

ACTIVITIES OF THE DANISH NATIONAL PUGWASH GROUP

May 21, 2008

This is summary of the activities of the Danish National Pugwash Group during the last few years. Further details, including photographs and speeches, can be found on our website, www.pugwash.dk, under “Begivenheder” and “Documenter”.

Panel debate on “The Overlooked Threat of Nuclear Weapons”

The panel debate on “The Overlooked Threat of Nuclear Weapons” was organized by the Danish Pugwash Group in collaboration with the Center for Philosophy of Nature and Science Studies and the Student Priest of the University of Copenhagen. It took place th the Alexander Hall of the University of Copenhagen on the 29th of January, 2004, and it was attended by about 50 people. Speakers included Assoc. Prof Claus Emmeche, Former Danish Minister of Justice Prof. Ole Espersen, the Student Priest Nickolai Halvorsen, Dr. Jan Øberg, Director of the Transnational Foundation for Peace and Future Research, and Dr. Klaus Arnung, from DLMK, the Danish branch of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War.

Hiroshima Day, 2005

In August, 2005, the Danish Pugwash Group organized three events commemorating the tragic nuclear destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

1. A seminar on “Building a Culture of Peace” was held at Christianshavn Gymnasium. Speakers included Professor Eric Marcusen of the Danish

Institute of International Studies, Assistant Prof. Jonas Christoffersen, University of Copenhagen, Dr. Jan Øberg, Director of the Transnational Foundation for Peace and Future Research, Prof. Emeritus Sven Bjørnhølm, Niels Bohr Institute, and Assoc. Prof. Emeritus John Avery, H.C. Ørsted Institute.

2. A commemoration ceremony was held, also at Christianshavn Gymnasium. The Japanese Ambassador in Denmark, H.E. Gotaro Ogawa, spoke at the ceremony, which was attended by the Japanese Minister Counsellor and other members of the Japanese Embassy, as well as by the Italian Ambassador and representatives of a number of Danish NGO's and the general public.
3. A poster and video exhibition on Hiroshima and Nagasaki was opened at Nørrebro Library on the 5th of August. The exhibition, which was prepared by the Hiroshima Peace Museum, continued for the remainder of the month.

Symposium on “Nuclear Dangers in the Middle East”

In collaboration with the Swedish Pugwash Group and the Swedish Institute in Istanbul, the Danish Pugwash Group organized a symposium on “Nuclear Dangers in the Middle East”. The symposium took place at the Swedish Institute in Istanbul in November, 2005. Among the speakers were Dr. Maj Britt Theorin, former Disarmament Ambassador of Sweden, Joseph Cirincione from the Carnegie Institution in Washington, Prof. Francesco Calogero, former Secretary General of Pugwash Conferences, and Dr. Ingmar Karlsson, the Swedish Council General in Turkey. The Iranian Ambassador to the International Atomic Energy Agency also spoke.

Symposium on “Chernobyl, 20 Years After the Catastrophe”

In collaboration with SGI International, the Danish Peace Academy, Danish Physicians Against Nuclear Weapons, we arranged a seminar to mark the 20th anniversary of the Chernobyl catastrophe. The symposium was held at the Nordic Culture Center on the 26th of April, 2006. The speakers included Ali Alfoneh, an expert on Iran's internal affairs, Dr. Cæcilie

Buhmann from IPPNW, who spoke on the medical effects of the catastrophe, and Prof Bent Erik Sørensen of Roskilde University, who spoke on renewable energy technologies as an alternative to nuclear power generation.

Hiroshima Day, 2006

In collaboration with SGI International, the Danish Peace Academy, and Danish Physicians Against Nuclear Weapons, we arranged a Hiroshima Commemoration Day on the 4th of August, 2006. It was held at Askov College in Jutland, and it was attended by about 120 students of the college representatives of the Japanese Embassy, and people from the nearby town. The speakers included the Japanese Ambassador in Denmark, H.E. Gotaro Ogawa, Dr, Maj Britt Theorin, former Swedish Disarmament Ambassador and former member of the Swedish and European Parliaments, and Dr. Cæclie Buhmann of IPPNW.

Symposium on “Current Dangers of Nuclear Weapons”

Together with several other Danish NGO's, we organized a symposium on “Current Dangers of Nuclear Weapons”. The symposium took place in Landstingssalen, a large hall in Christiansborg Palace, Copenhagen, on 27 September 2007. Besides the Danish Pugwash Group, the other organizers were the Danish Peace Academy, the Mandela Centre, SGI Denmark, Danish Physicians Against Nuclear Weapons, and International Network of Scientists and Engineers and Scientists for Global Responsibility. About 150 people attended the symposium, including representatives from 30 embassies, the Danish Institute for International Studies, the Danish Foreign Ministry and the Danish Parliament.

