

“Prison Gang” Peace Delegation to Germany July 12-18 Joins International Call for Ouster of US H-Bombs

Visit to Büchel Air Base Will Bring US Voices to German Campaign

LUCK, Wisconsin—For the first time in the long-standing campaign to rid Germany of the last 20 Cold War-era US nuclear weapons that remain in the country, a delegation of US peace activists will participate in the protests at the Büchel Air Base there from July 12 to 18. Noteworthy among the 12 delegates are seven activists who have served a combined total of 36 years in US jails and prisons for protesting US nuclear weapons in the United States.



Peace marchers on the perimeter of the Büchel air base in western Germany during an annual Easter March with their banner: “Our Future Nuclear Weapons-Free.”

“The world wants nuclear disarmament,” said US delegate Bonnie Urfer, the long-time peace activist and recently retired senior staff member at Nukewatch. “To waste billions replacing the B61s when they should be eliminated is criminal, especially when you consider how many millions of people need famine

a newly enhanced H-bomb—the so-called “B61-12”—to replace the 20 B61s now at Büchel, and the approximately 160 others still deployed in four other NATO countries—the Netherlands (20), Italy (40), Belgium (20), and Turkey (50-90). The replacement plan comes at a time when the US and most NATO partners boycotted United Nations negotiations that began last March for a treaty banning nuclear weapons. Over 130 countries took part, and draft treaty language was unveiled May 22. (See cover story.)

Under a NATO scheme called “nuclear sharing” the five countries still handle and train to use US Air Force B61-3s and -4s. The United States is the only government in the world that arms other countries with its nuclear weapons. The five US allies all claim that their nuclear war preparations do not violate the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

But binding sections of the NPT prohibit nuclear weapons from being transferred to (Article 1) or accepted from (Article 2) other countries. The Cold

German Parliamentary Resolution Urged Eviction of US Bombs

The March 26 start date of “20 Weeks for 20 Bombs” is doubly significant for Germans and others eager to see the bombs retired. First, on March 26, 2010, Germany’s national parliament, the Bundestag, voted overwhelmingly—across all parties—for a resolution urging the government to remove the US weapons.

Second, March 27, 2017 was the start at the United Nations General Assembly of formal negotiations for a treaty banning nuclear weapons. The UN General Assembly convened a second session—June 15 to



Sr. CAROL GILBERT (L), Plowshares activist, Baltimore, Maryland

Sr. ARDETH PLATTE (R), Plowshares activist, Baltimore, Maryland

July 7—to produce a legally binding “convention” that will ban any manufacture, possession, deployment or use of the Bomb, in accordance with Article 6 of the NPT. (Similar treaty bans already forbid poison, gas weapons, land mines, cluster bombs, and biological weapons.) Nuclear-armed states led by the US tried unsuccessfully to derail the negotiations in October 2016 and boycotted the March negotiations.

Susan Crane, from Redwood City, Calif. is a school teacher, mom, grandma, war tax resister, nonviolent anti-nuclear and anti-war activist, and a Catholic Worker who has acted in four Plowshares disarmament actions and served over six years in jail and prison. Susan asks: “What sort of world are we leaving for our grandchildren? Will they have clean air and water? Will they have affordable education, housing and medical care? Will they have a chance to live in a world where we value sharing and helping each other, instead of greed, death-dealing and war-making?”

Permanent Removal of US Bombs Wildly Popular in Germany

Ralph Hutchison, long-time coordinator of the Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance which scrutinizes the Y12 nuclear weapons site, reports in the latest *OREPA News*, that “An international day of action to Break the Nuclear Chain has been scheduled for July 16, so we’ll be there to add our voices to those who want to see the B61 retired.”

Germany’s current government under Angela Merkel followed the US government’s lead in boycotting the opening UN session in spite of the huge majority of Germans that supports both the UN treaty ban and the removal of US nuclear weapons. A stagger-



RALPH HUTCHISON, Coordinator of Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance, Knoxville, Tennessee



JOHN LaFORGE, Nukewatch staff/Plowshares activist, Luck, Wisconsin

ing 93 percent support the treaty according to a poll commissioned by the German chapter of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War published in March last year. A whopping 85 percent agreed that the US nuclear bombs should be ousted from the country, and 88 percent said they oppose US plans to replace current bombs with the new B61-12.



KATHY BOYLAN, Catholic Worker/Plowshares activist, Washington, DC



STEVE BAGGARLY, Catholic Worker/Plowshares activist, Norfolk, Virginia

relief, emergency shelter, and safe drinking water,” said Urfer, who has served 6 and 1/2 years incarcerated for peace and anti-nuclear actions.

On March 26, disarmament activists in Germany launched a 20-week-long series of nonviolent protests at Büchel, “20 Weeks for 20 Bombs,” demanding the withdrawal of the remaining US nuclear weapons, known as B61 gravity bombs, still deployed there. The protest actions continue through August 9, the anniversary of the US atomic bombing of Nagasaki, Japan in 1945.

During the anti-nuclear campaign’s “international week,” July 12 to 18, US activists from Wisconsin, California, Washington-DC, Virginia, Minnesota, New Mexico, Tennessee, and Maryland will join a coalition of 50 German peace and justice organizations converging on the base. Campaigners from The Netherlands, France and Belgium will also join the international gathering.

“Our united resistance will stop the new, illegal nuclear bombs nobody needs,” said Marion Kúpker, a disarmament campaigner and organizer of protests with DFG-VK, Germany’s oldest peace organization, this year celebrating its 125th anniversary. “We want Germany to be nuclear weapons-free,” Kúpker said.

The US delegation is particularly concerned that the United States Air Force is planning to produce



ZARA BROWN, Student & independent photographer, Minneapolis, Minnesota



CARMELLA COLE, Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance Board, Knoxville, Tennessee



SUSAN CRANE, Plowshares activist/Catholic Worker, Redwood City, California



LEONA MORGAN, Diné No Nukes, Albuquerque, New Mexico



BONNIE URFER, Nukewatch/Plowshares activist, Luck, Wisconsin

Seven of the 11 US delegates that will join the “Twenty Weeks for Twenty Bombs” campaign have served a combined total of 36 years incarcerated for anti-war and anti-nuclear protests in the United States.

War-era “nuclear sharing” began before ratification of the 1968 NPT, so the five states claim exemption from the treaty’s obligations.

“The delegation wants to draw attention to the danger, uselessness, and illegality of US nuclear weapons deployed in Germany,” said John LaForge, Co-director of Nukewatch.

Leona Morgan from Albuquerque, New Mexico, is a “Diné or ‘Navajo’ community organizer and activist challenging Nuclear Colonialism, specifically dealing with Environmental Justice issues affecting indigenous peoples in the United States Southwest from uranium mining. Morgan says she joined the group because she “does much of her work through popular education and advocating for the protection of water, environment, human health, and cultural resources.” In 2014, Morgan co-founded “Diné No Nukes,” an initiative to address impacts from all stages of the nuclear fuel chain with a focus on Diné Bikeyah (traditional Diné homelands). After the “international week” at the “20 weeks for 20 bombs” at Büchel, Morgan will make a speaking tour of several German communities.