Assemble 12 noon
Saturday 27 February 2016
March to Trafalgar Square Stop Trident rally with contributions from a range of political and celebrity speakers. Location Central London Meeting point to be announced soon.

The national campaign is gearing up for the Stop Trident demonstration on 27 February in London. We understand that the negotiations on the route have been difficult, so check the CND website, and for messages from us, for the finalised details and our local plans to meet up. TH CND has plans to take part in local leafleting on 6 February to publicise the demonstration, to continue to lobby our MPs at this crucial time and for a public panel debate on Trident in association with Queen Mary University of London on the 15th or 16th March.

Take action NOW • Sign ‘Time to Scrap Trident’ petition • www.cnduk.org/
As part of CND’s national Parliamentary lobby, in November we lobbied both our local MPs, Jim Fitzpatrick and Rushanara Ali, on Trident. They have both been consistently opposed to unilateral nuclear disarmament and pro-Trident renewal, and it was interesting to see indications of an emergent divergence of views between them.

A very honest exchange of views was reported in the meeting with Jim, who said that he was currently 55% to 45% for keeping Trident but was constantly reviewing the situation.

Rushanara, on the other hand, was dismissive of CND’s position, actually referring to it as an outdated 20th century argument. So we got short shrift, although, as a consistent supporter of the Party line, she may adapt to any change in Party policy on Trident. She was far more critical and questioning in her response on Syria, which we also discussed as the parliamentary vote on bombing was imminent.

In the event, on Syria, Jim voted with the Government and Rushanara against. In her public statement on why she voted against the air strikes, she presented a rigorous argument in support of her view that “Bringing an end to the conflict and eliminating ISIL/Daesh requires a political settlement, a credible military presence on the ground, backed by a serious plan for humanitarian support and post-conflict reconstruction.” If only she would bring the same critical intelligence to her stance on Trident.

Anti-Trident campaign • national context

The Parliamentary debate and vote on the Government’s National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) will happen around mid-March. There will now not be a straight vote on finalising the current investment plan for Trident renewal (the “Main Gate” decision) but a vote to commit to Trident renewal, and change of policy to keep the project for the design and manufacture of the replacement for Trident under annual review along with a vote on continuing to have Trident-armed submarines on “the principle of Continuous At Sea Deterrence”.

Let’s Lobby our MPs on Trident too

The recent well-attended AGM of London Region CND saw something of a turnaround regarding its focus, and suggests that the next year could well be an interesting one. Former Chair, Jim Brann stood down after a five-year stint, and was replaced by Carol Turner who has already proposed a number of activities for the coming year. As you would expect many of these concern the struggle to prevent the renewal of the Trident missile system, and the implications of the new leadership’s policy direction for the Labour Party. There was a feeling that London Region could work more closely with local groups. Tower Hamlets CND would welcome this.

Two things we really must consider are links with our local Labour Party, and lobbying our two MPs.

You will recall that we hosted a debate with the Tower Hamlets Labour Party in late 2014. With its growing membership over the past few months, many of whom are likely to be sympathetic to our views, perhaps now is the time to consider a rematch? As for the MPs, it is a matter of regret that both Rushanara and Jim are likely to vote for the renewal of Trident when the vote in Parliament happens later this year. We have to consider how best to work on them to change their views. Perhaps the probable change in policy following the Labour Party's Defence Review will help concentrate their minds?

THCND members might be interested in attending the next LRCND public meeting at Conway Hall from 7.00pm on Wednesday March 2nd when Kate Hudson will be developing the way forward in this crucial year for British nuclear disarmament, and will no doubt be helping us to advance further the ideas above.

TH CND public debate on Trident Hosted by Queen Mary University

CND Secretary Stephanie Clark met with QMUL ‘Centre for Public Engagement’ staff at the beginning of January to organise a public debate on Trident hosted by the University. It was agreed that a panel of distinguished speakers will debate a wide range of critical viewpoints on Britain’s nuclear weapons, examine the role of Britain as a nuclear-weapon state and raise questions about foreign and defence policies which would meet Britain’s future needs and shared aspirations for a safer world. This public event will take place close to the Parliamentary vote on Trident. We are determined to counter Government attempts to limit discussion, open debate, media collusion, manipulation and suppression of public scrutiny around “nuclear deterrence” propaganda.

Watch out for further details.
Len Aldis who died very recently, will be remembered by many people through his tireless work as a peace activist. He was a longtime member and Chair of Tower Hamlets CND. However he is best remembered for his liaison work with the ‘Mayors for Peace’ Initiative which encourages local councils to actively condemn nuclear weapons and aggressive acts such as waging war. He was always a central figure in Tavistock Square at the annual gathering held every August 6th where peace activists commemorate the atomic attacks against Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of WWII.

He tirelessly worked to achieve “Mayors for Peace” status for Tower Hamlets which he did in 2010 when he presented the Mayor (Lutfur Rahman) with a flag and gifts from the Japanese awarding body to the people of Tower Hamlets. A ‘Peace’ flag which flies in the Town Hall was reproduced by ArtZone Co-op.

33 years after Mayors for Peace was established, the number of member cities has exceeded 6,900 from 161 countries and regions and continues to grow. Mayors for Peace has now grown into an influential global network that can impact international public opinion calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons. The 9th Executive Conference of Mayors for Peace was held in 2015 at Ypres, Belgium.

