

TRIDENT PLOUGHSHARES

Trident Ploughshares is a campaign to disarm the UK Trident nuclear weapons system in a non-violent, open, peaceful and fully accountable manner

Newsletter for Supporters, April 2016

Since last year's newsletter, TP members have continued to campaign actively against the UK's nuclear weapons.

Below are some of the highlights.

Amongst the biggest highlights of 2015 were the two big blockades of infrastructures integral to the UK's nuclear weapons. Although Trident Ploughshares did not organise the Big Blockade at Burghfield on 2 March, many TP members took part. All three entrances of the warhead assembly plant were blocked, and there were no arrests. It appears that workers had been advised to stay at home.

Trident Ploughshares organised the Big Blockade at Faslane on 13 April, in conjunction with the inspiring Scrap Trident Coalition. On this occasion, over 400 people united to close down the submarine base for around seven hours. 34 people were arrested, but the majority were released within hours with no further action.

In February, 4 members of a newly formed TP affinity group, the Peaton Peace Pirates pinned their 'Pirates' Articles' to the fence at Faslane; 2 members were detained briefly, and one charged with vandalism, but no further action was taken against them. The Articles read:

1. WE be committed to disarming the UK of them dastardly nuclear weapons
2. WE be committed to acting with no fisticuffs, slugging off or other pesky and violent actions
3. WE will tell any landlubber or sea(wo)man who asks why we are there and what we be adoin of
4. WE will cite the articles from Nuremburg, Geneva and the 1996 ICJ ruling, and some other legal doings what we are experts on, to all who ask what we be up to and why.

The Pirates were in action again in December, blocking the Scotland Office in Edinburgh, selected since it is the outpost, within the devolution settlement, of the Westminster Government north of the Tweed. They demanded a public response to explain how Trident could possibly be used in accordance with International Law. To date, no response has been received.

In March, TP members joined members of Action AWE and others to perform Camilla Cancantata's oratorio '*Trident is a War Crime*', in the central lobby of the House of Commons. Several MPs stopped to listen to the tuneful questions, such as "Who is the criminal? What is the Law? Who decides....?"

In April, the Tamarians affinity group set up a protest camp in the remains of a bombed-out church in the centre of Plymouth to highlight the dangers of nuclear weapons and to raise awareness of the city's role in perpetuating this. At other times in the year, the Tamarians have done a variety of street theatre actions to stimulate public interest.

In May, a considerable length of the fence at AWE Burghfield was enhanced with anti-Trident slogans and beautiful knitted flowers, by Sylvia, Julia, Margaret and Erica. Police removed the decorations but returned them to the women for future use.

Trident Ploughshares members were involved in the Hiroshima-Nagasaki fast on 6-9 August in central London. The fasters and their supporters engaged in a variety of activities, including all-night vigils, a peace walk organised by Pax Christi, and a die-in outside the Ministry of Defence.

In September, Nikki Clark and Theo Simon were acquitted in Plymouth Magistrates Court of committing aggravated trespass in the Devonport Dockyard. The trial followed the blocking of the Camel's Head Gate entrance in July 2014, where the defendants had locked themselves to a car in the middle of the road. The District Judge ruled that as a road was specifically excluded from the definition of 'land' in the 1994 Criminal Justice & Public Order Act, the charge could not be upheld. Whilst pleased to be acquitted, the defendants were disappointed that the judge had not made a ruling on the lawfulness of the activity being obstructed.

In the same month, during the DSIE arms fair, the Muriel Lesters affinity group in London carried out an action at the building which houses Lockheed Martin's UKHQ, by spraying it with red hair colouring to symbolise the blood that this global arms company has on its hands. Zelda Jeffers was subsequently convicted on criminal damage and ordered to pay substantial costs. Muriel Lesters returned to Lockheed Martin in December to sing carols and give them a 'Christmas card'.

In October 2015, TP launched PICAT (Public Interest Cases Against Trident), a project to encourage groups in England and Wales to go to their local magistrates court and try to initiate a citizen's prosecution against the Secretary of State for Defence for conspiring to commit a war crime. Receiving no satisfaction from the courts, several groups are now applying directly to the attorney general.

Also in October, 6 TP members joined thousands of people in Sierra del Retin, in a demonstration against the increasing militarisation of this beautiful part of southern Spain, during a massive NATO exercise taking place with major UK involvement. Protesters were roughly handled and tear-gassed by Spanish police.

On 27 February 2016, Trident Ploughshares had a strong presence on the Stop Trident demonstration in London, organised by CND, one of the biggest anti-nuclear demonstrations for many years.

Forthcoming Actions

Please circulate widely and please support!

Burghfield month of action, June 2016

The UK Government is intent on replacing and modernising its nuclear weapon system and much of the work on the new system will be carried out at AWE Burghfield, near Reading in Berkshire, where the final assembly and maintenance of nuclear warheads takes place. The replacement of Trident is likely to cost around £167 billion pounds, at a time when the government is cutting billions from public spending on health care, education, welfare and services.

Trident Ploughshares, with other groups, is inviting people to take creative action at Burghfield to disrupt the illegal and immoral 'business as usual', with each group taking a different day in June. The scheduled day for TP is **Monday 6th June**.

For more information, ring 01547 520929 or 07456 588943 or email june@tridentploughshares.org

TP training days

As of Spring 2016, Trident Ploughshares is running a number of 1-day training sessions to try to mobilise for the month of action at Burghfield and encourage potential activists to consider becoming part of Trident Ploughshares. You can find out more by visiting <http://tridentploughshares.org/category/training/>.

International fast, August 2016

Groups of people around the world have decided to fast for the period from Hiroshima day, 6th August, to Nagasaki day, 9th August, to express their total opposition to nuclear weapons and call for their complete abolition. TP members will be joining fasters in London – all are welcome, either to fast or to support. More information from TP at <http://tridentploughshares.org/international-fasters-appeal-2016/>

Your continued interest and support, including financial support, is really appreciated. Cheques payable to "Trident Ploughshares" can be sent to Jean Oliver, 43 Knocklea, Biggar, ML12 6E, or you can request a Standing Order form, or bank transfer details.

If you are interested in becoming a member please email tp2000@gn.apc.org or phone 0845 45 88 366 for more information.

Do visit our website at tridentploughshares.org and Trident Ploughshares' Facebook page

If you have received this by post but would prefer to hear news from TP by email, or if your contact details have changed, or you would like us to remove your details from our database, please contact TP at jean.oliver49@yahoo.com or 43, Knocklea, Biggar, ML12 6EF.