

campaign

Let's make things we need

Sam Mason, Policy Officer for the Public and Commercial Services (PCS) Union, explains why it's possible – and vital – to start producing essential public goods rather than nuclear weapons.



PCS is proudly opposed to nuclear weapons and nuclear energy, which are intrinsically linked. In this new world of the coronavirus pandemic, it begs the question even more of continued support for weapons or energy sources that can cause widescale human and environmental destruction. If we are failing to cope with this pandemic, we will fail even more with a nuclear fall-out or the increasing impacts of climate change.

It is an obsession with both the nuclear defence system and other military projects that has in part led to the chronic

underfunding of our health and social care systems. Likewise, it has detracted from developing the manufacturing capability to produce things society needs, such as personal protective equipment or investing in the transition to renewable energy.

The nuclear budget has been protected whilst years of austerity cuts to NHS funding and other public services has seen these vital services struggle to cope in this crisis, and despite the government being aware of a tier one pandemic threat. As trade unionists, we cannot continue a position that argues to keep one set of jobs

in the defence sector whilst campaigning against public sector cuts which sees many other vital jobs lost in another.

Nuclear weapons have been called the currency of power, but they are useless in defeating what has been termed the ‘hidden enemy’ of this pandemic.

In 2017, TUC Congress passed a motion calling on the Labour Party to establish a shadow Defence Diversification Agency. The point of such an

would likewise provide a transition programme to protect skills, employment, pay and pensions, to enable redeployment into new jobs, including the social care sector.

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agency would be to see defence diversification as part of a wider industrial plan that redirects resources towards things we need.

Working with trade unions it would enable a process to discuss their members’ needs and capabilities and to listen to the ideas of workers for practical alternative plans. It

to become permanent at a national level.

With the economic and social crisis ahead, this is a moment for workers to use their organisation as a currency of power to make what is necessary possible: a new zero-carbon economy built on the premise of peace and security for all.

Wash our hands of Trident to combat Covid-19: Lobby your MP

Write to your MP today to tell them it's time for the government to wash its hands of Trident so that we can address the real security threats we face.

<https://cnd.eaction.org.uk/coronavirus>

Spotlight

Bristol CND



While Bristol CND – like everyone else - has cancelled all events during the coronavirus crisis, the group continues to campaign online, including producing their brilliant newsletter, ‘Peace Matters’.

If you live in the Bristol area, is now the time to get in touch with the group and offer your support?

Bristol CND can be contacted by phone 07419 186507 or email bristolcndchair@gmail.com

NPT postponement could be opportunity

CND Campaigns Officer **Sara Medi Jones** should have been at the United Nations in New York this month for a crucial conference on disarmament.

OUR normal life is currently on hold. Work events and weddings alike are being postponed, with no one quite sure when they will be re-scheduled. And the same is true for a hugely important conference on nuclear weapons that was due to take place at the UN headquarters this month.

Anti-nuclear campaigners and representatives of most of the world's states were due to gather in New York to assess the progress – or otherwise – of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the 1968 treaty that is often credited with limiting the number of countries which own nuclear weapons. However, it hasn't been remotely successful in one of its other aims – getting nuclear-armed states to take steps to disarm.

At a time when it's impossible to ignore the world is becoming a more dangerous place, this Review Conference should have been an opportunity for politicians to come together to make progress

on making the world a safer place. A Preparatory Committee meeting which took place in 2019 did not go well. It was clear that it's incredibly difficult to get the nuclear states to agree on any concrete steps towards them fulfilling the commitment they made as signatories of the NPT.

But there are a lot of aspects on which all the signatories are united, including their conviction that the treaty itself is important. This will hopefully be a solid base from which to start when the conference is re-arranged. The United Nations has set January 4th-29th as possible dates.

Whenever the NPT Review Conference re-convenes, you can be sure that civil society will play a prominent part. CND was due to host a side meeting during this year's conference, with guest speakers including the UK's Disarmament Ambassador Aidan Liddle and former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn MP. So in this new age of

Zoom-dominated activity, we arranged an online webinar instead, which over 6000 people watched.

Jeremy Corbyn spoke about how the postponement is actually an opportunity. It gives us more time to better prepare and learn important lessons from the current crisis so we can take different and better steps towards real peace and security. Another speaker, Member of the Scottish Parliament Bill Kidd made the point that those of us living in nuclear weapon states have a special responsibility to kick-start progress on international disarmament.

CND has also been able to join informal briefings with Ambassadors and participated in another NPT Review Conference online side meeting, hosted by the International Peace Bureau. Covid-19 hasn't stopped our disarmament campaigning, and we must make sure it doesn't stop any chance of progress with this all-too-important treaty.

Due to the coronavirus crisis, all in-person public events have been cancelled for the next few weeks. But you can join CND, and our groups, for virtual events. Keep checking our website for online activity.



NHS not Trident

You can now download NHS not Trident posters for printing at home at cnduk.org/NHSnotTridentPoster CND would like to add our thanks for the tireless work of NHS staff and all other frontline workers at this difficult time.

After the virus: can we build a better world?

Saturday 9th May, 2pm.
Join CND for a webinar with Reiner Braun, Executive Director of the International Peace Bureau.
Watch on CND's Facebook page or email pressoffice@cnduk.org for details on how else to view.

London CND will be holding online weekly training sessions on social media campaigning every Wednesday at 3pm. Email ahead to join – info@londoncnd.org

Meet the staff

This month:
John Asquith,
Fundraising Officer

"I'm responsible for raising the funds that are so vital for CND to be able to campaign effectively. This involves designing fundraising appeals, recruiting new members, sourcing and selling merchandise, running stalls at events, promoting legacy giving, and processing donations.

"The best part of my job is the amount of contact it gives me with our members and supporters, whether face-to-face, over the phone, or by email. None of our work would be possible without you, so thank you!"



Shadow Minister for Peace and Disarmament

In last month's edition of *Campaign* magazine, Labour CND highlighted its work to make sure the new Labour leadership retained the post of Shadow Minister for Peace and Disarmament. Since the magazine was published, we have been delighted to see Labour leader Keir Starmer announce that Fabian Hamilton MP would continue in this role as part of the Shadow Foreign and Commonwealth Office team. Also joining that team is London Region CND Vice-President Catherine West MP as Shadow Minister for Europe and the Americas.

Congratulations to all appointed in the Labour re-shuffle. CND looks forward to working with you to advance peace and disarmament.

Temporary office closure

The CND national office in London is currently closed, following government instructions in response to the coronavirus crisis. All staff are working remotely however so (most!) work should continue as normal. Kate Hudson is staying on temporarily as General Secretary and recruiting for the role has been put on hold while this crisis lasts. Feel free to get in touch with us by emailing enquiries@cnduk.org or phoning 07891 870732 (between 10am-6pm, Monday-Friday).