Resistance of Nuclear Power & Weapons

Occasion Re-established at Finnish Reactor Site

The Finnish group Stop Fennovoima! organized a week of action April 22-May 6, 2016—around the 30th anniversary of the meltdown of Chernobyl—to oppose the construction of the Fennovoima-Rusatom nuclear reactor in northern Finland. Rusatom—the Russian state-owned builder of the Chernobyl reactor—is the largest investor in the Finnish project. Stop Fennovoima’s original protest camp was dismantled in 2015 after an intense six-month occupation. The 2016 week of action involved reestablishing the encampment, workshops, and direct action, bringing construction work to a halt for several hours. Resistors used lockboxes to chain themselves together barricading the road, and one was u-locked to a piece of construction equipment. Police disrupted the nonviolent actions with pepper spray, rubber bullets, Tasers, a canine unit, and arrested 35 activists. Fennovoima-Rusatom managers hope to have the reactor operating by 2024. —Stop Fennovoima, and Resistus, May 29, 2016

Trial and More Action Against Trident

In Bangor, Washington, eight activists from Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action were sentenced April 1, 2016 to 100 hours of community service that does not involve nuclear disarmament work. On Hiroshima Day, Aug. 6, 2015, the eight crossed the line at Kitsap-Bangor Naval Base, home to the largest concentration of operational nuclear weapons in the US—deployed on eight giant Trident missile submarines. The action involved spreading ashes around bodies in a die-in and attempting to deliver a letter to the base commandant. The letter called for “an immediate halt to the planned updating and expansion of the Kitsap Bangor Trident fleet under your command.” After the trial of one of the activists, Rev. Anne Hall reflected, “I heard what we are saying? Does it occur to you that if we represent nuclear disarmament work. On Hiroshima Day, Aug. 9, with a different organization responsible for actions at the Air Force Base each week. Just outside the gates of the air base, a “Peace Meadow” dotted with banners and disarmament symbols recalls a campaign 30 years ago that successfully ousted 96 US ground-launched nuclear Cruise missiles from Huntslake, England. On Oct. 11, 1986, over 200,000 people marched there against atomwaffen. Today, arts, music, peace, and women’s groups and others have posted dozens of signs and placards near the base’s entrance, clearly visible to passing drivers. The US peace group Code Pink was one of several international organizations that sent representatives to this year’s actions demanding the permanent removal of the United States’ Cold War-era B61 gravity bombs. —Atomwaffenfrei Büchel, May 2016

British Trident Ploughshares Mobilize

As we go to press, the group Trident Ploughshares is ramping up a month-long series of actions aimed at disrupting nuclear weapons production at Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) Burghfield, just west of London. Groups from across England and Europe, united in opposing the maintenance and updating of warheads destined for Trident submarines in Scotland, met June 8th that their blockades had halted work at the factory for three days. England’s Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament reports that the government’s planned replacement of its four Trident subs, at a cost of £4 billion, equates to pay for the hospitals and wages for 150,000 nurses, three million affordable homes, installation of solar panels in every home in the UK, $20 million for every student. AWE is owned by the British Ministry of Defence, work is contract out to a consortium of 17 companies, including Serco, Jacobs Engineering, and Lockheed Martin. AWE is owned by the British Ministry of Defence, work is contract out to a consortium of 17 companies, including Serco, Jacobs Engineering, and Lockheed Martin. Jane’s “Scrap Trident” mobilization follows a February march in London that drew 60,000 people. —Trident Ploughshares, June 1, 2016; Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, June 2016

Coming Soon!

Youth between 18 and 26 years are invited to an International Youth Week Camp sponsored by Fellowship of Reconciliation, Germany. It will take place at Büchel Air Force Base July 25 to August 10, 2016. See: https://www.verenigingbund.de/sites/default/files/2016-JWC-Einladung-EN.pdf. —KL

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Radiation Harm Deniers (Continued from Back Cover)

James Hansen’s understanding of the radiation/health debates is shaky, to say the least. He falsely claims there is a “generally accepted 100-year gap between a dental dose and a deadly heart disease development.” But the accepted scientific position is that there is no threshold. Thus, a 2010 UNSCEAR report states that “the current balance of available evidence tends to favour a non-threshold response for the mutation component of radiation-associated cancer induction at low doses and low dose rates.”

Barry Brook is another example of someone whose understanding was shaky before and after he joined the pro-nuclear environmentalist club. Brook says that before 2009 he hadn’t given much thought to nuclear power because of the “peak uranium” argument. By 2010, Brook was in full flight, asserting that the LNT model is “discredited” and has “no relevance to the real world.”

In fact, LNT enjoys heavy-weight scientific support. For example the US National Academy of Sciences’ BEIR report states that “the risk of cancer proceeds in a linear fashion, lower with a threshold, the smallest dose has the potential to cause a small increase in risk to humans.”

Likewise, a report in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (2013) states “LNT is supported by experimentally grounded, quantifiable, biological arguments, a linear extrapolation of cancer risks from intermediate to very low doses currently appears to be the most appropriate methodology.”

Conspiracy theories

On Chernobyl, Brook said: “The credible literature (WHO, IAEA) puts the total Chernobyl death toll at less than 60. The ‘conspiracy theories’ drummed up against these authoritative organizations ring a disturbingly similar bell to the most minor errors in US and Gov’t Environmental Panel on Climate Change, NASA and World Meteorological Organization in climate science.”

And with the WHO, IAEA and other UN agencies estimated 9,000 deaths in ex-Soviet states in their 2005/06 reports, and more recently UNSCEAR has adopted the position that the long-term death toll is under 30.

Brook repeatedly promotes the work of Ted Rockwell from “Radiation, Science, and Health,” an organization that peddles dangerous conspiracy theories such as this: “Government agencies suppress data, including radiation homeostasis, and foster radiation fear. They support extreme, costly, and potentially disfiguring treatment for low-dose radiation for health and medical benefits that appear homeostatic, in favor of using (more profitable) drug therapies.”

Rockwell promotes the discredited theory that low doses of radiation are beneficial to human health.

Good for wildlife?

If Brook and contrarian scientists are right, Chernobyl (and Fukushima) have been beneficial by spreading health-giving, life-affirming ionizing radiation far and wide. And according to some pro-nuclear environmentalists, Chernobyl has been a boon for wildlife and biodiversity.

James Lovelock says that around Chernobyl “radioactive contamination arguments on human health have been twisted to state that there was a forest which was a storage place of nuclear ash!”

According to most pro-nuclear environmentalists, radiation exposure from Chernobyl has been harmless (except for those exposed to extremely high doses), and according to some, it has been beneficial to human health. And Chernobyl would be good for one of Europe’s “finest natural preserves” according to Stewart Brand. Pro-environmentalist Mark Lynas says the Chernobyl “explosion has even been good for wildlife and nature: it has thrived in the 30km exclusion zone,” and he says that restrictions on fishing around Fukushima “will improve the environment.”

James Lovelock says the land around Chernobyl “is now rich in wildlife, thriving because of the low dose rates.”

Call, Megan Wilson-Reitz, Ben Jimenez, Keven Kamps, John Bach, Marilyn Bannan, and Alfred Meyer.