the peace following his participation in a demonstration at HMNB Faslane on 14 Nov 1998. He and fellow members of the Adomnan affinity group of Trident Ploughshares had held a Christian service at the base's North gate before chaining themselves together across the gateway.

Alan had two parts to his defence, one based on the alleged facts of the case and the other on matters of law. In the event only the first part was required. The charge stated that he had behaved in a disorderly manner, had refused to desist when asked and had obstructed traffic. There was no evidence that his conduct was in any way disorderly. An MOD witness, Sergeant Rielly, had claimed that he had warned Alan three times to desist. Alan pointed out that he had a considerable hearing loss, that none of the other members of his group had heard a warning and that a warning given through the weld-mesh gateway at the base would have been inaudible above the loud singing of the protesting group. Defence testimony had cast considerable doubt on the Crown claim that vehicles had been impeded. There was also a 50 minute discrepancy in the Crown evidence in regard to the time of arrest.

After a short adjournment for deliberation JP Joe Scullion found the case not proven. A Trident Ploughshares spokesperson said:

"The verdict is dishonest. Alan's demolition of the Crown case was total and the JP was duty bound to find him not guilty. The court is quick to find us guilty on thin and dubious evidence but today, when the crown case was found wanting at every turn, the magistrate would still not do the honourable thing. At least the Crown will be on notice that on matters of fact and matters of law it will be challenged in every detail."

Yesterday (30th May) Trident Ploughshares pledger Zoe Weir (24) was found guilty on a charge of malicious mischief and fined £150.

Last May she was one of a group attempting to scale the perimeter fence at Faslane, and had cut the razor wire with a hacksaw. On a second charge, relating to a Faslane Peace Camp action last November, when she locked herself to the bottom of a bus going into the base, she was found not guilty. Her lawyer, Clare Ryan, had argued that she could not be guilty of a breach of the peace since no-one had been alarmed or threatened by her action and that she had a right to engage in peaceful protest.

22nd 46 Arrests in Blockade of Nuclear Bomb Factory

22nd May 2000

46 Arrests in Blockade of Nuclear Bomb Factory

Starting at 6.45 this morning, members of Trident Ploughshares blockaded AWE Aldermaston near Reading. They believe that AWE is breaking international law by manufacturing nuclear warheads for Trident, Britain's nuclear defence system. Their blockade aimed to prevent workers getting in to the site, thus halting the criminal activity of the base. 46 were arrested by Thames Valley Police.

The morning had a bright start with a procession of banners and a Quaker meeting of worship. Traffic was at a standstill for 45 minutes, as three gates at the site were kept shut by protesters. Numerous nonviolent direct action tactics were used, including the erection of a "tripod" at two gates, a "lock-on" at another, and other demonstrations. The majority of those arrested have now been released [7 pm].

They not been charged but have been bailed to report to Newbury Police Station at a variety of future dates.

A Trident Ploughshares spokesperson said:

"This has been a most encouraging day and a great start to our week of action. So many protesters have been willing to put themselves on the line to challenge the criminality of Trident."

The Ploughshares protesters have been at Aldermaston since Thursday in a temporary peace camp on M.O.D. land. Their actions are supported by more than 60 MPs from the English and Scottish Parliaments and the Welsh Assembly.

21st [Member of "Trident Three" Among First Arrests at Aldermaston Camp](#)

21st May 2000

Member of "Trident Three" Among First Arrests at Aldermaston Camp

In the first disarmament activity of the Trident Ploughshares camp at AWE Aldermaston four activists were arrested last night (Sunday) and six others warned under Section 69 of the Criminal Justice Act.

Among those arrested was Ulla Roder (45), from Odense in Denmark, one of the Trident Three who were famously acquitted in Greenock Sheriff Court last October after causing £80,000 worth of damage to a Trident related research barge in Loch Goil, Scotland. She has been charged with criminal damage along with Roger Franklin (72) from Stroud, and Joan Meredith (70), a former teacher of the deaf from Alnwick in Northumberland. Zoe Weir (24), from the Peace Camp at Faslane in Scotland, was charged under Section 69 of the Criminal Justice Act for failing to respond to a warning re trespass. Six others were warned under Section 69.

The group of ten activists entered the Aldermaston site with various aims. Some intended to get hold of useful information from the administration building, some wanted to paint radiation signs on the blue vehicles which are used for special materials transportation and others intended to cause general disruption.

Roger Franklin and Joan Meredith have been released on police bail, on condition they do not come within five miles of Aldermaston. Ulla Roder is currently considering these conditions while Zoe Weir has refused bail and will remain in custody.

Over 50 activists are now at the camp and numbers will build today as preparations are made for tomorrow's blockade of the base, which will start at 6 a.m. One of the campers, Marlene Yeo, from Burton on the Wolds, is to appear tomorrow at 2 p.m in Loughborough Magistrates Court. She is refusing to pay compensation of £291 to AWE Aldermaston after damaging the site's perimeter fence last summer.

20th [Music ensemble at gates of Aldermaston](#)

20th May 2000

Music ensemble at gates of Aldermaston

Marlene Yeo's story in the media

The "Sonnerie" early music ensemble gave a concert today at the Main Gate of AWE Aldermaston. When the musicians and supporters arrived the police came down in numbers but drifted off when they realised what was afoot. The weather behaved itself and the

performance was very special.

Marlene Yeo is in court in Loughborough on Monday for failing to pay her fine and compensation order. Here are extracts from the story that was sent her local media:

Marlene Yeo, who has lived in Burton on the Wolds for over 30 years, and has been a campaigner against nuclear weapons for almost as long, was convicted in March of criminal damage at the Atomic Weapons Establishment at Aldermaston, Berks. She and her three co-defendants from Trident Ploughshares 2000 were ordered to pay for the repair of fences surrounding the Establishment.

