

TAKE ACTION

As an individual:

Your vote counts – use it.

Ask your MP/candidates about their policy on nuclear weapons.

Encourage your MP to sign Early Day Motions on nuclear issues. *Look on the CND website for the current EDMs.*

As a Church member:

Publicise statements your church leaders have made on nuclear weapons on your church notice board or in your church newsletter. *Available from CCND*

When an election is coming up, encourage your parish officers to host a discussion between candidates.

The Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament is a specialist section of CND. CCND seeks to put forward the disarmament message in the light of the Gospel in all churches.

Christian CND works in churches and other Faith Communities encouraging them to see campaigning for nuclear disarmament as part of their Faith commitment. It engages with the government of the day and makes public statements on this subject.



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NUCLEAR WEAPONS and DEMOCRACY



One of our greatest responsibilities in a democracy is to elect our Members of Parliament. Often we think that our responsibility ends there and we leave the policy decisions to those we elect and the experts, frequently encouraged by our political leaders. Robert Dahl, in his essay “Democracy versus Guardianship” says “*We have, in fact, turned over to a small group of people decisions of incalculable importance to ourselves and mankind*”

So we have given this special class of people sole responsibility for the decision whether or not to kill millions of people and destroy vast areas of the planet by firing nuclear weapons- without any participation by the people who paid for those weapons with their taxes or by those who voted for the leaders who gave the final orders-

Where is democracy here?

Once citizens no longer feel qualified to participate in discussions about their very survival, the connection between the governing and the governed is severed.

Is this democracy?

In her book “Thermonuclear Monarchy – the Choice between Democracy and Doom”, Elaine Scarry argues that the very existence of nuclear arsenals betrays the basic purpose of the social contract that governs any civil society. “*Nuclear weapons undo governments and undo anything that could be meant by ‘democracy’. They put the population completely outside the realm of overseeing our entry into war or having a say in their own survival or destruction. We have to choose between nuclear weapons or democracy.*”

Nuclear weapons are, what she calls “out-of-ratio” weapons: ones that give a very small number of people the power to annihilate very large numbers of people. “*An out-of-ratio weapon makes the presence of the population at the authorisation end (of an attack) a structural impossibility. New weapons inevitably change the nature of warfare*”, she says “*but out- of- ratio weapons have changed the nature of government.*”

The nuclear-armed submarine, this obscenely powerful engine of destruction and death, when deep under the ocean at a time of political tension, is difficult to communicate with. The Extra Low Frequency radio waves that can penetrate such depths take many minutes to arrive, so at the most critical moment it is almost incommunicado.

There is no transparency if you have to wait 30 years to get information on Cabinet decisions. **There is no transparency** if treaties can be signed without discussion in Parliament (eg. 50 year Teutates Treaty).

“The two artifacts, the social contract and the nuclear array are mutually exclusive. To exist, each requires that the other be destroyed. Which one will it be?”
Elaine Scarry.

Information and quotes from ‘ Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists’ (columnist; Kennette Benedict) and ‘Harvard Magazine’ (columnist: Craig Lambert).