

<https://www.acdn.net/spip/spip.php?article1262>



France's Presidential Campaign 2022

Stop the Nuclear Insanity!

- Homepage - News - News Articles -

Publication date: Monday 1 November 2021

Copyright © www.acdn.net - All rights reserved

Published in French on 28 October 2021

Madame, Monsieur,

For 50 years now I have opposed the nuclear plague, in its military and civilian forms, which ever since Hiroshima has sown illness and death across our planet and prepared us for a future with no future. This subject merits your attention, and maybe your action. At stake is the future of us all, your very life and the lives of your loved ones.

Nuclear power

In April 1971 under the sunny sky of Alsace several thousand of us marched in family groups to oppose the opening of the nuclear construction site at Fessenheim. Yet it opened. Fifty years later its two reactors have at last been stopped, but 56 others in metropolitan France continue to produce unmanageable radioactive wastes which will go on carrying death for thousands of years. Not to mention all the authorised daily radioactive emissions entering the environment in tiny doses.

And now President Macron is promising us a swarm of little SMR reactors, mostly intended for export, and for France at least six big brothers for the Flamanville EPR, which itself is still unable to function after 14 years of construction and setbacks and defects which made it almost as deformed as a baby born harmed by radiation from depleted uranium.

So he is saying "en marche" to another nuclear half-century. Nuclear-powered, that is. But don't ever believe that his main aim is to solve our energy problems.

Civilian nuclearism acts as the perfect servant of military nuclearism. At the start it served as an alibi to justify the research done by the CEA (Commissariat à l'Energie Atomique), and then to obtain for the generals the highly enriched uranium and plutonium they needed for their bombs. Today and tomorrow they need it to provide fuel for the reactors aboard our nuclear attack submarines (SNAs in French), our nuclear missile-launching subs (SNLEs), and our nuclear-powered aircraft-carrier the *Charles de Gaulle*, plus another nuclear aircraft-carrier in the pipeline.

At a time when almost all our neighbours (Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, Italy...) are freeing themselves from nuclear energy, how can one explain France's obsession with it? Doubtless the reason is the same as for Britain's similar obsession: because both France and the UK have nuclear weapons and nuclear subs. The civilian technology serves as a screen for the military. When people focus on nuclear power, they forget nuclear arms, even though nuclear weaponry is its *raison d'être*.

Since 2007, the EPR at Flamanville has not produced a single kilowatt-hour. Doesn't matter, they say. It was estimated at 3.3 billion euros, yet has already cost us 12 billion (the EDF's figure) and is going to cost 19 billion, according to the Official Auditor. Doesn't matter. It has heated the atmosphere through concreting and transport. Doesn't matter. It should have started operating in 2012, yet is not certain to start in 2022, ten years later. Doesn't matter. Its vat infringes the safety norms, as does its welding. Doesn't matter. The lid of the vat will need to be replaced one or two years after entry into service. Doesn't matter. Meanwhile the EPR which France is building in Finland at Olkiluoto is experiencing an even worse story of defects, delays and budgetary blow-outs (at our expense). Doesn't matter, apparently.

Nuclearism and the Climate

Every day these EPR reactors, if they end up working, will offload directly into the sea or the atmosphere 66 % of the heat they produce. What a handsome contribution to global warming! Doesn't matter. All the other reactors do the same. Doesn't matter. They will be increasingly threatened by climatic hazards. Doesn't matter. The champions of nuclearism forget to tell us all that, just as they forget to say that the total world array of power-plants (about 440 reactors in service, getting older and older) barely satisfies 2% of the final energy consumption of all humankind. So couldn't we reduce our consumption by 2% to get rid of the atomic cankers? Apparently not. On the other hand, we could make them multiply like daisies so as to produce 10 times as much energy. Yes, really? But when will they be built? When the Earth's temperature will have risen by several degrees? And what will exist then to fuel them, since they currently use uranium, a fossil-fuel mineral which is non-renewable and will run out before long?