Marlene says, "I do not intend to pay my share of the repair costs. AWE Aldermaston manufactures the nuclear warheads which are used by the British Trident nuclear submarines, and which are so destructive as to be incompatible with international and British laws of warfare. They are also a constant danger to people and the environment because of the risk of accidents, (as recent File On Four and Panorama Programmes have shown). I and my co-defendants had three times asked for an interview with the management of the Atomic Weapons Establishment, in order to discuss these issues with them. When our requests for an interview were refused, we tried to make contact with the people working inside the establishment, and to do this, we had to cut some of the fences. As our action was done in order to prevent the threatened and real dangers of mass destruction, I believe I was justified in committing this damage."

The management of AWE said that they were only fulfilling the contract the government had given them. But, says Marlene, that sort of argument was discredited at the Nuremberg trials of Nazi war criminals.

The Nuremberg Principles state clearly that:
▶ acting under orders doesn't relieve a person from responsibility,
▶ crimes against peace and against humanity are punishable as crimes under international law,
▶ preparations for a war in violation of international treaties are themselves a crime,
▶ as is complicity in the commission of such crimes.

Marlene says, "I am an ordinary British citizen, I exercise my vote and I pay taxes. I do not want to be accused of complicity with regard to nuclear mass killings."

Marlene will cut short her participation at the week's Trident Ploughshares Aldermaston disarmament camp from 18-25 May in order to attend the court hearing. She hopes that the court will accept her reasons for not paying the sum owing. But if they don't, she is prepared to go to prison. The fact that she has done this once before in 1986 proves that she is serious about it.

Several opponents of the Trident Nuclear system are expected to come to the court to give support to the defendant.

19th [Activists Want To Meet MP Martin Salter](#)

19th May 2000

Activists Want To Meet MP Martin Salter

Monica Huggett in Concert at AWE Aldermaston this Saturday

Trident Ploughshares activists, who have just set up a week-long disarmament camp at AWE Aldermaston, have invited Reading West MP Martin Salter to meet them, after critical comment on the campaign was attributed to him in the press.

In yesterday's Reading Chronicle Salter is quoted as saying:

"I am very sceptical about the motives of some of the people who are likely to be involved in this

demonstration."

A Trident Ploughshares spokesperson said:

"Obviously Martin is not yet aware of our open, peaceful and accountable methods. We would be delighted if he could come over to the camp and meet us. We want his future comments on our activities to be based on real knowledge of what we are about."

Tomorrow (Saturday 20th May) the baroque music ensemble "Sonnerie" will give a concert at the Main gate of AWE Aldermaston at 4 p.m. One of the violinists is world famous Monica Huggett, who will join Monday's blockade of the base with fellow musician and Trident Ploughshares pledger Emilia Benjamin. Monica said: *"Music is humanity's common language - it gives expression to our deepest feelings of universal compassion. Maybe doing a concert outside the base at Aldermaston will present a stark enough contrast to nudge unthinking peoples' minds - compassion versus demonisation, soft and melodious versus hard and metallic, life versus death."*

18th MOD Half-truths to Workers about Trident Ploughshares

18th May 2000

MOD Half-truths to Workers about Trident Ploughshares

As they prepare for their seven day disarmament camp at AWE Aldermaston, Trident Ploughshares (TP) activists have been studying a leaflet which is being handed out by the Ministry of Defence to workers at the site.

The leaflet tells the workers that TP will be there from 18th to 25th May. It goes on to say:

"Unfortunately there are no formal organisers for this protest and it has been difficult to establish exactly what their intentions will be over this period." The leaflet assures the workers that the MOD and Thames Valley Police will work together to ensure the events are "peaceful and cause as little disruption as possible".

A TP spokesperson said:

"We are giving them five out of ten for accuracy, which is not bad for the MOD. Clearly both the MOD and Thames Valley Police now understand that we are a campaign made up of autonomous affinity groups and individuals who have pledged to prevent nuclear crime in a peaceful, nonviolent, safe and accountable way. As to our intentions, these have been openly available on our website for almost two years now. They know we intend to cause as much disruption as we can to the operation of this site. Moreover they have not told their workers that AWE is engaged in criminal activity. Just listen to these guardians of an establishment committed to preparations for mass murder talking about keeping things peaceful!"

17th Trident Ploughshares Set up Camp at AWE Aldermaston

17th May 2000

Trident Ploughshares Set up Camp at AWE Aldermaston

MEP Caroline Lucas and Violinist Monica Huggett to Participate

The Trident Ploughshares advance party arrived yesterday (17th May) at Aldermaston to begin preparations for the seven day disarmament camp, as MEP Caroline Lucas and world famous baroque violinist Monica Huggett prepared to join the activities.

Green Party MEP Caroline Lucas, who was arrested along with 184 others at the Trident Ploughshares/Scottish CND blockade of Faslane naval base in Scotland in February this year, will join the

protest march on Sunday. She said:

"The continuing production of nuclear warheads at Aldermaston is contrary to international law, and must stop. The Cold War may be over, but there are still more than 30,000 nuclear warheads around the world, enough to destroy it many times over - and the development of new weapons continues. I'm proud to be joining people from all over the country on another historic march to Aldermaston. Britain can never be safe until these horrific weapons of war have been removed from our country."

Monica Huggett, one of the foremost baroque violinists of our time and Professor of Baroque Violin at the Royal Academy of Music in London, will give a concert with her four colleagues in the baroque ensemble "Sonnerie" at AWE Aldermaston on Saturday 20th May before joining the blockade of the site on Monday 22nd May with fellow musician Emilia Benjamin. Both have indicated their willingness to risk arrest.

Note:

There will be a protest march of about 5 miles starting at the Savercenter at Junction 12 on the M4 to Aldermaston at 1 p.m. on Sunday 21st May. "Velvet Fist" will greet the marchers with song when they arrive at Falcon Gate. For information on the precise location of the Sonnerie concert on Saturday 20th call the campsite number from Friday 19th May.

11th [Ploughshares Activists To Confront Aldermaston](#)

11th May 2000

Ploughshares Activists To Confront Aldermaston

The anti-nuclear campaign Trident Ploughshares will hold a seven day disarmament camp at the Atomic Weapons Establishment at Aldermaston, from 18th to 25th May, with a mass blockade of the base on Monday 22nd May.

The campaign has held a number of successful disarmament camps at the Trident bases on the Clyde in Scotland. Although individual affinity groups from the campaign have undertaken disarmament actions at Aldermaston this is the first concerted move against the establishment, where the components for Trident nuclear warheads are made.

