

# PEACELINE



Mar-Apr  
2020

Newsletter of London Region CND • Mordechai Vanunu House, 162 Holloway Road  
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## 74 years of defying World opinion

March 5 sees the fiftieth anniversary of the coming into force of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (the NPT).

April 27 sees the start in New York of the 5-yearly NPT Review Conference.

Later this year the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (the nuclear ban treaty) is likely to come into force.

The British government 'likes' the first two but hates the third one. That's all of a piece with 74 years of defying World opinion.

In August 1945 the United States dropped atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, killing up to 230,000 people.

Five months later the first United Nations General Assembly met in London. It reflected the overwhelming majority opinion when it unanimously passed its Resolution number 1.

This called for bringing about "*with the utmost despatch ...the elimination of atomic weapons*", ensuring that nuclear technology was used "*only for peaceful purposes*".

The British government voted for the resolution but didn't agree with it. Nine months later it secretly decided to produce a British nuclear bomb with "*a bloody Union Jack on it*" so that "*our prestige in the world*" was maintained, so that Britain wasn't "*left behind*" and to "*secure American co-operation*". It had set the standard for other powers to follow.

The US had a nuclear weapons monopoly and struggled hard to keep it,

### London CND AGM and Conference

**Saturday 7 March**

**School of Oriental and  
African Studies (SOAS)**

**Thornhaugh St wc1H 0Xg**

**5 minutes from Russell  
Square tube**

**10-11.30am • AGM** (Open to CND members) in Room B104, Brunei Gallery; Registration at [info@londoncnd.org](mailto:info@londoncnd.org)

**11.30am: Conference on Ethical Foreign Policy** in the Khalili Lecture Theatre; Open to all

**Topics include** What role for Britain in the world? • No place for nuclear • Conflicts in Iran, Iraq • View from Westminster • Campaigning URL to IRL • Culture and protest

**With** Catherine West MP • Rokhsana Fiaz, Mayor of Newham • Emily Rubino, Peace Action New York State • Sami Ramadani, Iraqi Democrats • Abbas Edalat, CASMII • Amber Goneni, UAL SU • Carol Turner, CND • Hannah Kemp-Welch, London CND • Nobu Ono, SOAS CND

**London CND  
New Members Meeting  
Sat 21st March 3.00-4.30pm  
SOAS Main Building Room G3**

An introduction to London CND and how you can get involved

cutting off collaboration with Britain, its wartime partner.

In 1949 the Soviet Union carried out a nuclear test, then Britain in 1952, France in 1960 and China in 1964.

'Proliferation' of nuclear weapons, not their existence, was billed as the 'problem'. The 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) recognized the 5 countries which had tested nuclear weapons – and who were also the Permanent Members of the United Nations Security Council - as 'Nuclear Weapons States'. These were to negotiate the abolition of their stockpiles, although there was no control of this.

All others had to sign the NPT as Non-Nuclear Weapons States which were to guarantee not to get nuclear weapons and had to open themselves to inspection to prove it.

The NPT was initially to last 25 years and to be reviewed every 5 years.

The number of nuclear weapons rose to a high of 62,000 in 1985.

The Cold War was declared 'over' in 1991. The 1995 Review Conference agreed to indefinitely extend the NPT based on a package of decisions.

A key one was the Resolution on the Middle East calling for all states in the region to join the NPT, and for action to be taken on the "*establishment of an effectively verifiable Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction (WMD)*." Britain, the U.S. and Russia were to guarantee this.

Israel was the only state in the region outside the NPT; it was widely understood to have nuclear weapons.

No progress was made on the question of a Middle East WMD-free zone. Meanwhile the US continuously threatened Iran with armed attack for supposedly having a secret nuclear weapons programme. Iran had signed the NPT in 1970 and been subject to continuous inspections ever since, all of which it had passed.

The question of a Middle East WMD-free zone was raised again, more pointedly, 15 years later. The 2010 NPT Review conference decided that a meeting with that aim must be held by the end of 2012. Britain was to be jointly responsible for organizing it. The US 'cancelled' it. So much for nuclear powers' 'guarantees'!

After 67 years of bowing to nuclear powers the World rebelled. A series of conferences on the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons led to the UN General Assembly in 2016 voting for "*convening in 2017 a ... conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination*".

The western nuclear powers issued a joint statement opposing a ban saying "*we are dismayed at the fact that the disarmament debate has turned in this direction*".