Nuclear power and nuclear arms: one train may conceal another

All that makes no sense. It's nothing but silly nonsense. Doesn't matter. Each SNLE carries 16 M51 missiles, each of which has 6 warheads of 100 Kt (7 times the power of the Hiroshima bomb). The *Charles de Gaulle* carries *Rafale* jets armed with ASMP-A missiles (A short for ameliorated) of 300 Kt, which is 20 times Hiroshima. That does matter! **And nobody discusses it. That is the essential point.** That is why Macron waves the nuclear red cloth under the noses of the media and his opponents: as long as they pounce on his provocative announcements and his improbable reactors, they forget about the bombs - yet the bombs are well and truly present, only not seen because not spoken about.

Nevertheless, to reassure the nuclear champions and lock in their support, Emmanuel Macron offered a sweetener on 8 December 2020 at Le Creusot: "*No nuclear power without nuclear weapons, no nuclear weapons without nuclear power*". Before him, General Ailleret, the putative father of our deterrence strategy, had already said so: he always made sure that those two "marched in step", because the death of one would mean the death of the other. In short, nuclear power-generation is the g-string of nuclear arms, the shirt hiding the backside, the sugar-coating making us swallow the bitter bomb.

So that's what the reactors are for: to generate a tiny bit of electricity by boiling water for billions of euros, dollars, rubles or yens; to heat the climate while pretending not to; to produce for eternity millions of tonnes of radioactive waste, which will weigh on every future generation. And to allow the countries that don't yet have nukes (like Iran, Saudi Arabia or Egypt) to develop the bombs that we forbid them to get, although we declare them to be indispensable to our security. And then will we have to wage war on them, as happened with Iraq? Meanwhile, let's sell to the Saudis the arms they want in Yemen, and to the Egyptians what they need to maintain their dictatorship...

So there is civilian nuclear technology, very dangerous but partially useful, and there is the military kind, which is terrifying. Yet in France that is discussed almost never. Well then, let's speak about it. For myself, I've been trying to do so for 35 years now...

Nuclear Weaponry

In January 86, Mikhail Gorbachev declared : « No more nuclear weapons by the year 2000!! »... I heard that call - it overturned my life, and it permitted the fall of the Berlin Wall. For five years I followed the efforts of Gorbachev, I weighed up the "balance of terror", and in 1991 (just 50 years after the Hitlerian fury called Barbarossa) I defended my doctoral thesis in philosophy which concluded on the imperious necessity of eliminating all nuclear weapons without exception. That was in Strasbourg, one of Europe's co-capitals (with Brussels).

Stop the Nuclear Insanity!

In 96, some friends and I founded Action des Citoyens pour le Désarmement Nucléaire (ACDN - in French the acronym says: "We've had enough of hatred" !), and since then this association has never ceased to say Stop War and Stop Nukes. We hosted the first "Nuclear Disarmament Days" in Saintes in 2001, then the International Gatherings for Disarmament in 2004, 2006 and 2008. We took part in the World March for Peace and Nonviolence in 2009. In 2011 we organised together with five other organisations - (ATTAC, Confédération Paysanne, Ligue de l'Enseignement, Ligue des Droits de l'Homme, Réseau SDN), the "States-General for a Livable World, the first "citizens' convention" before the phrase was current. At that event, in three days, 150 of us drafted and adopted the Charter for a Livable World, which became in 2019, with the Gilets Jaunes, the Charter for a Human France and a Human World - its 123 articles are more relevant than ever to today's world.

We have instigated or participated in many other events. For example the meeting in 2015 which brought to Saintes the "enemy brothers" of the nuclear movement, permitted convivial exchanges between them, and resulted in a final declaration that is still topical. Every year since 2001 we light the Nuclear Disarmament Flame from 6 to 9 August to commemorate the victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In 2021 this ceremony gave rise to the Citizens' Festival "Disarm to Live". We will never forget the warning sounded by Albert Camus on August 8, 1945: "In the terrifying perspectives now opening to humanity, we see better than ever that peace is the only struggle worth waging. This is not a prayer, but an order that needs to rise from the world's peoples to their governments, the order to choose definitively between hell and reason".