The aim of the camp and the blockade is to cause significant disruption to the establishment and its operations. The AWE is currently under considerable pressure from public anxiety about the quality of its management, as well from the pending Judicial Review of the decision of the Environment Agency to grant authorisations for radioactive discharges there.

A Trident Ploughshares spokesperson said:

"In simple, common sense terms, AWE Aldermaston makes the hardware for mass murder. It is an essential part of the Trident nuclear weapon system that is maintained by the UK government in wilful defiance of international law. The government refuses to shut this appalling place down so it is up to responsible citizens to do whatever they can to prevent its criminal operations. Trident Ploughshares activists are determined to play their part."

10th [Determined Activists Return To Faslane](#)

10th May 2000

Determined Activists Return To Faslane

This Saturday, 13th May, anti-nuclear activists will gather again at the gates of Faslane naval base to continue their challenge to the UK's Trident nuclear weapon system.

They will be present at both the north and the south gate of the base, home to the Trident submarine fleet, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The protest is being jointly organised by Scottish CND and Trident Ploughshares.

A Trident Ploughshares spokesperson said:

" I was in Helensburgh District Court today and heard activist after activist, including MSP Tommy Sheridan, give unequivocal "not-guilty" pleas to various charges. *We are not going away*. The bosses and the mere message men in the organised crime racket called Trident now know that. So do the courts and the civil police. On Saturday we will have fun and celebrate the love of life. At the same time we will confront this embodiment of hatred, fear and murder."

Activists from French anti-nuclear groups will join the protesters to underline the global reality of nuclear terrorism

10th [Legal Challenge to Trident Warhead Production](#)

10th May 2000

Legal Challenge to Trident Warhead Production

A local peace campaigner and the Reading based national nuclear awareness-raising group, NAG have been granted permission to bring a case for judicial review to challenge the continued manufacture of Trident warheads.

The decision being challenged through judicial review is that of the Environment Agency (EA) to grant authorisations for radioactive discharges to the Atomic Weapons Establishments (AWE) sites at Aldermaston and Burghfield near Reading in Berkshire.

The decision, which took effect on 1st April 2000, enables the troubled consortium of BNFL, Lockheed Martin and Serco to operate the site. Warhead production, decommissioning and the build up of historic wastes result in radioactive discharges into the air, the local sewage works, to natural watercourses and to the River Thames via the eighteen kilometre Pangbourne pipeline.

"According to the Environment Agency's decision document, 45% of alpha discharges to air from AWE at Aldermaston are caused by the continuing production of Trident. It is time to concentrate on cleaning up this site. We need the Government to publish a timetable for zero discharges" said Pam Vassie today for NAG.

Pam Vassie asked:

"Why has a proper justification not been provided for radioactive discharges from Aldermaston and Burghfield? Why did the Environment Agency not carry out a proper justification exercise?"

There is enormous public interest in this decision given that the sites are used for the research, design, development, manufacturing and servicing of Trident warheads. Although the EA believed that radioactive discharges present a negligible risk to health, the public is concerned that past, present and future discharges from AWE accumulate. They contaminate the environment and pose a long-term threat to public health.

"The United Nations International Court of Justice declared in 1996 that nuclear weapons were subject to the ordinary rules of humanitarian law which forbid indiscriminate attacks on civilians. It is scarcely imaginable that Trident, with its 100 kiloton warhead, eight times the yield of the Hiroshima bomb, could make this distinction. The continuing production of nuclear warheads at AWE Aldermaston cannot be

justified." said Emanuela Marchiori, peace campaigner.

Phil Shiner, the lawyer acting in this case said today:

"This is a judicial endorsement that we have an arguable case. This case challenges the Government's continued manufacture of Trident warheads and raises very important public interest points. We say that the EA had to satisfy itself that the project was justified in terms of the benefits to the public, and that it would have made a difference if it had done so properly. We also say that the EA had to consider an International Court of Justice opinion that a nuclear warhead, such as Trident, will be contrary to international law if it is not capable of discriminating between military and civilian targets".

For more information contact:

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Emanuela Marchiori: 0118 967 1362

9th [Tommy Sheridan To Appear In Court Tomorrow](#)
9th May 2000

Tommy Sheridan To Appear In Court Tomorrow

Trident Swimmers Found Guilty

Tommy Sheridan, Member of the Scottish Parliament, will appear personally in Helensburgh District Court tomorrow (Wednesday 10th May), for a plea hearing in regard to his alleged breach of the peace along with 184 other activists at the blockade of Faslane on February 14th. Tommy will plead not guilty. **Today in Helensburgh District Court Louise James (18), a student from Cork, and Marcus Armstrong (39)**, a peace worker and counsellor from Milton Keynes were found guilty by JP Joseph Scullion on charges of breaching the military bye-laws by swimming into the protected area at Faslane naval base. The JP would not permit Marcus Armstrong to cross-examine Crown witnesses on issues of international humanitarian law and demanded that the accused, in their own witness statements, restrict themselves to "relevant material". Marcus Armstrong was also found guilty of breach of the peace for his part in a blockade of Coulport base in August last year. They were fined £50 on each charge.

At the end of his witness statement, referring to the threat of nuclear catastrophe, Marcus Armstrong said: "If anything ever happened and if any of my children, grandchildren or any person asks me, did you know? What did you do? although it would give me little comfort, I would be able to say yes, I did know and although I wish I'd found the strength to do more, I did what I could at the time, given the circumstances." Turning to JP Scullion he asked him directly: "What would you say to your children or grandchildren?" There was a silence and then the JP said: "I will not answer that question."

Also today, Margaret Bremner (45), a nurse from Portobello in Scotland was found guilty of malicious damage after cutting the perimeter fence at Coulport last year. She was fined £50 and ordered to pay £100 compensation. The case against Gaynor Barrett (21), a student and hospital cleaner from Cambridge, was abandoned by the Crown after it was realised that the military bye-laws did not cover the area in which she was arrested.

