

Report for Southern Region of CND by Peter Gloyns, Salisbury CND

Kate Hudson gave an overview of the current position. She noted that publication of the SIPRI Yearbook indicated the first increase in nuclear warheads in decades.

(<https://cnduk.org/sipri-global-nuclear-stockpiles-grew-in-2022/>) The counter-offensive in the war in Ukraine is slow and for the first time, the high cost in terms of lives lost has been acknowledged. Russian tactical nuclear weapons are going to Belarus, whilst the B61-12 nuclear weapon is going into Europe. These deployments are ill defined at the moment. The IAEA has been active, judging the current situation at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant to serious but stable. The water supply is said to be good for the short term. They say there is no evidence of Russian deployment either within or around the plant. They urge all sides to avoid conflict in this area. (<https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/pressreleases/update-168-iaea-director-general-statement-on-situation-in-ukraine-0>)

Iran is allowing more monitoring of nuclear materials. Whilst the formal negotiations have failed, President Biden is looking towards a possible informal agreement with Iran. There is increasing diplomatic activity around nuclear weapon issues. The NPT pre-com meeting is coming up, and Tom Unterrainer will be attending for CND. Recent US visits to China are seen as positive developments. Despite the deployment of Russian nuclear weapons to Belarus, the US has said they see no indication that the Kremlin has plans for nuclear use in Ukraine. African leaders have put forward peace proposals for Ukraine.

The meaning of the Wagner rebellion is hard to tease out. These forces are still in Belarus. It must mean that there is instability in Russia and this leads to concerns about the control of its nuclear arsenal. There is a NATO summit in the week after next. Plans for further NATO expansion need careful monitoring. A counter summit event is planned in Brussels and this will be led by the Women's Peace Initiative. It will be attended for CND by Sophie Bolt. Events will be on line. (<http://womenagainstnato.org/event-in-brussels/>)

HMS Victorious has gone to Devonport for a major refit, which is likely to be a long and expensive process. (<https://cnduk.org/hms-victorious-to-begin-major-refit-months-after-fire-onboard/>)

There is a briefing on the new Public Order Act on the CND website. (<https://cnduk.org/resources/a-guide-to-the-public-order-act/>)

After a discussion amongst Council members, Kate Hudson summed up, pointing out that the UK Government was pushing hard for Ukraine NATO membership. Other countries are more cautious. Consensus is needed within NATO. Ben Wallace has been ruled out as the next Secretary General of NATO. The misleadingly named

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James Cleverly, the Foreign Secretary, has said it is fine for Sweden not to have nuclear weapons on their soil.

The results of the recent G7 were shameful! (<https://cnduk.org/g7-hypocrisy-in-hiroshima/>)

Campaigns Plenary

1. Lakenheath campaigning – Next Steps

Submitted by Kate Hudson.

The national demonstration at RAF/USAF Lakenheath on 20 May was a successful event within the parameters in which we are operating, notably complete refusal by the base to engage with us. CND nations, regions and local groups were present on a widespread basis and we were very pleased to welcome activists from The Netherlands and Germany. In line with popular requests, the protest included varied activities including a military plane spotting workshop, an art workshop and two forms of theatre, as well as some great speeches, singing and drumming. This time we were fortunate to have food provided by Veggie's in Nottingham.

Planning forward, I have consulted with the officers and the regular all-staff meeting for feedback on the idea of having a Day of Action in the autumn to take the issue more widely into our communities, to get away from the idea that this is a Suffolk problem, when in fact it is a country-wide problem. GMDCND has already pioneered a Lakenheath working group in their area, based on the idea of Carry Lakenheath Home (drawing on Carry Greenham Home continuity). It can also include an international webinar to draw together with the campaigns across Europe.

The feedback has been very favourable on this proposal. This doesn't exclude the possibility that there will be an emergency action at Lakenheath when the nuclear weapons arrive, and we are likely to return to Lakenheath en masse next year in any case. But this will be a great opportunity to get the issue out there more widely, tying it in with local campaigning priorities as well as the bigger picture of putting us all on the front line in a nuclear war.

It would be very good to have feedback from council members, regions and groups about the kind of materials we can produce, support that we can give to local campaigning, and any other ideas.