The participating mayors and representatives from the executive cities shared their respective activities towards nuclear abolition and regarding other challenges that their regions face.

In 2010, Tower Hamlets’ Mayor, Lutfur Rahman, signed up to the ‘Mayors for Peace’ policy. The role has now been handed on to the current TH Mayor, John Biggs. We all look forward to him actively supporting this initiative and to keep flying the flag of peace.

It was a great shock to us all to learn of the recent passing of Len Aldis, our former Chair and so much more. Len was involved in the wider peace movement for many years. A strong opponent of the Vietnam War and supporter of the Vietnamese people for many years after the end of the War, he was also active in the movement for an independent Palestinian state, and more progressive organisations than there is room to mention here.

As far as Tower Hamlets CND is concerned, he was an inspirational and tireless Chair for more years than he liked to remember, a man who never gave up whatever the obstacles. We all recall with awe his battle with the then Council to get them to affiliate to the Mayors for Peace organisation. He was very pleased to learn shortly before his death that the current Mayor is keen to continue his predecessor’s work with us on this.

He was also a determined campaigner for the Campaign Against the Arms Trade and, more specifically, East London Against Arms Fairs. On one occasion he managed to get himself invited as a delegate to the biennial arms fair at the Excel Centre, took photographs and spoke to exhibitors. He also purchased a share in BAE Systems so that he could attend their AGMs and harangue their Board!

This was a man of strong beliefs and high principles. He will be greatly missed. Len’s funeral took place on Monday 4th January 2016 at City of London Crematorium in Manor Park.

More info - http://len.aldis.muchloved.com

Len Aldis 
(1930 - 2015)
Here are some info updates on DSEI trials on DSEI
trials at Stratford
Court in January

- Criminal damage against a tank (involving whiteboard marker!) charge has been dropped.
- Defendant charged with assaulting a police officer in the exercise of his duty has been acquitted.

Monthly East London Against the Arms Fair (ELAAF) meeting • Second
Wednesday of the month, 7-9pm at The Garden Café, 7 Cundy Rd, E16 5DJ
Campaign against the return of the DSEI arms fair in East London - all opposed to Arms Fairs welcome.

Musical Protests
No More Armes Fairs
Saturday 20th Feb • 2 - 5 pm
Saturday 19th March • 2 - 5 pm
Saturday 23rd April • 2 - 5 pm
Outside ExCeL Centre (Custom House DLR)
www.elAAF.org or email elAAF@hotmail.co.uk or call 07513 792705.

Weekly Vigil
No More Fukushima!
12:00 for start at 12:30
Held every Friday since August 2012.
05/02/2016 • 12/02/2016
26/02/2016 • 04/03/2016
Info David, 020 7607 2302

Labour CND
Conference & AGM
Sat, 30th Jan 2016 - 10am
With MPs Diane Abbott, Catherine West, Louise Haigh, Ruth Cadbury, Clive Lewis, Nick Brown and Kate Osamor and others.
Venue: Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, WC1R 4RL
Info: 020-7607 2302

Gandhi Foundation Annual
Multifaith Celebration
Sat, 30th Jan 2016 - 2pm
Animal welfare was a concern of Gandhi throughout his life. His first public speech was on animal cruelty. Is the case for reducing meat consumption even stronger today than it was in Gandhi’s time?
Graham Davey of the Gandhi Foundation will introduce the day’s speakers.
Kingsley Hall, Powis Road, London E3 3HF
Organised by: Gandhi Fnd william@gandhifoundation.org
Info: 07910215651

Walk in Peace
A little bit of peace, starting with yourself - the first Sunday of every month.
Please join us in a slow, silent walk in peace. Meet with yourself - the first Sunday of every month.
Info: 07946676761

The Moment of Decision for Trident Renewal
Wed, 02/03/2016 - 19:00
London Region CND Public Meeting Speaker: Kate Hudson, followed by LRCND Council meeting.
Venue: Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, WC1R 4RL
Organised by: London Region CND. Info: 020-7607 2302.

International Women’s Day
Tue, 8 March 2016. Many local and London-wide events.

Key events to attend or remember
Let everyone know where the Action is - put the word out
11.00am, returning to starting point at 12 noon.
Organised by: Walk in Peace
Info: Clare 020 8755 0353 or walkinpeace@hotmail.co.uk

Ash Wednesday
Wed, 02/02/2016 - 15:00
Witness to Nuclear War Preparations@Ministry of Defence
Venue: Ministry of Defence, Horse Guards Ave.
London SW1A 2EX
Organised by: Pax Christi with Christian CND and London Catholic Worker
020 8203 4884
info@paxchristi.org.uk

Pancakes for Peace
Fri, 12/02/2016 - 00:00
Aldermaston Women’s Peace Camp is held on the second weekend of every month. All women are welcome to come along at any time - and male visitors are welcome at camp during the day, but not during the evening or at night.
Camp phone: 07946676761
info@aldermaston.net

Stuff Happens
Exhibition by May Ayres
1st September to 6th October 2016
Belfry, St John on Bethnal Green, London
May Ayres’ skillfully crafted sculptural installation works of fired ceramics expose the horror of war and the war mongers plying their destructive trade across the world. A previous exhibition of her dramatic work “God’s Wars” was shown in St John’s during 2011. Images of her work can be seen on: www.mayayres.com/index.html