8th [Tommy Sheridan Pleads Not Guilty To Trident Charge](#)
8th May 2000

Tommy Sheridan Pleads Not Guilty To Trident Charge

Before anti-Trident campaigners return to the gates of Faslane this Saturday a number of Trident Ploughshares activists are to be called by Scottish Courts for previous actions, among them Member of the Scottish Parliament, Tommy Sheridan and a duo who in August last year swam across the Gareloch to the submarine base at Faslane.

Tommy was one of the 185 people arrested at the blockade of Faslane on February 14th this year. He is charged with breach of the peace and will submit a not guilty plea this Wednesday (10th May). He said:

"I will plead not-guilty because in my opinion it is the government which is guilty of crimes against humanity, not people like myself who are fighting to get rid of nuclear weapons. I was proud to be arrested along with many other courageous activists. Scotland can never be free of fear until these barbaric weapons of war have been banned from our country."

In Helensburgh District Court tomorrow (9th May) Louise James (18), a student from Cork, and Marcus Armstrong (39), a peace worker and counsellor from Milton Keynes, will be tried on charges relating to the 20th August last year when they swam across the Gareloch into the protected area around Faslane. They made it right up to the floating barrier to the base before the alarm sounded. They are charged with breaching military bye-laws.

Also tomorrow in the same court Gaynor Barrett (21), a student and hospital cleaner from Cambridge will be tried for breaching military bye-laws. In August last year, as part of the Trident Ploughshares camp, she entered Coulport base through a hole in the perimeter fence. Also facing trial tomorrow is Margaret Bremner (45), a nurse from Portobello in Scotland. She is charged with malicious damage after cutting the perimeter fence at Coulport last year.

A Trident Ploughshares spokesperson said:

"Tommy's willingness to stand beside us as we challenge Trident in the courts and at the bases is a huge encouragement."

5th [Peace Activist Faces Jail Rather Than Pay for Damage to Nuke Base](#)

5th May 2000

Peace Activist Faces Jail Rather Than Pay for Damage to Nuke Base

A veteran peace protester could be jailed tomorrow over his refusal to pay court costs and a compensation order.

Roger Franklin (72), of Horsley, Gloucestershire, was convicted on the 3rd of March along with three others from the Midlands affinity group of Trident Ploughshares, of causing criminal damage to the Atomic Weapons Establishment at Aldermaston. He was ordered to pay £250 towards court costs and £291 compensation for the damage. Tomorrow he will attend Gloucestershire Magistrates Court in Stroud for the payments to be enforced.

In a letter to the Court Roger has made it plain that he has no intention of paying up. He says: "For about 20 years, I have refused willing payment of money, for taxes or fines, to the British state because I will not be complicit in what I consider to be its immoral and criminal activities; its continuing preparation of weapons of mass destruction designed to murder whole populations of distant cities."

Rather than allow a warrant to be served for his arrest for non-payment, Roger has volunteered to come to court to explain. In a statement to the court Roger says: "I am prepared to go to prison again... However, such treatment will not deter me from continuing to campaign against nuclear weapons in the

future, as long as I am physically able to do so."

Roger faces jail just as his fellow pledgers in Trident Ploughshares are preparing to step up the pressure on Aldermaston through the week-long disarmament camp from May 18th to 25th and the blockade of the base on Monday 22nd May from 6 a.m.

A Trident Ploughshares spokesperson said:

"Roger's courage, determination and dignity are an inspiration to us as we prepare to challenge the criminality and the horror of Aldermaston."

[*Update:* Yesterday (5th May) Roger appeared at Gloucester Magistrates Court in Stroud for his outstanding compensation order and court costs to be enforced (arising from the Midlands Affinity group action against Aldermaston last year). The court decided not to jail him but will send round the bailiffs.]

April Government and Judges Join Forces to Stifle Debate on Illegal Nuclear Weapons

4th April 2000

4th

Government and Judges Join Forces to Stifle Debate on Illegal Nuclear Weapons

Trident Ploughshares campaigners who were today hoping to see evidence that the Scottish judiciary would look in an impartial way at the question of the illegality of Trident were dismayed at the clearly biased attitude of Lords Rodger, Reed and Weir.

The one hour hearing at the High Court of Justiciary in Edinburgh was to determine the procedure for answering the four questions posed by former Lord Advocate Lord Hardie in his Reference arising out of the acquittal of the "Trident Three" in Greenock last year. As the Lord Advocate is an officer of HM Government it came as no surprise that he had twisted the questions to suit the Crown's position. There was the possibility that the judges of the High Court would maintain their independence and look at the wider issues raised during the Greenock trial. They look unlikely to rise to this challenge.

Lord Rodger of Earlsferry was himself the Lord Advocate in 1992 when anti-Trident campaigners presented him with evidence of how the UK's Trident Nuclear weapons system breaches Customary International Law. He said then that he didn't consider the arguments against the Government's Defence policy to be correct.

Advocate John Mayer, representing Ulla Roder from Denmark, submitted that the matter should first be referred to the European Court for an opinion. This was refused.

Angie Zelter representing herself made a powerful statement saying:

"The action which landed us in Greenock Sheriff court was an implementation of the International Court of Justices Opinion and that the major question of the Criminality of Trident should now be addressed. The questions presently before the court suit the purposes of the Government and not the interests of the people."

The court today decided that the full hearing will take only five days. It may well not be heard this year. They turned down requests for a full transcript of the proceedings to be made in spite of clear evidence of the worldwide interest.

March 31st **Ploughshares Activists and Lord Advocate Take Trident To High Court**

31st March 2000

31st **Ploughshares Activists and Lord Advocate Take Trident To High Court**

Tuesday 4th April: First hearing for "Trident Three" Reference.

Wednesday 5th April: Brian Quail's Appeal.

On Tuesday next week (4th April), at the High Court of Justiciary in Edinburgh, the "Trident Three" will attend a procedural hearing in connection with the Lord Advocates' Reference of Sheriff Gimblett's judgment.

