

On the Bright Side

Blocking the Doors of Nuclear Ban Treaty Blockers



After court, Dennis DuVall and other activists returned to the nuclear weapons base and placed a 28-foot-long copy of the nuclear ban treaty across the access road. Photo: Sjaak Tensen

Two More U.S. Peace Activists Win Jail Time in Germany

By Jack Cohen-Joppa

Two American nuclear abolitionists will soon serve time in German prisons for their nonviolent actions opposing the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpiled at Germany's Büchel air base.

Susan Crane, age 80, was sentenced in September, 2022 for a series of fence-cutting actions and occupations of the Büchel base beginning in 2018, and ordered to pay a fine equivalent to 229 days in prison. Crane, a Catholic Worker in Redwood City, California, refused to pay, and was notified by the court to report to prison in Germany on June 4.

After sentencing, Crane said, "When I look at Büchel air base, I see nothing but the organization of death ... At the same time, I see the suffering of people around the world who lack basic needs that could be met if our economies weren't based on war-making. ... [I]f we are to continue life on this planet, we need to disarm."

Meanwhile, Dennis DuVall, who already served a 60-day sentence in the spring of 2023 for protests at Büchel, was back in a German court on January 22, coincidentally also the third anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The 82-year-old Vietnam War veteran, now living in Germany, was charged for the "Atom Bomb Crime Scene" graffiti he'd painted in hot pink across the base's entrance road last summer.

Despite DuVall's clear and calm defense that he acted to expose criminal preparations for mass murder, he was sentenced to a fine equal to 90 days in prison. Like Crane, he told the court he will not pay, and expects to eventually be sent back to prison.

Supporter Frits ter Kuile wrote, "It was a sad display. An elder man warning with great clarity for the End of Time in his own end time and those blind figures in their black gowns standing on the wrong side of history for the umpteenth time."

Nuclear Phaseouts

In Spain, "the future for nuclear is looking bleak" according to reporter Paige Lambermont. In 2019 the government decided to phase out the country's seven nuclear reactors. Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party formed a new government coalition last fall that quickly reaffirmed its once-stalled commitment to closing Spain's reactors. On December 26, the Council of Ministers (the main decision-making body of Spain's government) approved the Seventh General Plan for Radioactive Waste, which includes a final schedule for decommissioning the reactors. The first shutdown will occur in 2027, and the last in 2035.

— Competitive Enterprise Institute, Jan. 21, 2024

By John LaForge

Jan. 22, 2024 marked the third anniversary of the coming-into-force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The TPNW now has seventy "states parties" and two dozen governments moving to see it ratified. The entry into force anniversary is celebrated all over the world as the best means of preventing accidental or deliberate detonations of the most poisonous and overwhelmingly destructive weapons in human history. (Universalization would also end today's regular use of nuclear weapons which are employed by nine governments the way bank robbers use a pistol: without pulling the trigger, they still get the loot. It's not deterrence but armed robbery.)

So far, the nine nuclear-armed governments have dismissed the TPNW as a political annoyance, the naive aspiration of an unschooled group of UN member states (the 122 out of 193 that voted for enactment). This neo-colonial condescension shrewdly ignores the millions of people from TPNW-friendly countries who are sick from radiation poisoning after being targeted by the nuclear mobsters' bomb testing and uranium mining.



Nuclear weapons abolitionists including Nukewatch's Kelly Lundeen (right) affixed a 10-ft sticker to the window of the U.S. Mission to the UN in NY. Photo: Felton Davis

However, a super-majority of UN members decided that the nuclear powers must have lied when they promised in 1970, in Article VI of the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) — 57 years ago — "to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date", etc., etc. After six decades, "at an early date" has become the laugh line of international law. And the phrase was of course vague enough for nuclear threat mongers to ignore it indefinitely, while asserting their lawful adherence. The U.S. state department still claims on paper, "The United States

is in full compliance with all of its NPT obligations, including Article VI."