As the 2017 conference opened the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations led a boycott of it. She spoke outside flanked by her British and French counterparts.

She said nuclear disarmament must come through the NPT. She was against "*allowing the bad actors to have nuclear weapons and those of us that are good, trying to keep peace and safety, not to have them*".

The three western governments issued a statement declaring that they "*do not intend to sign, ratify or ever become party*" to the ban treaty.

On 7 July 2017 nearly two-thirds of the world's states adopted the 'ban' treaty "prohibiting and eliminating" nuclear weapons. It is to come into effect once 50 states had ratified it.

The prospects for the NPT Review Conference which opens on April 27 in New York look bleak. The 2015 Review conference was a failure. Again there had been no progress on the issue of a Middle East WMD-free zone which had been a condition for making the NPT permanent 20 years before.

Meanwhile 35 states have ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. It is to come into force ninety days after 50 states have ratified it. Campaigners are hopeful that the necessary 15 states will do so in 2020. The powers of the world will fight it tooth and nail but the world will have taken a real step forward.

**Jim Brann**

## What the World has demanded

**1946:** The United Nations General Assembly unanimously calls for finding "*with the utmost despatch*" ways of achieving "*the elimination of atomic weapons*" and ensuring that nuclear power is used "*only for peaceful purposes*".

**1961:** The UN General Assembly issues a "*Declaration on the prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons*". This says that using nuclear weapons would "*cause indiscriminate suffering and destruction to mankind and civilization and, as such, is contrary to the rules of international law and to the laws of humanity*".

**1968:** The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) requires Britain and the other Nuclear Weapons States to negotiate the abolition of their nuclear weapons.

**1978:** The Special Session of the UN General Assembly



Devoted to Disarmament calls for "*complete elimination of nuclear weapons at the earliest possible time*" and says that nuclear disarmament should be the priority.

ent should be the priority.

**1996:** The International Court of Justice restates the "*obligation*" of Britain and the other Nuclear Weapons States contained in the NPT "*to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control*".

**2000:** Britain and the other Nuclear Weapons States are required to give an "*unequivocal undertaking to encompass the total elimination of nuclear arsenals*".

**2010:** Britain and the other Nuclear Weapons States have to repeat their "*unequivocal undertaking*" of 2000.

**2013:** The UN General Assembly institutes 26 September each year as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

**2013-15:** Three Conferences on 'the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons' are held. The result is the creation of the 'Humanitarian Pledge' which expresses deep concern about the catastrophic consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and therefore recognizes the need to "*stigmatize, prohibit, and eliminate*" them. The large majority of states vote to adopt it.

**2017:** 122 states vote to finalise the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons with the Humanitarian Pledge in its preamble. Signatories are banned from developing, testing, producing, manufacturing or otherwise acquiring, possessing or stockpiling nuclear weapons.

## What Britain has done

**1946:** A cabinet sub-committee secretly decides to produce a British atomic bomb with *"a bloody Union Jack on it"* so that *"our prestige in the world"* is maintained, so that Britain isn't *"left behind"* and to *"secure American co-operation"*. At the same time the government begins the British nuclear bomber aircraft programme.

**1952:** Britain carries out its first atomic bomb test. The United States tests the first of the vastly more powerful hydrogen bombs.



**1954:** Britain begins its own hydrogen bomb programme. The Prime Minister says it's

*"the price we pay to sit at the top table"*. The military chiefs say it would strengthen *"our position and influence as a world power and put within our grasp the ability to be on terms with the United States and Russia"*. France follows Britain's example and begins its nuclear bomb programme. Its Prime Minister says France has to join the *"gangsters"*.

**1958:** The U.S. restarts nuclear weapons collaboration with Britain under the 'Mutual Defence Agreement'. Britain will have access to U.S. nuclear technology and can now copy US nuclear bomb designs.

**1962:** Britain will replace its nuclear bomber fleet with U.S. Polaris missiles carried on nuclear submarines.

**1969:** British 'Polaris' submarines enter service – the second generation of British nuclear weapons.

**1980:** Britain agrees to rent Trident missiles from the U.S. stockpile to replace the Polaris ones and will build new submarines for them.

**1994:** British 'Trident' submarines enter service – the third generation of British nuclear weapons.

**2006:** The decision is made to build a new generation of British nuclear-missile submarines.

Prime Minister Tony Blair says it would be *"unwise and dangerous"* for Britain to give up nuclear weapons, regardless of its treaty commitments. He writes that he thought giving up nuclear weapons would be *"too big a downgrading of our status as a nation"*.