At Greenock Sheriff Court last year Angie Zelter, Ellen Moxley and Ulla Roder were acquitted by Sheriff Margaret Gimblett after damaging the Trident-related laboratory "Maytime". The three women had argued that their action was justified under international law. The Reference is not an appeal against the verdict at Greenock but is a method of seeking the High Court's view of the legal aspects of Gimblett's ruling. The full hearing of the Reference is likely to take place in the autumn.

The appeal of Scottish Ploughshares activist Brian Quail will be heard next Wednesday (5th April) by the same court. Brian's appeal will be argued by advocate John Mayer, a member of the "Trident Three" defence team.

Brian was originally convicted at two separate trials which arose from protests at Faslane naval base in August and November 1998. The basis of his appeal is that at both trials the magistrate excluded consideration of international law in reaching his verdict. Like the "Trident Three", Brian had argued that the illegality of Trident under international law gave him reasonable excuse for taking direct action against the naval base, home to Britain's four nuclear weapon submarines.

Brian said:

"In using non-violent direct action against Trident, Ploughshares activists are trying to uphold the basic humanitarian law which states we must not kill, or threaten to kill, innocent people."

13th **JP Finds Peace Activists Not Guilty**

13th March 2000

JP Finds Peace Activists Not Guilty

Crown Case Bungled

In Helensburgh District Court today JP Tony Stirling found two peace activists not guilty on three charges after the Crown had failed to present sufficient evidence.

Marilyn Croser (24), a student from Glasgow, and Helen Harris (27), an adult education tutor from Bristol, had been charged with three offences relating to their participation in a Trident Ploughshares disarmament action at Faslane naval base in August last year. There were two charges of criminal damage (cutting the base's perimeter fence) and one of breaching the military bye-laws. In regard to the criminal damage charges the police witnesses were unable to show any clarity about which fences were being referred to. In the case of the bye-law charge the witnesses were unable to show that the women were on MOD land without proper authority. There was also confusion about identity.

Although JP Stirling did not permit the accused to develop issues of international law in cross examining the Crown witnesses there was one interesting exchange with a Strathclyde PC from the Gorbals Division. He had come to the scene after being informed by a member of the public that someone was cutting the base's fence. In cross-examination Helen Harris asked him whether he would similarly investigate if told by a protester that international law was being breached by the activities behind the fence. He readily acknowledged that he would.

The accused did not take the witness stand but just gave a statement in summing up, on the grounds that they were weary of the continued refusal of the District Court to consider arguments based on international law. The Crown evidence had been patchy and sloppy but the real issue was not what fence had been cut where but the criminal activity going on inside the base. It was shameful that in spite of the judgment of Margaret Gimblett in acquitting the Trident Three at Greenock the District Court did not take account of the illegality of Trident.

In delivering his verdict JP Stirling said that his court did not have the discretion to argue the rights and wrongs of international law. The "appeal" of the Trident Three case had not yet been heard by the High Court and the relevant ruling was still that of the High Court in rejecting the appeal of activist Helen John. Yet the prosecution had not provided sufficient evidence to substantiate the charges and he therefore found the accused not guilty.

At this point Helen Harris interjected: " I wish you had a better reason than that for finding us not guilty." Stirling replied: " Be thankful for small mercies."

Later Helen Harris said:

"The JP's position is illogical. If the District Court is not competent to deal with international law he should refuse to try our case. The whole episode was a hollow farce. One ray of light was the Gorbals PC who promised to investigate international crime. He will have a big mail bag soon!"

A Trident Ploughshares spokesperson said:

"JP Stirling is all over the place in legal terms. International law applies at any level of justice, even the most parochial. He also has no right to block the cross-questioning of Crown witnesses on matters of international law without giving the accused the chance to show the relevance. Had Helen and Marilyn been convicted this case would have ample grounds for appeal."

3rd

Midlanders Found Guilty at Newbury

3rd March 2000

Midlanders Found Guilty at Newbury

Four activists from the Midlands affinity group were given a guilty verdict today at Newbury Magistrates Court.

The magistrate took time to explain his verdict but ruled that he could not consider International Law if

it was not incorporated by statute.

Alison, Sylvia, Roger and Marlene were all landed with hefty compensation orders, £250 each for court costs, and £291 for their share of the damage to the fence. Sylvia was also fined an additional £100.

Afterwards she spoke of the hypocrisy that allows the UK to make grand statements about the need to bring war criminals to justice, whilst at the same time using a dubious interpretation of international law to defend its own criminal activities.

February Magistrate hears expert witnesses in Aldermaston trial. Verdict Expected 3rd March
17th February 2000

17th

Magistrate hears expert witnesses in Aldermaston trial. Verdict Expected 3rd March

The trial of Roger Franklin, Sylvia Boyes, Marlene Yeo and Alison Crane, of the Midlands affinity group, had its second day today at Newbury Magistrates Court.

Their defence team is barrister Steven Cottle and Solicitor Gareth Pierce. All the business was done except for the verdict which the magistrates are expected to return on the 3rd March.

They are charged with causing criminal damage estimated by the Crown at £1000 +VAT relating to 13th July last year when they entered the Nuclear Weapons Establishment at Aldermaston.

The four do not dispute the basic facts referred to in the charge, but argued that their action was justified in the light of the illegality of Trident, and the need to take urgent action against war crime.

The Stipendiary Magistrate has allowed the defence to call expert witnesses and has listened carefully to the argument. **Professor Nick Grief** from Bournemouth University gave expert evidence on the applicability of international law to the issue of Trident's legality. **William Peden**, International Disarmament Campaigner for Greenpeace, and independent nuclear consultant **Dr. Frank Barnaby** gave evidence on the targeting of Trident missiles, the imminent nature of the threat and the workings of Britain's nuclear weapon system.

The four are reported to feel quite upbeat and happy that the arguments have been heard.

14th

185 Arrests At Faslane
14th February 2000

185 Arrests At Faslane

Tommy Sheridan, Caroline Lucas and Ten Church Ministers Detained

This morning Strathclyde and Ministry of Defence Police detained 185 peace activists at a blockade of Faslane naval base near Glasgow. Included in the arrests were Member of the Scottish Parliament Tommy Sheridan (Scottish Socialist Party) and Member of the European Parliament Caroline Lucas (Green Party) and ten Scottish church ministers.

