Resisting Nuclear Power & Weapons

Occupation Re-established at Finnish Reactor Site

The Finnish group Stop Fennovoima! organized a week of action April 22–May 1, 2016—around the 30th anniversary of the meltdown of Chernobyl—to oppose the construction of the Fennovoima-Rosatom nuclear reactor in northern Finland. Rosatom—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. Resisters 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-Rosatom managers hope to have the reactor operational by 2024. —Stop Fennovoima, and Reuters, May 29, & Apr. 26, 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, August 6, 2015, the eight crossed the line at Kitsap-Bangor Naval Base, home to the largest concentration of operational nuclear weapons in the US arsenal—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 commander. The letter called for "an immediate halt to the proposed updating and expansion of the Kitsap Bangor Trident fleet under your command." After the trial one of the activists Rev. Anne Hall reflected, "When Magistrate Chrystel said our community service couldn't go to work for nuclear disarmament, I wanted to say, 'Did you hear what we are saying? Does it occur to you that if we don't avert nuclear war there won't be any community to serve?'" On Mother's Day 2016 three more activists were arrested after blocking traffic, holding a sign depicting Father Daniel Berrigan and quoting him, "Know where you stand and stand there." —Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action, May 9 & Apr. 4, 2016

20 Weeks of Peace Actions at Büchel Air Force Base, Germany, Home to 20 US H-bombs

Again this year, the Atomwaffenfrei Büchel (Nuclear-Free Büchel) is engaged in a series of actions to resist the 20 US nuclear weapons stationed at the Büchel Air Force Base, in West-Central Germany. This year's occupation takes the slogan: "Büchel is Everywhere — nuclear-free now! 20-Week Action Presence in Büchel." Topping last year's nine-week protest dubbed "Büchel 65," this year's 20-week-long protest began on March 26, the anniversary of the German Parliament's 2010 resolution to have the missiles removed. The presence is continuing through Nagasaki Day, August 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 Hunsrück, Germany; 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, said 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 $296 billion, could pay for 120 new hospitals and wages for 150,000 nurses, three million affordable homes, installation of solar panels in every home in the UK, or tuition fees for eight million students. While AWE is owned by the British Ministry of Defence, work is contracted out to a consortium of US-owned companies including Serco, Jacobs Engineering, and Lockheed Martin. June'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 Work 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.versoehnungsbund.de/sites/default/files/2016-IWC-Einladung-EN.pdf. ***—KL***

For comprehensive reporting on anti-nuclear actions, visit NukeResister.org.

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 millisievert threshold for fatal 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 mutational 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-hitting scientific support. For example the US National Academy of Sciences' BEIR report states that "the risk of cancer proceeds in a linear fashion at lower doses without a threshold and ... 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 states: "Given that it is supported by experimentally grounded, quantifiable, biophysical 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 rings a disturbingly similar bell in my mind to the crank attacks on the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change, NASA and World Meteorological Organization in climate science."

But 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 uncertain.

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 hormesis, and foster radiation fear. They support extreme, costly, radiation protection policies; and preclude using low-dose radiation for health and medical benefits that apply hormesis, in favor of using (more profitable) drug therapies."

Brook promotes the discredited "hormesis" 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.

The region surrounding Chernobyl is one of Europe's "finest natural preserves" according to Stewart Brand. Pro-nuclear environmentalist Mark Lynas says the Chernobyl "explosion has even been good for wildlife, which has thrived in the 30km exclusion zone," and he says that restrictions on fishing around Fukushima "will improve the marine environment there."

James Lovelock says the land around Chernobyl "is now rich in wildlife" and he follows this asinine argument to its logical conclusion: "We call the ash from nuclear power nuclear waste and worry about its safe disposal. I wonder if instead we should use it as an incorruptible guardian of the beautiful places on Earth. Who would dare cut down 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 has been good for wildlife and biodiversity (mutations aside). Follow the pro-nuclear environmentalists down these rabbit-holes and you come up with Hansen's claim that the nuclear industry's safety record is "superior to any other major industry," or Lynas' claim that nuclear power is "extraordinarily safe," or Brook's claim that "nuclear power is the safest energy option."

Nuclear power the safest energy option? Safer than wind and solar? To arrive at that conclusion, Brook and others understate the death toll from Chernobyl (and Fukushima) by orders of magnitude. They conflate an uncertain long-term Chernobyl death toll with a long-term death toll of zero, ignoring the science every bit as much as do climate change deniers.

—Dr. Jim Green is the national nuclear campaigner with Friends of the Earth Australia and editor of the Nuclear Monitor *newsletter. This article, which has been edited for length,was written for the April 7, 2016 edition of The Ecologist.*

For all their help arranging last winter's *Nuclear Heartland* book tour, we want to thank Don Timmerman, Roberta Thurston, Jerry and Molly Mechtenberg-Berrigan, Dwight Call, Megan Wilson-Reitz, Ben Jimenez, Keven Kamps, Carol Gilbert, Ardeth Platte, Joanne Kennedy, John Bach, Marilyn Bannan, and Alfred Meyer.

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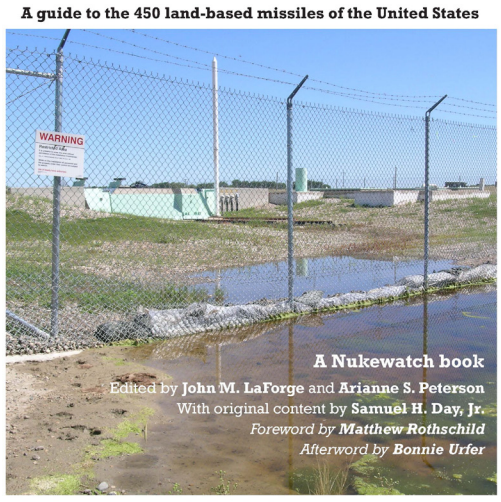
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