Council resolves to: *further develop our campaigning against US nuclear weapons coming to Lakenheath by organising a Day of Action in the autumn to take the issue out into our communities.* ADOPTED

2. Report on CND's work with Muslim organisations

Submitted by Kate Hudson.

Following a motion on work with the Muslim community at CND's last national conference, this short report has been drawn up in discussion with Murad Qureshi, CND Council member and former London Assembly Member.

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One element of the motion was to request a report on CND's current relations with Muslim organisations. Murad clarified that within this description there are many factors to be taken into consideration. If we are talking about specifically faith contacts, then we can refer to Finsbury Park Mosque and East London Mosque. In the case of Finsbury Park Mosque our relationship has been primarily related to anti-war campaigning, anti-Islamophobic support (strongly led by Bruce Kent) and regular participation in the Eid al-Fitr celebrations. East London Mosque was involved in our No Faith in Trident Tour a few years ago, alongside a wide range of faith communities.

Regarding wider community based organisations we have had good relations with the Muslim Council of Britain, particularly on wider anti-war issues, and the Muslim Association of Britain as a specific campaigning partner in our anti-war work. MAB has also been a partner in Rethink Trident and the Stop Trident Alliance, as well as supporting our TPNW work. We also work with a number of primarily Muslim political organisations on Palestine, such as Friends of Al-Aqsa (also in anti-war work) and Palestinian Forum Britain. We are also periodically invited to contribute to specifically faith-based Muslim TV programmes and we pass those requests to Russell Whiting.

Murad has drawn attention to the importance of a nuanced understanding of this issue. He points out that Islam has different communities, Sunni and Shia to name the two largest, and different organisations are linked to these different communities. When it comes to primarily Muslim countries, there are also different perspectives on nuclear weapons. Pakistan is pro-nuclear weapons, Iran has condemned nuclear weapons. Many Muslim majority countries have ratified the TPNW but that is not necessarily for faith-based reasons. So more knowledge is required here.

Our approach to the Muslim community in the last two decades has been to work primarily in partnerships based on respect and solidarity, building trust and support on matters of common interest. We would recommend continuation of this policy, whilst being aware of any opportunities for developing individual membership. We also strongly support the inclusion of Muslim faith leaders and Mosques in the inter-faith work of Christian CND.

3. Build the Trade union call for Peace!

Submitted by Tony Staunton on behalf of the Trade Union Advisory Group.

Context

As Chair of a small branch of the University & College Union (UCU) I was overjoyed to see the vote in favour of Peace in Ukraine taken at our annual Conference – UCU Congress, in May 2023. Having collaborated with comrades towards ensuring such a motion – opposing the Russian invasion but also any escalation of the war by NATO – we knew the vote would be close. To win a majority, against the recommendation of the union's leadership, represented understandably deep concerns by union representatives at the way the war has been heading.

To see our General Secretary (the subject of censure at the same Congress for her weak leadership of our current national dispute) immediately condemn the vote and organise to overturn the decision of the union's highest authority, was outrageous. UCU members have stood steadfast against the destructive privatisation of further & higher education and the bullying managerialism that has eaten away pay and workers rights across the sectors. Five years of industrial action against the descent of education into businesses for profit rather than knowledge has surely radicalised the membership.

The context is vitally important. Successive votes of the Trade Union Congress (TUC), the democratic organisation of most trade unions across the UK, have voted for the arming of Ukraine

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by NATO, and for additional arms spending, both conventional and nuclear, by the UK. Apart from a statement criticising NATO made by the fire brigades union, the FBU, union conferences have generally rejected explicitly anti-war motions.

At this point, a major trade union like the UCU standing firm for Peace, ceasefire and negotiated settlement in Ukraine, can only be seen as a vital breakthrough for “our side”.

There is much to do towards regaining a majority of trade unions towards CND policies, and no time to lose. The UCU motion should be copied and pasted into debate at every trade union Branch, regional and national decision-making meeting, and it is CND members who will have to be to the fore of such initiatives. At the very least, locating local union meetings and leafleting those attending will be a must. Producing model motions for union activists a significant promotion. The UCU decision should make the debates easier to win.