The blockade prevented workers from entering the base for two hours, leading to long traffic tailbacks. The event was jointly organised by Scottish CND, British CND and Trident Ploughshares and drew 400 protesters to the gates of the base, where the UK Trident nuclear weapon submarines are based. The arrested campaigners are currently being detained in a number of police

stations in the Glasgow area and are expected to be released this evening.

A Trident Ploughshares spokesperson said:

"Today's blockade shows that more and more people are grasping the urgency of the threat posed by Britain's unlawful nuclear arsenal. We are delighted that so many have been ready to take this significant step towards preventing nuclear crime."

10th

Green MEP to Claim Parliamentary Privilege if Arrested in Nuclear Base Blockade

10th February 2000

Green MEP to Claim Parliamentary Privilege if Arrested in Nuclear Base Blockade

A Green Member of the European Parliament will be claiming parliamentary privilege when she joins a controversial blockade of the Trident nuclear submarine base at Faslane next week.

Caroline Lucas, a member of the Parliament's Peace Inter-Group, will face arrest when she blockades the base with supporters of CND and the Trident Ploughshares group next Monday February 14. The action is being taken following recent court rulings stating that nuclear weapons are illegal under international law. The protestors will be pleading they have "reasonable cause" and a legal duty to prevent work at the base should the police decide to arrest them. But Dr Lucas intends to add further weight to the protestors' case by citing parliamentary privilege.

She will be at the demonstration alongside expected attendances by Green Member of the Scottish Parliament Robin Harper, Irish Green MEP Patricia McKenna and eight other MSPs and MPs. Traditionally members of parliaments have avoided joining hands with such nonviolent direct action campaigners because they can lay themselves open to criticism that the makers of laws should not break them.

"This issue doesn't apply in this case," said Dr Lucas. "It is widely agreed that the possession of weapons of mass destruction is immoral, but recent court decisions have found that such weapons are against international law. That means they are also against UK law. These legal decisions clearly demolish successive government claims that they can maintain these horrific weapons and obey the law.

"I've agreed to join CND and Trident Ploughshares and risk arrest in this campaign because it is time the British government owned up to the fact that its possession of nuclear weapons is illegal. These weapons provide no protection for us, since they cannot be used without inviting an attack by similar weapons from an opponent. Not only do they not promote peace, they encourage other nations to develop similar weapons of mass destruction as they feel threatened.

"I will be risking arrest on Monday in solidarity with other parliamentarians, church ministers and many committed activists. We are looking forward to the issue of the illegality of nuclear weapons being further considered by the courts."

Special Information Pack for Journalists Available by Fax or E-Mail

7th

300 Activists Prepare to Disrupt Trident

7th February 2000

300 Activists Prepare to Disrupt Trident

Blockade is Backed by Emma Thomson and Kurt Vonnegut

Update on Crimebusters Blockade on 14th February

Over 300 activists are now expected to blockade Faslane naval base, home to Britain's nuclear weapons submarines, on Monday 14th February. Their intention is to close down for a day the base which they believe is illegal under international humanitarian law. The number of parliamentarians who will be present has risen to 11 and some of these have indicated their willingness to risk arrest. Six Christian ministers have also declared themselves open to arrest.

Messages of support have come from across the world and from many individuals, including actress Emma Thomson and author Kurt Vonnegut. A Trident Ploughshares spokesperson said:

"It is thrilling to feel the sense of urgency among people as they prepare to come to Faslane or send us warm messages of encouragement. In the wake of the acquittal of the Trident Three and the impending reference to the High Court of the issue of the legality of Trident, there is a strong sense that this is a special moment in the long history of resistance to nuclear crime."

Special Information Pack for Journalists Available by Fax or E-Mail

2nd [Sheriff Questions Legal Aid Ruling And Frees Peace Activist](#)

2nd February 2000

Sheriff Questions Legal Aid Ruling And Frees Peace Activist

In Dumbarton Sheriff Court today the presiding Sheriff released a peace activist on standard bail conditions after questioning the decision of the Legal Aid Board to turn down his application for legal aid.

Trident Ploughshares pledger Ian Thomson, a long term peace and environmental campaigner, was remanded to Greenock Prison on 21st January after appearing on two charges of malicious mischief relating to actions at RNAD Coulport, Britain's Trident nuclear warhead store. He appeared today at an Intermediate Hearing before his trial, which had been scheduled for 14th February.

The Sheriff took the view that Ian Thomson's case might merit legal aid and adjourned his case until the 6th June to allow for that issue to be resolved. He granted standard bail conditions.

A Trident Ploughshares spokesperson said:

"We are glad that the Sheriff has acted in the interests of justice and freed Ian. It is a pity that he did not take a further step in the right direction and throw the case out on the basis that the crime prevention to which Ian is committed deserves support not prosecution. The reasons for the Legal Aid Board's negative decision will be further investigated.

1st [Peace Activists to Blockade Faslane on St. Valentines's Day](#)

1st February 2000

Peace Activists to Blockade Faslane on St. Valentines's Day

Hundreds Will Be Joined By Politicians and Church Leaders

On February 14th, St. Valentines' Day, activists from British and Scottish CND and Trident Ploughshares will blockade Faslane naval base, in an attempt to cause significant disruption to a facility they believe is immoral as well as illegal under international humanitarian law.

Faslane is the base for the UK's four Trident nuclear submarines, a nuclear weapons system recognized as unlawful by the ruling of Sheriff Margaret Gimblett in October last year when she

acquitted the "Trident Three" who had disarmed a Trident-related research barge on Loch Goil.

Over two hundred activists are expected, from as far afield as Belgium and Washington State in the US. Eight parliamentarians, John McAllion MP and MSP, Caroline Lucas MEP, Patricia McKenna MEP (Eire), Dorothy-Grace Elder MSP, Lloyd Quinan MSP, Sandra White MSP, Tommy Sheridan MSP and Harold Best MP will be present and some of these have indicated their willingness to take part in the blockade itself. Also present will be over a dozen church leaders from Scotland and England, including Rev. Norman Shanks, representing a number of denominations, including Episcopal, Church of Scotland and Roman Catholic.

