

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, March 2017

Since last year's newsletter, TP members have continued to campaign actively against the UK's (and the world's) nuclear weapons. Below are some of the highlights.

In April 2016, Dagmar Schwitzgebel represented TP at the **Stop Fennovoima (Defend Hanhikivi) Action Week, Finland**, where protesters gathered to try to stop Finland's 6th nuclear plant on a large nature reserve, due to start operation in 2024. There were many arrests and much police brutality against the protesters was reported.

TP supported and participated in a **Month of Action at Burghfield**, June 2016, during which time the Construction Gate was blocked continuously for 11 days. Creative as ever, participants included Nessie, a Welsh Dragon, a Mad Hatter's Tea Party, an academic seminar, various faiths groups and activists from Finland, France, Germany and Belgium, as well as many parts of the British Isles. At the start of the month, the messages "Trident is a war crime" and "Stop Trident Replacement" were projected onto the walls of the Houses of Parliament and MOD in London. During the month, there were 13 arrests including TP members Helen Swanston, who took part in a car blockade at the north end of The Mearings, and Mary Millington, who painted "No More Deadly Convoys" on the road. Both were taken to court, found guilty and fined.

Sponsorship from Lush paid for the production of a video report of the month, which can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WOyyJhvGSdA&feature=youtu.be>

During the **Trident Replacement vote** in Westminster on 18th July 2016, 11 TP members super-glued themselves together and sang for hours in the Lobby of Parliament. With only 47 Labour MPs voting against Trident renewal not even all the Scottish MPs, Plaid Cymru, Liberal Democrats, Greens and SDLP could change that shameful vote, which was won by a majority of 355. Theresa May had said she would be willing to authorise a nuclear strike that she knew would kill over 100,000 people.

You can see a video on the TP website at <http://tridentploughshares.org/we-told-the-government-no-trident-replacement/>

Four TP members, with support from others, staged a **public fast in London from Hiroshima day to Nagasaki day 2016**. They leafleted, talked to many people and took part in a die-in outside Downing Street, accompanied by the singing of Raised Voices choir.

In France, Angie Zelter joined fasters in Paris and Dijon.

TP members have joined with **Nukewatch** to track nuclear convoys on our roads each time one travels from Burghfield to Coulport and back. TP member Brian Quail was twice arrested for stopping the convoy by physically impeding a vehicle, at Balloch, for which he was found not guilty, and at Stirling, for which he was found guilty and fined £200.

Forthcoming Actions

Please support and circulate widely!

UN Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty

On March 27th 2017, negotiations will begin at the UN on a Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty. Last year the General Assembly's First Committee voted in favour of disarmament negotiations taking place in March and June/July 2017. The UK (represented by an ambassador, rather than a minister) voted against, and will not be participating, even though it claims to support multilateral disarmament. TP member Janet Fenton will be attending the meetings in New York. More information is available at www.nuclearban.org

Please write to the Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson, to ask him to engage constructively with the negotiations. Here is a suggested model letter:

Dear Boris Johnson

I am writing to ask you to attend and take part in the UN negotiations on a treaty for the worldwide prohibition of nuclear weapons. The first round of talks is scheduled for March 2017, and I urge you to make this a priority.

The UK Government has repeatedly stated its commitment to working towards international nuclear disarmament. This is clearly to be seen in the policy paper 2010-2015 Government Policy: Nuclear Disarmament', available on the Government's website, which states: 'We believe that sustainable nuclear disarmament can only be achieved through a multilateral process.'

It was therefore disappointing that the UK Government missed the opportunity to turn this rhetoric into action when the opportunity arose, and voted against negotiating a treaty when the matter came before the General Assembly's First Committee. As you will know, the majority of member states voted for the negotiations to take place. You may also know that North Korea, one of the states most often accused of providing a nuclear threat, was among those in favour.

I very much hope that you will be able both to remedy this missed opportunity and to make good on the Government's long-stated commitment to multilateral nuclear disarmament by attending these negotiations and explaining how the UK will meet this commitment. I also hope that you will encourage other states opposed to the process, principally the other nuclear states and NATO members, to come on board as well. I look forward to hearing from you about what plans the UK has to engage with these negotiations.

You can e-mail: fcocorrespondence@fco.gov.uk or post to: The Rt Hon Boris Johnson, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, King Charles Street, London, SW1A 2AA. A letter to your own MP may also be helpful.

Monday March 27th 2017, London. Oyez Oyez, Good news from the United Nations!

Trident Ploughshares and friends will meet in Trafalgar Square at the National Gallery steps at 9.30am for Town Crier Action to highlight the negotiations on a global ban on nuclear weapons which will be taking place at the UN this week, in the absence of the UK. We will aim to raise awareness and encourage members of the public to take the issue up with their own elected representatives through a combination of street theatre action and the handing out of leaflets.

Contact Sylvia Boyes at tridentsylvia@gmail.com or phone 07985 102580

8 – 16 July 2017, Coulport Disarmament Camp, Scotland (leaflet attached)

Nine days of life-affirming action, close to Faslane and Coulport, the home port and warhead store for the UK's Trident nuclear weapons, camping in ancient oak woodland on the shores of Loch Long, 30 miles from Glasgow. For more information, visit the TP website, <http://tridentploughshares.org> or phone 0345 4588 362

4-8 Sept 2017, London. Disarm DSEI

Trident Ploughshares will be taking part in the week of action against DSEI, the world's largest arms fair. We are planning a day of action specifically to highlight the horrors of nuclear weapons, and the involvement of the world's largest arms companies in Trident. We are organising convergence space nearby, and will have more details available nearer the time.

Contact Chris Bluemel: chrisbluemel@yahoo.co.uk or phone 07985 982288

Your continued interest and support, including financial support, is greatly 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 of Trident Ploughshares, 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 if 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.