Scottish CND AGM: Chair’s Framing Statement

Scottish CND’s aim is the removal of UK nuclear weapons from Scotland and the world. We are in the unhappy situation of having to resist a new generation of nuclear powered submarines and missiles carrying new nuclear bombs. Nevertheless, Scottish CND should confidently take some credit for the fact that most political and religious leaders in Scotland oppose nuclear weapons and want to collaborate with signatory states to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

As an active partner in the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, Scottish CND will continue to use its participation in the international peace movement and its support for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, to help to project a future vision of Scotland as a member of an international community of states which recognise nuclear weapons as the antithesis of security and are committed to their eradication.

In pursuit of our aims, Scottish CND’s members, groups and elected executive do not favour one particular style of action but adopt a broad repertoire including non-violent direct action, political lobbying, education work, social media campaigning and street campaigning. For example, we support Faslane Peace Camp, Peace Education Scotland our sister charity that focuses on schools, and the cross party group in the Scottish Parliament on nuclear disarmament. We willingly liaise with and many other Scottish and international peace, justice, and environmental organisations, and maintain a position in support of Scottish Independence as the shortest route to nuclear disarmament in the UK.

SCND local group coverage of Scotland is uneven and there are sub-groups that are more absent than in the past - trade unions, a youth group, Labour CND. We do not currently take many steps to measure and monitor what works or to set targets such as numbers of new members; the exec is interested in members’ views about trying to set specific achievable goals.

We do not yet live in a Scotland in which it is impossible to be ignorant of the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons for people and planet - the stories of survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the lives lost and ecological damage inflicted by uranium mining and nuclear testing. The parallels and connections with climate emergency should make the catastrophe of nuclear weapons easier to communicate: surely the ultimate example of taking the wrong direction in terms of stewardship of the earth. However, myths persist: the false necessity of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the deluded colonial macho thinking of ‘deterrence’ and ‘security’ based on nuclear arms race, the selective denial of the connections between civil nuclear power and nuclear weapons, of the harms of radiation or risks of catastrophic accident, the myth that nuclear power is ‘carbon neutral’.

Sustaining and building popular opposition to nuclear weapons requires continuous awareness-raising actions and educational work; the pro-nuclear lobby is powerful, some constantly repeated myths remain tenacious and anti-nuclear memories can die out over a generation.

Like our recent ‘die in’, Scottish CND’s actions often highlight Faslane and Coulport. The site of UK’s nuclear weapons are an inevitable focus - we all want the wider public to specifically understand the consequences if their weapons were used, the radioactive discharges and environmental damage there, the risks of accident, the astronomical costs and alternative socially productive uses of the people, power and money. However, Scottish CND also takes responsibility for highlighting the many sites, facilities and organisations and ways in which Scotland remains implicated in the nuclear postures of the UK, US and NATO warfighting machines which reach well beyond our borders.
It has been normal practice for the executive to present a resolution to the AGM outlining plans for the coming year. This year we thought it might be more useful to have a less structured discussion and to use the time to hear the views of members on how best to develop our campaigning strategy. The following are some suggested topics but are not exclusive:

1) Should we be seeking greater action from public authorities in Scotland on nuclear issues e.g. on warhead convoys, pollution, etc.? 

2) How best can we do educational work to promote public awareness of developments like the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the increasing number of warheads at Faslane/Coulport which are largely ignored by mainstream media?

3) The climate crisis and the accelerating nuclear arms race are the two great threats to the planet. There are important links between these. Could we project these more effectively?

4) What contribution can we make from Scotland to upcoming NPT Review Conference and the first meeting of States parties to the TPNW?

We invite members to reflect on these questions, and others raised by our framing statement, ahead of the AGM, and to participate in an inclusive and thoughtful conversation about how our movement can most effectively meet the challenges and opportunities ahead of us in 2022.

Lynn Jamieson
Chair, Scottish CND