

WELSH MAYORS FOR PEACE

Mayors for Peace, instituted by the Mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1982, is campaigning to rid the world of nuclear weapons by 2020. Its main focus now is the Non-Proliferation Treaty which will have a major Review in May 2005 at the U.N. in New York. This really is an exercise in democratic accountability, demanding that the five great nuclear-possessing states should honour the undertakings they gave in 1970 to reduce and then eliminate their nuclear weapons in return for the non-nuclear states agreeing not to acquire them.

In the light of world public opinion over military action against Iraq, it is increasingly important that people should hold their governments to account. About 120 countries have Mayors who have signed a special Declaration about this. My little attempt to rally the Mayors of Wales has so far not been too successful. Since the re-organisation of local government, not all of our 22 Counties and County Boroughs have "Mayors". Then the 108 Town Council Mayors seem a little reluctant to get involved in such an international issue. Now we face the change-over of Mayors in the month of June.

Mayors for Peace urges all of us to try to arrange civic support for a Hiroshima/Nagasaki commemoration on August 6th/9th (see p.2), and then to seek signatures from more Mayors, so that a significant representative body of Mayors can be in New York next year. As soon as the local changes have settled down, I propose to write again to all the 130 Mayors/Leaders/Chair-persons, repeating the offer to arrange for a local peace activist to address them briefly to explain the importance of democratic voices in such international affairs.

I already have the signatures of Cardiff's Lord Mayor; Newport is said to be signed up already, along with the Chair of Gwynedd and the Mayors of Llandello, Flint, Bala, Holywell, and the Clerks for Nefyn and Rhyl. If anyone would like to give me some help, let me know.

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TROUBLE AT ALDERMASTON

On Wednesday 23rd June, West Berkshire District Council rubber-stamped the notice of proposed development (NOPD) for a new laser building at AWE Aldermaston. This was in spite of over 300 written submissions arguing against the development, which would be used to test a new generation of nuclear weapons in clear contravention of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to which Britain is a signatory. Councillors declined to use their powers to refer the NOPD back to the Ministry of Defence and recommend to the Secretary of State for the Environment that the new developments at AWE should be the subject of a public inquiry.

Protesters will continue to argue against the proposals, but if the laser goes ahead, work will start on the site later this year or early in 2005. In this case, direct action will be needed to stop the development.

Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp (AWPC), with the support of other groups, is launching the "Block the Builders" pledge and asking people to sign up to a massive nonviolent blockade of Aldermaston on the first Monday after work starts on site. People will also be needed in non-arrestable support roles. AWPC and other groups are calling on the Secretary of State for the Environment to set up a public inquiry into the new developments at Aldermaston. Full details, including sample letters and background information, can be found on the web site: www.aldermaston.net.

"BLOCK THE BUILDERS! CAN WE DO IT? YES WE CAN!"

Meanwhile, AWE continues to service the current Trident system. More people are desperately needed to watch Aldermaston to monitor and track the Trident convoys on their way to and from the weapons store for nuclear submarines at Coulport. Without enough nuke watchers, people along the route and in Scotland will not know that the convoys are coming their way. If you want to get involved in convoy watching, please contact juliet.mcbride@btinternet.com



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