

# A day at National CND's Conference

## Scrapping Trident: Strategising for Success in 2016

### Session 1

### Scrapping Trident: how far have we got? The current political context.

Chaired by Kate Hudson (CND)



### Catherine West MP, Shadow Foreign Secretary



Catherine questioned how Trident replacement could be seen as insurance and spelt out how the money involved could be spent better elsewhere. It was explained that Labour were starting a review of defence spending and that they looked forward to everyone taking part and pushing for peaceful aims.

### Rebecca Johnson (IICAN International Steering Group)



Rebecca argued that there was a legal gap that needed filling with a Treaty for the elimination of nuclear weapons. She felt that there should be a focus on the potential impact on communities from an incident involving the regular nuclear convoys in this country. She coined the phrase "Nukes of Hazard"!

### **Amelia Womack (Deputy Leader of the Green Party)**



The Greens are simply opposed to nuclear weapons. David Cameron's commitment to pushing the button makes him a threat to international security. The UK has the potential to be a good non nuclear neighbour. It is simply hypocritical for the UK to have nuclear weapons and to insist that other countries can't be so armed.

### **John Hilary ( War on Want)**



John argued that there was now a changed climate for debate in which undeniable truths could now have currency. Trident was a weapon we don't need, for situations we don't face, paid for with money we don't have now and will never have. There are moral and absolute arguments against nuclear weapons, not founded on calculations, but on a moral position.

### **Lindsey German (Stop the War Coalition)**



Replacing Trident and getting rid of the deficit costs about the same. Trident doesn't deal with foreseeable threats and conventional bombing contributes to a climate in which terrorism flourishes and the refugee problem is exacerbated. Nuclear wars pose a threat to humanity itself. Lindsey called for a huge turn out at the anti-trident demonstration in London on 20th February 2016 as an essential illustration of public opinion.

Questions from the floor pleaded that the term "nuclear deterrent" should not be used as it fed into a common misconception that Trident really was a deterrent. There was emphasis on the need to further develop arguments about alternative jobs following abandonment of

nuclear weapons and the need to build support within the union movement. Attention was drawn to the whistle blower from the Royal Navy who had highlighted deficiencies in the way Trident was currently handled (<https://wikileaks.org/trident-safety/>). The UK's violent domestic and foreign policy represented a threat to British society itself. There was emphasis on the unacceptability of either of the two available scenarios with Trident. Fire first and initiate a nuclear holocaust or fire second, to what effect? TTIP, the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, was characterised as an "economic NATO" and as unhelpful for a peaceful world.

### **Walter Wolfgang (A Vice-President of CND)**



We are engaged in a march for civilisation and we are much further forward than we were. Over 100 countries support a Convention to ban nuclear weapons. He made an appeal for funds to help further CND's campaign.

### **Workshop - How do we make better use of economic arguments**

#### **Sam Fairbairn (People's Assembly)**



Sam argued that spending money on Trident in the midst of a drive towards austerity did not make sense. It was throwing money away. Issues such as the attack on the Welfare State, cuts to the NHS and reduced public spending need linking up. Trident should be at the centre of the anti-austerity debate.

## George Binette (Camden Trades Council)



George highlighted the CND document “People not Trident” as a good source of data relevant to the Trident debate (<http://www.cnduk.org/component/k2/item/1855/people-not-trident-the-economic-case-against-trident-replacement>). He called for a “Just Transition” to move from military spending to sustainable production. Currently much of our economy is based on the destruction of human life. The GMB and UNITE unions oppose Labour going against Trident renewal. The union leadership are currently speaking at odds with the UNITE formal position against Trident. Jeremy Corbyn has explained that he

intends to form a “Defence Diversification Agency”.

After the introductory speeches the workshop participants explored the topic in more detail together, with authoritative contributions from many speakers from the floor.

## Workshop - Organising effective creative protest

**Janet Fenton (Scrap Trident Coalition Scotland)**

**Matthew Burnett-Stuart (Campaign Against the Arms Trade)**

This was a group discussion of creative protests with video examples of various approaches. Participants in the workshop split into small groups to discuss the examples shown and then tried to use the background approach to formulate a strategy for stopping a nuclear convoy in an effective way. Participants were urged to join NukeWatch [www.nukewatch.org.uk/](http://www.nukewatch.org.uk/)

## Next Steps in the struggle : aiming to win Chaired by David Webb (CND)



### **Brendan O'Hara MP (SNP spokesperson on defence)**



Banning Trident is within the DNA of the SNP. There is no moral, military or economic case for Trident. People must reject the scare tactics that cite possible job losses. It is crazy that 35% of the UK defence budget goes to Trident. It's a political weapon, not a military one. Tony Blair acknowledged that Trident was hugely expensive and not useful, but defended its renewal on the basis that it secured Britain's place at the top table of international discussions. The prospect of Donald Trump shortly having his finger on the button was floated. Trident is based on

the thinking of 40 years ago. Do not look to Parliament to sort the Trident issue. The demonstration of overwhelming public opposition is likely to be the deciding factor.

### **Reiner Braun (Co-President, International Peace Bureau)**



The peace movement in Europe is looking to the UK. Jeremy Corbyn needs a social movement both in UK and Europe. Movement against TTIP is part of this whole argument. European delegates will come to the mass demonstration in London on 20th February. Japan has the largest people's movement against nuclear weapons, with the UK in second position. Other countries will follow. We must stop spending money on war and killing. Reiner urged people to stop making war talk personal, using Mr Putin as a scapegoat, and suggested that in some

current conflicts, it is NATO that is the organisation in violation of existing treaties and Russia could be seen to be trying to reinstate their borders.

### **Sam Fairbairn (People's Assembly)**



Sam Reiterated the points he had made at the morning workshop. Further information on the People's Assembly can be found on:

<http://www.thepeoplesassembly.org.uk>

**Kate Hudson (CND)**



Scrapping Trident will challenge the Establishment and change politics in the future. With a Parliamentary vote next year, mass movement mobilisation is needed. **“We are the majority”**

*(Report prepared by Peter Gloyns, who attended the meeting with Linda Griffiths. They are both from Salisbury CND)*