At the same time a modernisation programme begins at British nuclear weapons facilities.

**2012:** The Defence Secretary tells Parliament that building a new fleet of nuclear missile submarines will guarantee British nuclear weapons *"into the 2060s"* - 100 years after Britain agreed to negotiate their abolition.

**2016:** Construction begins of the next generation nuclear-missile submarines, to be operational by the 2030s. Britain has never taken part in any *'negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament'*.

## Trump's new nuclear weapons policy goes live

In February 2018 the Trump administration published its nuclear weapons policy. This loosened the limits on the US use of nuclear weapons and blurred the line between using conventional and nuclear weapons. It expanded the existing ambitious modernisation plan by ordering a new sea-launched cruise missile and a 'low-yield' warhead for Trident submarine-launched nuclear missiles.

Existing Trident warheads have the power of 100,000 tons of conventional explosive. The policy argued that producing a 'low-yield' warhead would counter the idea that the US wouldn't use its massive arsenal in reply to a limited nuclear attack.



Existing Trident W76 warheads have two stages, the first of which triggers the second. The 'low-yield' warhead has most likely been created by replacing the second stage with a dummy – a relatively simple task.

The new warhead - the W76-2 - is estimated to have an explosive power of 5-6,000 tons - about a third of that of the Hiroshima bomb.

In January 2019 the US government announced that the first W76-2 had been produced and that the first batch of them was scheduled for delivery to the navy by the end of September. The first US submarine armed with a W76-2 then went on patrol in December 2019.

The Russian Deputy Foreign Minister said the U.S. was *"lowering the nuclear threshold"* and creating the possibility of *"waging a limited nuclear war and winning it"*.

One expert said the real motivation behind the new warhead was for the U.S. to have a 'prompt and assured capability' to threaten any adversary. 'Prompt' would mean that a nuclear strike could be launched in 15-30 minutes from a submarine secretly lurking offshore and 'assured' would mean that, unlike a bomber or cruise missile, the Trident missile wouldn't have to face enemy air defences.

He also thought that confronting Russia wasn't the chief motivation; that was to have a more usable nuclear weapon against countries like Iran and North Korea.

That could explain why there was a crash programme to develop the W76-2 which resulted in it going live just when the 'Iran crisis' was at its height. Trump capped that crisis with the chilling declaration that *"we will not allow Iran to obtain a nuclear weapon."*

What's clear is that the US has a new usable nuclear weapon which can be stealthily and covertly deployed at the command of a man who once asked loudly and very publicly *"why can't we use our nuclear weapons?"*

# Coming Events

## London CND Events

[info@londoncnd.org](mailto:info@londoncnd.org) 020 7607 2302

**Sat Mar 7 • London CND AGM and Conference at SOAS University of London, Thornhaugh Street WC1H 0XG; Russell Square tube; See page 1**

**10-11.30am • AGM in Room B104, Brunei Gallery; CND members welcome; Register: [info@londoncnd.org](mailto:info@londoncnd.org);**  
**11.30am • Conference in Khalili Lecture Theatre: 'An Ethical Foreign Policy Agenda for Britain'; open to all**

**Sat 21 March • 3.00-4.30pm • London CND new members meeting at SOAS Main Building Room G3**

## Local Group Events

### Bromley Borough

**Sun April 26 • 12-3.00pm •** Chernobyl Day stall Bromley Market Square  
**• 1st Saturday every month • 2.30 - 4.00pm •** Leafleting; 020-8460 1295  
[anncgarratt@yahoo.com](mailto:anncgarratt@yahoo.com)

### Kingston

**Every 2nd Wed of the month • 7.45pm •** Group meeting at Quaker Centre Kingston • **Every 1st and 3rd Saturday • 11am •** Stall for 2-3 hours outside All Saints' Church Kingston market place; New helpers welcome.