Among the messages of support from across the globe is one from American author Kurt Vonnegut. Kurt says: "You of Trident Ploughshares 2000 are the shock troops of the sane in the war against insanity. I am honored by your invitation to be on the front lines with you at Faslane on Saint Valentines' day, and especially in a year so full of zeros . . . a blank slate. Yours will be among the very first messages to end its blankness, and with this oldie but goodie: Thou shalt not kill. Sorry I can't be there. Pax Vobiscum Kurt Vonnegut".

A Trident Ploughshares spokesperson said:

"After the Greenock ruling we stepped up our efforts to bring others into the work of confronting and preventing the planned war crime called Trident. The response to the call to Faslane on 14th February shows that these efforts are beginning to pay off."

January Minor Ploughshares Case Still Unresolved After 14 Months

31st January 2000

31st

Minor Ploughshares Case Still Unresolved After 14 Months

Administrative Competence of the Courts in Doubt

In Helensburgh District Court today a member of the Trident Ploughshares campaign had his case adjourned until April 2000, nearly 17 months after a demonstration at Faslane naval base which led to his being charged with a Breach of the Peace.

Retired company director Alan Wilkie, of Currie in Midlothian, was arrested last November while protesting against Britain's Trident nuclear weapon system at the North Gate of the base, in which the UK's Trident submarines are berthed. His trial was adjourned from 6th December last year when there was insufficient time in the day to hear the case for the defence. Today's adjournment arose from the absence of the Procurator Fiscal who had heard the first half of the case. Justice of the Peace Scullion indicated that the Procurator Fiscal had a right to question Mr. Wilkie after his summing up and so the remainder of the trial had to be postponed.

A Trident Ploughshares spokesperson said:

"While you cannot legislate for illness, the court could have shown a minimal consideration for Alan by letting him know beforehand. Having to turn up time and again for the same case is a way of penalising the innocent since the travel costs involved for Alan and his family and friends exceed any fine that might be imposed should he be found guilty. This may not be Crown ploy to harass disarmers but simply another example of the astonishing complacency and incompetence of the criminal justice system as experienced by our activists. This is true not only in Argyll and Bute, where there are frequent and unnecessary adjournments due to disorganisation on the part of the

Crown, but also in England, as shown by the sloppiness of the Crown at the Lancaster trial of Rachel Wenham and Rosie James last week "

Alan Wilkie's case is now set for 11th April 2000. Meanwhile Ploughshares activists are preparing for a major blockade of Faslane naval base on 14th February.

28th

[Lancaster Judge discharges jury and orders a retrial](#)

28th January 2000

Lancaster Judge discharges jury and orders a retrial

Justice Slinger determined that the trial of Rosie James and Rachel Wenham for an indeterminate value of damage to HMS Vengeance (Trident nuclear submarine) could not proceed. This is in response to the last-minute delivery of evidence regarding the value of the damage caused which did not provide the defence with the time necessary to seek an independent assessment.

Having begun the case by delivering a new witness statement claiming a fourfold rise in the value of the damage, for two and a half days the prosecution procrastinated and avoided bringing clear evidence to substantiate their new witness statement. Estimates of the value have ranged from zero to almost one million pounds.

Having been instructed on Thursday afternoon by the Judge to produce the necessary evidence, the trial was halted when it became apparent that the lack of substance and vagueness of prosecution evidence demanded independent assessment. As this would mean a substantial delay, a new jury was deemed necessary.

Vera Baird, Barrister for the defence said

"The sequence of misleading estimates as to the value of the damage leads us to suspect that we cannot rely on a word that is said by Marconi or the Crown."

A spokeswoman from Aldermaston Women Trash Trident said

"With 11 months to prepare for this case, we are surprised that the prosecution presented the court with such dramatic last minute revisions to its evidence. Given the nature and gravity of the legal issues being discussed in this case, we would expect a more professional and serious approach. We stand by our disarmament action but we will challenge unsubstantiated claims made by the prosecution."

A hearing will take place this afternoon at Preston with Judge Opinshaw to determine where and when the retrial will take place.

To offer financial or other support contact awtt@hotmail.com or phone 07808 553778.

25th

[Prosecution claim damage of £110,000 to HMS Vengeance](#)

25th January 2000

Prosecution claim damage of £110,000 to HMS Vengeance

This morning at 10.30 am on the opening day of the case against Rosie James and Rachel Wenham at Lancaster Crown Court, the session was adjourned. This was in response to a prosecution statement made by the VSEL Trident Programme Director claiming a fourfold increase on the original estimates of damage caused to HMS Vengeance.

The court agreed the short adjournment to provide the defence with an opportunity to procure the services of an electronics expert who can make an independent assessment of the value of the damage caused. If £110,000 is deemed excessive, the defence will argue for a lower value.

Jury selected

The jury has been selected from a total of 26 prospective jurors. The defence asked that all those who could answer positive to the following question to be released from service:

Do you or your close family work or have worked at/for VSEL, Marconi, BNFL, Bae, the Royal Navy or other armed forces?

At this point six prospective jurors were released from service. The jury is comprised of eight men and four women and has been sworn in.

The case for the prosecution has now opened.

Notes: To receive daily press releases during the trial send your name and fax number or email number to: awtt@hotmail.com or leave a message on 07808 553778.

25th

JP Rejects Devolution Plea Without Explanation

25th January 2000

JP Rejects Devolution Plea Without Explanation

At Helensburgh District Court today the Justice of the Peace rejected the plea of a peace activist that the charge against her of Breach of the Peace was unlawful.

Peace activist Pamela Smith was one of 49 people arrested last February 16th during a blockade of Faslane nuclear submarine base. When she eventually appeared in court for trial on 8th December last year she gave notice that she wished to raise a devolution issue. The court granted this and the Diet of Debate was held today.

Smith represented herself and argued that the charge of Breach of the Peace is now illegal in that it contravenes the requirement of the European Convention on Human Rights that any criminal charge must be accurately framed so that it specifies the limits of the criminality involved, and that Breach of the Peace is a clear example of a vague and unspecified charge. Smith gave instances from past prosecutions of peace activists to show the inconsistency with which the charge was applied. After consideration JP McPhail rejected her plea. Smith has indicated that she will appeal the ruling.