The symposium discussed a number of serious dangers posed by nuclear weapons despite the end of the Cold War. These included weakening of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, the spread of nuclear weapons associated with nuclear power generation, dangers from inadequately guarded plutonium and highly-enriched uranium, the danger of accidental nuclear war, the danger that nuclear weapons will intentionally be used in a war, and the danger of nuclear terrorism.

Speakers included the former Danish Foreign Minister and former leader of the Social Democrat Party, MF Mogens Lykketoft, Dr. David Krieger, President of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, Vladimir Ulasevich, Chargé

d’Affaires of the Russian Embassy in Denmark, and Dr. Maj Britt Theorin, former Disarmament Ambassador for Sweden and former Member of the Swedish and European Parliaments.

Visit to Copenhagen’s City Hall by the Mayor of Hiroshima

Together with the other NGO’s mentioned above, we helped to organize a visit to Copenhagen and to Stockholm by Dr. Tadatoshi Akiba, Mayor of Hiroshima and President of Mayors for Peace. On November 16, 2007, Klaus Bondam, Copenhagen’s Mayor for Technology and Environment gave a reception for Dr. Akiba at Copenhagen’s City Hall. Mayor Bondam said that he was happy that Copenhagen had joined Mayors for Peace. Many other Danish cities also joined, following Copenhagen’s example, and as a result of an energetic NGO campaign in which individual mayors were contacted by telephone.

Peace education at Copenhagen’s Open Gymnasium

As part of Mayor Akiba’s visit, a Peace Education Day was organized at Copenhagen’s Open Gymnasium. On November 17, 2007, between 8.00 and 10.00, representatives of the Danish Peace Academy and the other NGO’s mentioned above taught classes on topics related to peace. At 10.00, the whole gymnasium assembled to hear a speech by Dr. Akiba on the need to abolish nuclear weapons and afterwards a panel discussion. Mayor Akiba’s speech received enthusiastic cheers from the 500 students of the gymnasium.

Peace education conference at the University of Copenhagen

The following day, November 18, 2007, a Peace Education Conference was arranged at the University of Copenhagen’s Alexander Hall. The Danish Peace Academy helped to arrange this conference, at which Mayor Akiba also spoke. Other speakers included, Drs. Peter Kemp, John Avery, Tom Børsen, Michael Aktor and Bill Williams. About 80 people attended the conference, some of them coming from England, Sweden and Germany.

Meeting prior to the NATO Summit in Bucharest

On March 18 2008, representatives of the Danish Pugwash Group and other NGO's met with MF Pernille Frahm, a member of the Danish Parliament, to discuss the NATO Summit in Bucharest, which was scheduled to take place on April 3-5. Among the issues discussed were respects in which NATO nuclear policy violates the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty as well as violating international law. The need to make NATO's actions conform with the United Nations Charter was also discussed. Background documents were sent to many other members of the Danish Parliament.

Plans for future activities

Symposium on "Strengthening the NPT and the IAEA"

Like last year's symposium on "Current Dangers of Nuclear Weapons", this symposium is planned to take place in Landstings salen, a large hall in Christiansborg Palace, the building in which the Danish Parliament meets. It will be held on 17 November, 2008. Speakers will include Dr. Hans Blix of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, Joseph Cirincione, President of the Ploughshares Foundation, Hans M. Kristensen, Director, Nuclear Information Project, Federation of American Scientists, and Pol D'Huyvetter, Belgium, Coordinator of the Mayors for Peace 2020 Vision Campaign. All of the speakers have accepted and the hall is reserved.

Peace education in Danish schools

We have written to the Danish Minister of Education, Bertel Haarder, suggesting that 24 October, United Nations Day, should be a theme day in Danish schools, especially devoted to the discussion of global problems and their solution. We received an encouraging reply from the Minister saying that he supported this idea. He added, however, that as Minister he was unable to tell the individual schools what to do, since each school determines its curriculum independently. He suggested that we should approach individual schools with the plan, and we intend to do this.

Commemoration of Frederik Bajer's Nobel Peace Prize

In 1908, the Danish politician Frederik Bajer received the Nobel Peace Prize. In November, 2008, the International Peace Bureau, in collaboration with other NGO's, intends to commemorate this event by arranging a Peace Conference in Copenhagen. The Danish National Pugwash Group supports this arrangement, and will help in every way possible.

Baltic NGO Forum

The Baltic NGO Forum plans a meeting of NGO's from the Baltic region, which will take place in January, 2009. We plan to participate in this meeting as well as helping to arrange it.