### Wimbledon

**Every Friday • 6-7pm •** Vigil for Peace at St. Mark's Place, Wimbledon. Has been held for 16 years.  
Info: Maisie, 020 8001 5167;  
[info@wdc-cnd.org.uk](mailto:info@wdc-cnd.org.uk)

## Other Events

**Sat Feb 29 • 11am •** Peace Pledge Union AGM. Free for PPU members; hear more about our work over the past year and to help us shape what comes next. At Friends House 173 Euston Rd NW1 2BJ. 020-7424 9444

**Wed Mar 4 • 7pm •** International Women's Day event with Kate Hennessy, granddaughter of Dorothy Day, supported by Pax Christi. At Bloomsbury Baptist Church 235 Shaftesbury

Av WC2H 8EP. 020-8203 4884

**Tue Mar 10 • 7pm •** "Can a Pacifist ever be a nationalist?" London Pacifism and Nonviolence Discussion Group meeting. At Housmans Bookshop, 5 Caledonian Road, Kings Cross N1. 020-7278 4474  
[SecondTuesday@groupmail.com](mailto:SecondTuesday@groupmail.com)

**Wed Mar 11 • 5.30-7.30pm •** Fukushima Anniversary vigil outside the Japanese Embassy, Piccadilly, Org. Kick Nuclear (KN) & Japanese Against Nuclear UK (JAN). Info: [www.kicknuclear.com](http://www.kicknuclear.com)

**Sat Mar 14 • Noon •** assemble outside Japanese Embassy, 101-104 Piccadilly, Mayfair, London W1 for Fukushima anniversary march to Downing Street. Org. KN & JAN. Info: [www.kicknuclear.com](http://www.kicknuclear.com)

**Thu Mar 19 • 7pm-9pm •** House of Commons Fukushima Anniversary Public Meeting in Committee Room 16, House of Commons (St. Stephen's Entrance), Westminster SW1 (allow 20 mins to get through security). Info: [www.kicknuclear.com](http://www.kicknuclear.com)

**Sat Mar 21 • Noon •** "March Against Racism" Meet Portland Place W1 for march to Downing Street for 2pm rally. Organised by Stand Up to Racism as part of day of anti-racism demos around world. Info: [www.standuptoracism.org.uk](http://www.standuptoracism.org.uk)

**Sat Mar 21 • 11am-1pm •** Nuclear Train Action Group stall and leafletting outside Brixton tube (Trains carrying highly-radioactive cargoes cross a bridge near the entrance to the station.) Info: 020-7700 2393.

**Sat Mar 28 • All day •** "Our Power Is Real." Nov 2019 saw the 60th anniversary since the building at 5 Caledonian Road, Kings Cross was transformed into Peace House - a base for many campaigning organisations and home to Housmans Bookshop. To celebrate this anniversary, bringing together a range of campaigning groups. At University of East London.

Org. Housmans Bookshop. Info: <https://ourpowerisreal.com/>

**Sat Mar 28 • All day •** "Movement of Movements Conference." Org. by Extinction Rebellion. At Karibu Education Centre 7 Gresham Rd SW9 7PH

**Sat Mar 28 • Noon-4pm •** "War and Climate." Youth & Student CND Conference. At 62 Marchmont Street WC1N 1AB. [information@cnduk](mailto:information@cnduk); 020 7700 2393.

**Tue Mar 31 • 11am •** Embassies Walk: join Christian CND discussing various countries' plans to ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Meet at Dick Sheppard Chapel, St. Martin-in-the-Fields; 020 7700 4200 [christians@cnduk.org](mailto:christians@cnduk.org)

**Tue April 14 • 7pm •** London Pacifism and Nonviolence Discussion Group meeting. Topic to be decided. At Housmans Bookshop, 5 Caledonian Rd N1. 020-7278 4474  
[SecondTuesday@groupmail.com](mailto:SecondTuesday@groupmail.com);

## Regular events

**Every Wed • 6-7pm •** Women in Black silent vigil against militarism & war; Edith Cavell Statue, St Martin's Pl WC2; [wibinfo@gn.apc.org](mailto:wibinfo@gn.apc.org)

**Every Fri • 10am-12.30pm •** "No More Fukushimas" Vigil outside Japanese Embassy, 101-104 Piccadilly. Green Park Tube **1-1.30pm •** Vigil at Tokyo Electric Power Company offices, 14-18 High Holborn (Chancery Lane tube); Info: David 020 7700 2393; [www.kicknuclear.com](http://www.kicknuclear.com)

**1<sup>st</sup> Sun each month • 10.55am •** Walk in Peace; Slow, silent 1-hour walk for peace; Speakers' Corner café, Hyde Park (Marble Arch tube); Clare 020 8755 0353; [beatrice@b-millar.com](mailto:beatrice@b-millar.com)

**3<sup>rd</sup> Tue each month • 12.30-1.30pm •** Refugee Vigil in front of the Home Office; Organised by London Catholic Worker. Contact: 020 8348 8212