

Agent orange court date

A French court is set to hear a landmark case against more than a dozen companies which supplied the US with the chemical Agent Orange during the Vietnam War. The highly toxic defoliant was sprayed by US forces to destroy jungles and find hiding places from 1962 to 1971.

The case has been brought by Tran To Nga, a 78-year-old French-Vietnamese woman who covered the conflict as a journalist and who accuses the chemical firms of causing harm to her and her children.

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• **MAW Executive member Alison Lochhead writes:** I urge readers to listen to *The Food Programme* on BBC Radio 4 about the World Food Programme (Nobel Peace Prize winners 2020). It can be accessed via <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m000qwtq> and is 28 minutes long. It analyses the connection between war and food insecurity. The more we can understand the links between war, climate change, food insecurity and poverty, the better.



MAW celebrations as Nuclear Prohibition Treaty is ratified

MAW members will be among the millions of people delighted to know that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, opened for signature at UN in New York on 20 September 2017, entered into force on 22 January when it was ratified by its 50th State Party. None of the nine nuclear weapon states have signed or ratified the treaty, including the UK.

Tim Devereux, MAW chair, said: "The Treaty is the first multilateral, legally-binding, instrument for nuclear disarmament to have been negotiated in 20 years. It prohibits State Parties from developing, testing, producing, manufacturing, acquiring, possessing, stockpiling, transferring or receiving control over nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. It also prohibits them from using, or threatening to use, such weapons."

Without the involvement of the nine nuclear weapon states, there is a concern the treaty risks becoming symbolic and of little practical use in the pursuit of disarmament.

However, advocates such as the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons argue that it will put pressure on the nuclear countries, and their allies, and contribute to an international 'norm' against nuclear weapons.

[See pages 2 and 3 for MAW's action plan to mark the Treaty plus photos from events on January 22.](#)

Check out our new-look website

The MAW website - www.abolishwar.org.uk - has been undergoing an update for the past few months and has now been relaunched!

We're very grateful to Clare Bryden, web designer, who has looked after the technical and design sides, while others gathered fresh content.

Visitors will now find it easier to find what they are looking for - perhaps to see how MAW campaigns are progressing, or searching through the archive.

Visit soon - and blog posts are always welcome.

Tim Devereux

MAW members may be interested in this video of an American Iraq War veteran survivor of PTSD which lasts just under five minutes.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ptqtd7i4ok>

To receive an electronic version of the newsletter email Gill Hurlle at gill.hurle@abolishwar.org.uk

Abolish War will next be published on June 1.

If you are a Facebook user, please like our page and share our posts [facebook.com/abolishwar](https://www.facebook.com/abolishwar)



Public displays which celebrated the Treaty - all Covid safe - popped up all around the UK, thanks to MAW members and others.



As part of the joint statement on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, several prominent Mayors recorded video messages.

Hiroshima

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RMpAHJXmpJU>

Nagasaki

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8kHxCWUT3vc>

Barcelona

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kqRNkKK9MqA>

Granollers

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n3VxuloGftw>

Manchester

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XEeNEOMUMDU&feature=youtu>

How MAW supported nuclear ban Treaty celebrations across the UK

MAW sent members a five-point Covid-safe action plan for celebrating the ban's entry into force, asking them to put up posters/banners/notices in house windows, shop windows and other places easily seen by passers-by. They were also encouraged to write to MPs and local places of worship, contact local papers and radio stations and swell a Twitter storm. The feedback from members so far tells of banners, posters and notices in homes and shop windows in Abingdon, Durham, Exeter, Hastings, Leeds, Teddington and Twickenham and at the Peace Pagoda in Battersea Park as part of a Buddhist celebration. MPs were lobbied and letters and adverts published in local papers. Dozens of places of worship were contacted with the request to bring the good news to the attention of congregations and, if possible, to ring bells in celebration. We know of two churches in Kingston-upon-



Thames and one in Hastings which rang bells at noon, with a Hastings member sounding a gong on his front doorstep.

The Richmond-upon-Thames parish newsletter gave the treaty a mention and Twickenham parish church included it in Sunday prayer. MAW committee members sent questions to Radio 4's *Any Questions* - they were very topical as the programme was broadcast on the day the treaty entered into force, sadly, to no avail.