Given the extraordinary scale of Establishment and media propaganda in favour of escalation, the arguments may well be fierce. Every news item, from the Coronation to Eurovision Song Contest has whipped-up support for the war and provision of weapons, including the fighter planes that will expand war in Europe and the very real chance of use of nuclear weapons.

The recent bombing of the Nova Kakhovka damn supplying the coolant for the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant should ram-home the nuclear risk to us all, and place CND policies at the heart of the Peace and Environmental movements.

Support for CND and the Stop the War Coalition was central to the decision of the UCU Congress, and opens-up the potential for trade union affiliation to CND and a fresh mobilisation for Peace. Please take every opportunity, and create many new opportunities, to build mass opposition to the warmongers and arms profiteers fast-tracing us towards nuclear Armageddon.

Tony Staunton

Motion

CND National Council notes:

1. The escalation of the war in Ukraine with the launch of a fresh offensive by Ukraine;
2. The blowing-up of the Nova Kakhovka dam, in Ukraine’s Kherson region, causing catastrophic flooding and destruction, and placing the stability of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant at risk from loss of coolant;
3. The growing calls for ceasefire and a negotiated peaceful resolution to the Ukraine War, including by the University & College Union (UCU).

CND National Council believes:

1. The escalation of the war in Ukraine has brought the potential of nuclear disaster through the weaponisation of nuclear power plants and the threat of use of nuclear weapons to level not seen since the second world war;
2. The UK trade unions, currently with more than 6 million paying members, have a strong history of standing against war and for peace, and has the potential to win a significant proportion of the population away from support for NATO expansionism and for an urgent and peaceful resolution to the war in Ukraine;

CND National Council resolves:

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1. *To send a message of support and congratulations to the UCU for standing for peace and opposing escalation of the war in Ukraine;*
2. *To step-up measures at local, regional and national level for open debates within and throughout the UK trade union and labour movement in pursuit of policies similar to that of the UCU – for Russian withdrawal, no NATO escalation, immediate ceasefire and a negotiated settlement to the war in Ukraine.* ADOPTED

4. Engaging locally with the TPNW

Submitted by Tom Cuthbert.

Focussing on the process of councils engaging with the UN Prohibition Treaty Leicester CND described in their June 2023 newsletter a 2-year process which began in February 2020. This is vital to my group in St Albans CND who decided to approach our district councillors after the local elections of May 2023 with emails and letters from our members. My inquiry of CND National Council members is- What advice can you give us in St Albans CND, where we sense some resistance to our efforts, in a council dominated by the Liberal Democrats? What are the experiences of the activists in Manchester, Oxford, Leeds, and Norwich for example in their achievement of a nuclear ban?

City communities even in the UK are significantly different but as we start the process of engaging councillors in *'our patch'* what can we learn from the 29 other communities in the UK to help us?

Was there a significant 'Ukraine factor' in the nuclear ban deliberations of councillors?

Do we need to develop a team of activists within our group to focus on the *relevance* of the Prohibition Treaty to local authorities?

Were the cities involved in achieving their nuclear ban, working with the *'national'* political parties or was the relationship a hindrance?

Was there any involvement of local MP's in the nuclear ban communities?

What part did local press and media play if any in informing communities?

The topic of *'resilience'* keeps coming up in relation to emergency planning. Our District Council has numerous committees and councillors seem to specialise for example in areas like health, transport, finance and pensions. Did activists have to learn about the process of how councils discuss matters?

How do we best raise an issue in council ?

Do we need an *'inside man'* or *woman*?

If we can get answers to just some of these questions it will help us here in St Albans and in the environs of Hertfordshire as we develop links with other organisations like StWC, the UNA, the Greens all who have an input to the political culture of our region.

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Financial Report

Linda Hugel presented the financial report. Expenditure still exceeds income and this situation **has** to be addressed effectively for the long term stability of the organisation. The Report was ADOPTED

Council noted that **Nigel Day**, Oxford CND, was recovering in hospital and collectively sent him their very best wishes. He was also thanked for donating his catering equipment to CND for use at Glastonbury and elsewhere. It was agreed that Council would send him a card in Hospital.

CND's involvement at Glastonbury was described and more merchandise was sold this year than ever before. (Over £8000 worth). The CND symbol on the Pyramid Stage was very eye catching and the team talked with many people over the period of the festival.