Fed up with decades of such lip service, 122 United Nations governments took to heart Article VI's mandate to pursue disarmament in good faith, and in 2017 they produced the TPNW. The treaty is now part of the "rules-based order" that President Biden loves to pose with.

Early last month, the United Nations held its second meeting of governments that have ratified the TPNW. Although held at UN headquarters in New

See *Nuclear Ban Treaty* on page 8

"The Only Sane Solution ..."

By Brian Terrell

"We still hold that nonviolent resistance is the only sane solution," Dorothy Day wrote in 1940, in a time of war much like our own, minus the daily escalating threat of nuclear annihilation that we face today. "We have to continue to make our voice heard until we are finally silenced — and even then, in jail, or concentration camp, to express ourselves." In that spirit, Catholic Workers and other activists in Kansas City will be hosting the annual Spring Midwest Catholic Worker Resistance Retreat there April 12-15.

Each spring for more than 20 years, Catholic Workers and their fellow travelers have left their homes, houses of hospitality, and farms to lend support for a local campaign of nonviolent resistance somewhere in the Midwest.

The Kansas City "National Security Campus," (KCNSC) "creating technology roadmaps to ensure we're at the forefront of national security innovation" — along with the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, the Los Alamos National Laboratory, the Nevada National Security Site, the Pantex Plant, the Sandia National Laboratories, and the Y-12 National Security Complex — is a facility of the U.S. Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA). With some 7,000 employees, the Kansas City "campus" produces more than 80% of the non-nuclear components in U.S. nuclear weapons.

In January 2022, officials at KCNSC announced the completion of the B61-12 "Life Extension Program's" first production unit (FPU): "It is with great pride and excitement that we see the B61-12 achieve FPU," said Eric Wollerman, president of Honeywell Federal Manufacturing & Technologies which manages and operates the "campus" complex, formerly known as the Kansas City Plant.

The new B61-12 H-bombs are on their way to replace the old B61 freefall gravity bombs at bases in five NATO countries as part of "nuclear sharing" arrangements. These new, "more flexible" thermonuclear bombs — with adjustable tail assemblies that allow them to be guided, and a built-in option

to dial up to 50 kilotons (three times the destructive power of the Hiroshima bomb) or down to less than one kiloton — are the nuclear weapons closest to the borders of Russia. If or when the order is given, they will be "delivered" to their target areas by their host countries' air forces.

New technologies like the B61-12 have inspired optimism in U.S. war planners that a nuclear war, once started, can be controlled and brought to decisive victory. Open talk about "using nuclear weapons could create conditions for decisive results and the restoration of strategic stability," in the words of a June 2019 report by the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, "and create conditions that affect how commanders will prevail in conflict" has become commonplace. On Oct. 12, 2023, the Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States published its report on the unsubstantiated dangers posed by China and Russia, suggesting that "the United States and its Allies and partners must be ready to deter and defeat both adversaries simultaneously."

Responding to "the demands of a rapidly evolving security environment," on October 27 the [Pentagon] announced that "a modern variant of the B61 nuclear gravity bomb, designated the B61-13" would be produced. [According to the Arms Control Association, the B61-13 would have a maximum explosive force of around 360-kilotons, "a massive increase when compared to the most recent 50-kiloton B61-12."] The B61-13 "would be deliverable by modern aircraft ... providing the president with additional options against certain harder and large-area military targets," the Pentagon said. The doctrine of "mutually assured destruction" (MAD) — that a nuclear war could have no winners and would annihilate the combatant parties leaving much of the planet lifeless — was never a good plan for lasting peace. The existential fear that gripped the planet in the cold war years was "not a way of life at all, in any true sense," President Eisenhower said in 1953, but "humanity hanging from a cross of iron." MAD didn't prevent endless conflicts and wars of proxy, but somehow, by sheer luck some say, a final nuclear weapons exchange did not happen in those years.

See *Sane Solution* on page 6