Pamela Smith said:

"The JP did not explain the reasons for finding there was no devolution issue. That is not good enough. We need to be given reasons for such rulings and I intend to appeal against this decision because Breach of the Peace has been used indiscriminately to silence lawful protest."

70 year-old Joan Meredith, a Trident Ploughshares activist from Alnwick in Northumbria, also appeared in the court today, charged with Breach of the Peace for blocking the South gateway of Faslane Naval Base in May last year. She was found guilty and fined £100.

24th

Lord Advocate Refers Greenock Ruling

24th January 2000

Lord Advocate Refers Greenock Ruling

The Lord Advocate of Scotland, who indicated last October that he would make a reference to the High Court of Justiciary in relation to the acquittal by Sheriff Margaret Gimblett of the *'Trident Three'* in Greenock Sheriff Court, has finally lodged the official referral papers.

Ellen Moxley from Dollar, Ulla Roder from Odense in Denmark and Angie Zelter from Norfolk were acquitted of 'malicious mischief' estimated at £80,000 worth of damage, after they openly admitted they had thrown Trident-related equipment into Loch Goil. In acquitting them Sheriff Gimblett said that she could find no criminal intent in the women's action.

A Lord Advocate's reference, of which there are only five recorded instances, is a device whereby the Crown can seek a ruling on a particular case, when the point of law to be clarified will not otherwise be raised, e.g. at an appeal. There is no question of the acquittal being overturned. To date there is no information on the nature of the clarification sought, or of the date of the hearing.

A Trident Ploughshares spokesperson said:

"Unless the reference is merely technical, the hearing will provide another opportunity to demonstrate the unlawfulness of Britain's nuclear weapons policy and the solid justification under international humanitarian law for peaceful disarmament action against Trident. In the meantime we are stepping up our campaign with a mass blockade of Faslane base on February 14th."

Between 150 and 200 demonstrators and activists are expected at Faslane on 14th February, including six parliamentarians from Labour, SNP, Scottish Socialist Party and the Green party and a dozen Scottish clergy. The aim is to close the base for a day.

21st [Vera Baird to Represent Trident Trashers](#)
21st January 2000

Vera Baird to Represent Trident Trashers

Barrister Vera Baird joins legal team at 11th hour.

Due to the early closure of a previous case, barrister Vera Baird has joined the legal team representing Rosie James and Rachel Wenham in their forthcoming trial at Lancaster Crown Court. As a defence barrister, Ms Baird has taken several nuclear and anti-militarist protest cases, most notably representing Jo Wilson in the successful Hawks to Indonesia case at Liverpool Crown Court in 1997. All four women defendants in the Seeds of Hope -East Timor Ploughshares group were acquitted on charges of £1.5m damage to a BAe Hawk jet about to be sent to Indonesia. Their defence was based on the argument that they had "lawful excuse"; the same defence will be presented by Vera Baird on behalf of Rosie James and Rachel Wenham - that they too had "lawful excuse" in their action which aimed to prevent the deployment of HMS Vengeance and Britain's Trident nuclear warheads.

Background: On 1 February 1999, Rachel Wenham and Rosie James boarded HMS Vengeance, Trident nuclear submarine, at Devonshire Dock in Barrow in Furness. They caused damage to the submarine's testing equipment, to an estimated value in excess of £25,000. The action was part of Trident Ploughshares, an ongoing campaign of civil resistance to the production and deployment of Trident. The campaign argues that the British government is acting illegally by producing and deploying nuclear weapons. Under international customary and humanitarian law it is illegal for states to use methods of warfare which do not discriminate between combatants and non-combatants. The campaign uses negotiation, public awareness and nonviolent direct action to achieve its aims.

Forthcoming trial: On 24 January, Rosie and Rachel will stand trial at Lancaster Crown Court on

charges of Criminal Damage to HMS Vengeance. The trial is expected to last up to two weeks and the defence will use both legal and moral arguments. Expert witnesses will be called to testify about the Trident nuclear weapons system and its legality. Both women are represented by solicitor Gareth Pierce (BN Birnberg & Co., London). During the trial, support, events and actions will be organised by the Aldermaston Women Trash Trident affinity group.

Notes: To receive daily press releases during the trial send your name and fax number or email name to: <mailto:awtt@hotmail.com> or leave a message on 07808 553778. A comprehensive "awtt Info Pack" is also available.

11th [Trial Of Trident Ploughshares Disarmers Begins In Lancaster Crown Court On 24th January](#)

11th January 2000

Trial Of Trident Ploughshares Disarmers Begins In Lancaster Crown Court On 24th January

Government Nuclear Policy On Trial

Background

Rosie James and Rachel Wenham will face charges of £25,000 worth of damage to the Trident nuclear submarine Vengeance in Barrow shipyard on the night of 1st February 1999. The two swam out to the submarine and used hammers to disarm equipment on the conning tower. They also sprayed messages of peace, and hung a banner on the submarine declaring 'Women Want Peace'.

The two women are part of the international Trident Ploughshares campaign, which has pledged to openly, non-violently and accountably disarm Britain's nuclear weapons system.

Government policy on trial

This case comes shortly after the landmark Greenock judgement of October 1999, at which Judge Gimblett instructed a Scottish jury to acquit three other Trident Ploughshares activists charged with damaging a Trident nuclear weapons facility at Loch Goil in Scotland. This was the first British judge and jury to hear and accept a defence of the illegality of Trident nuclear weapons based on international law.

Rosie James and Rachel Wenham will also mount a defence based both on moral arguments and on the 1996 International Court of Justice Advisory opinion on the illegality of nuclear weapons. Gareth Pierce, who successfully defended the Guildford Four, will be acting for both women.

Defendant Rachel Wenham said "We are confident this case is winnable."

Expectations are high that an English jury will now hear the same legal and moral arguments which led a Scottish court to acquit.

Further press information

Press packs with background information, contacts before and during the trial, and details of photographs and interviews are available from: 07808 553 778 or awtt@hotmail.com.