• MAW committee members Hilary Evans (above) and David Collins (with placard) at the Peace Pagoda in Battersea (left)



BOOKS:

***Human Shields: A history of people in the line of fire* - by Neve Gordon and Nicola Perugini. 312 pp. Aug. 2020, Univ. of California Press.**

The authors discuss the various forms of human shielding, including as a pacifist tactic.

***The United States of War: A Global History of America's Endless Conflicts, from Columbus to the Islamic State* - by David Vine. 464pp. Oct. 2020, Univ. of California Press.**

Wide-ranging survey of the American way of war, expensive and incessant, in support of an empire they're not supposed to have.

Excerpts at: <https://www.davidvine.net/unitedstatesofwar.html>

***What is at stake now* - by Mikhail Gorbachev. 140pp. Sept 2020, Polity Books.**

Gorbachev focuses on the big challenges such as the renewal of the arms race, the global environmental crisis, the rise of populism and the decline of democracy.

He urges political leaders to recognise that re-establishing trust between Russia and the West requires the courage of true leadership and a commitment to dialogue and understanding on both sides.

Colin Archer

● The 20th Annual Remembrance Lecture - *Peacebuilding in the Post-Covid World* - was delivered online by Fabian Hamilton MP, pictured, the Shadow Minister for Peace and Disarmament. Mr Hamilton said that he felt peacebuilding "should not be allowed to fall by the wayside as the world battles Coronavirus".

And he added: "I am convinced that the Labour Party must make peace a priority for its foreign policy and make the case for conflict resolution and diplomacy over escalatory rhetoric and brinkmanship".



Our thanks to Fabian and watch this space for details of the 2021 lecture.

See the lecture on Youtube:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=gUkBJSfqF8I

See the lecture text at: <https://abolishwar.net/wp-content/uploads/Fabian-Hamilton-Peacebuilding-in-the-Post-Covid-World.pdf>

New focus on Lucas Plan for useful manufacturing

The surviving members of the Lucas Aerospace Combine Shop Stewards' Committee have produced a website dedicated to the Lucas Plan. The Lucas Aerospace Combined Shop Stewards' Committee's Alternative Corporate Plan (known widely as the Lucas Plan) was launched in 1976; it rapidly became an international *cause celebre*.

The Plan was unique in that trade unionists, for the first time, proposed a radical alternative to job losses in the arms industry by expanding the workforce to manufacture alternative products which were socially useful, whilst using human-centred design and production methods to maximise skills and abilities. The Plan, which proposed a

wide range of products designed primarily by the workforce – including wind turbines, hybrid cars, energy efficient housing, as well as much needed medical equipment - attracted widespread national and international recognition as a positive alternative to unemployment and recession; it also identified how technology could be used to answer society's unmet needs.

Nominated in 1982 for the Nobel Peace Prize, interest in the now 45-year-old Plan endures as the social and environmental problems it tackled are still with us, only so much more urgent.

thelucasaerocombineshops-towardscommittee.org/

The Movement for the Abolition of War – join us, or renew your membership

We aim to create a world where war is no longer seen as a way to solve a problem; where it has ceased to be an option; where conflict resolution means resolution. Working through education and dialogue, nationally and locally, we have the tools, skills and laws that we need, but we also need you - ordinary people can help us realise our goal, the abolition of war.

To join MAW or renew your membership, complete this form or download the membership and standing order forms from our website at <http://www.abolishwar.org.uk/support-us/join-us/>
Send the completed form (and cheque if applicable) to: Movement for the Abolition of War, 1 Old Mill Place, Haslemere, GU27 1NE

Membership application / renewal

Name

Address

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Type of membership (please tick):

Life £100 Individual £15 Unwaged £5

Household (2 or more at same address) £20 Group or organisation £25

I enclose: Membership £
Donation £
Total £

Please make cheque payable to Movement for the Abolition of War
OR Please send me a standing order form

Military involvement in UK universities - an update

Dr Stuart Parkinson, of Scientists for Global Responsibility, has produced a document which outlines how the major increase in UK military spending - announced in November - will draw universities further into programmes related to nuclear weapons, armed drones, and military space technology - fuelling arms races and decreasing international security. Downloaded a PDF at <https://www.sgr.org.uk/resources/military-involvement-uk-universities-update>

Membership subscriptions: If you received this newsletter by post the label on the envelope shows your membership status: the date to which you are paid up, eg 2020; 'Life', if you are a life member; 'SO' if you pay by standing order or 'Comp' if you receive a complimentary copy.

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