In 2002, I stood in the presidential election for the purpose of advocating the phasing-out of nuclear power and nuclear weapons. I failed to get 500 sponsorships by mayors, but got enough to lodge an appeal with the Constitutional Court, asking it to invalidate the candidacies of Chirac and Jospin. In 2012 a single sponsorship enabled me to call for the invalidation of Sarkozy and Hollande, "for preparing crimes against humanity, not respecting international treaties ratified by France, and infringing the French Constitution". In both years the Council kicked for touch: it said the matter was outside its competency. Then in 2012, the day President Hollande took office and controlled the nuclear button, I began a hunger strike - I fasted for 42 days asking to be received by him and requesting a referendum on the nuclear question. But on 26 June the police turned us back 50 metres from the Elysee Palace, despite the fact that two days earlier we had been promised entry. ACDN then continued its action in other forms, including a national revolving strike over the span of a year.

Beginning in 2015, the year when the Shared-Initiative Referendum (RIP in French) became a legal option, ACDN initiated the procedure and tried to obtain the first RIP referendum of the 5th Republic. Under Hollande's presidency, 126 parliamentarians signed a Bill - two-thirds of the number required (183). Then the 2017 elections put us back to zero. Under Macron the gathering of parliamentary signatures became a search on contaminated ground. As of today, after three and a half years, 52 MPs and senators have signed. This is a frightening failure of national representation: only 5% of the parliament share the opinion of 85% of the voters.

This confirms the requirement already formulated in the 2011 Charter and again in the 2019 Charter: among the numerous measures that can be taken to end tyranny by a president, we need to create a Citizens-Initiated Referendum.

At the gates of Apocalypse

To speak frankly, the work done by ACDN (witness the 1200 articles on our bilingual website, which has received a million visits) is out of proportion with our human and financial resources, which are laughably small. But for what results? Since Plogoff forty years ago, the anti-nuclear movement has won practically no victories. The beast is still there, and despite being in poor condition from its own defects, it continues to threaten humankind.

Never since 1945 have we been so close to the nuclear apocalypse. It is 100 seconds away: that is the figure given

by the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*. Everybody knows this. Except for France. This proud rooster at bay continues to defend with beak and claws its policy of a "nuclear strike force" and its stupid "deterrence doctrine", which is criminal and suicidal (as President Giscard d'Estaing admitted in his memoirs), and also scarcely more dissuasive - though much more costly - than was the Maginot Line back in 1940.

The lessons of the « Popular Primary » : a strange gap and an equally strange procedure

On 20 August 2021, Five Anti-Nuclear Questions were sent out, personally addressed, to the five candidates in the Ecologist Primary. Not one saw fit to reply.

Consequently, on 29 August I presented my candidacy for the Popular Primary, in order to introduce three demands: to eliminate all nuclear and radioactive weapons, to stop the nuclear power-plants as soon as possible, and to end the trade in weapons of war. These are three existential threats to humanity, yet the "Common Basis" of the Popular Primary, drafted under the negative influence of certain so-called "leftwing" parties, says not a word about them, despite their being extraordinarily dangerous - we can even say criminal.

The results of this Primary have now been published. They merit clarifications.

According to the organisers "over 130 000 people enrolled on the Primary's site and thus took part in identifying the 5 men and 5 women they deem most legitimate to carry forward the propositions of the Common Basis and to compete in the presidential race." In addition to these 10 candidates, 5 others (men) are placed on a "waiting list".

The rules imposed by the organisers were:

- (1) nobody to be mentioned on the site without gaining at least 500 "nominations", and
- (2) nobody, even the candidates, to know the names or scores of potential candidates until they have crossed the 500 line. This rule clearly advantages the personalities that were partisan or well-known in the media.

But in the list of the 100 "nominees" who failed to reach the sponsorship stage, the first nine had the huge privilege of having their names and pictures published on the site, along with an appeal to vote for them. My position was number 11, so my candidacy was the second of all those that remained invisible. With more propositions than all the personalities quoted subsequently.

This UNEXPECTED result proves that the anti-nuclear citizens who were called on to mobilise did indeed do so, and that in France they represent a political force that is large and independent of the parties - all in spite of the pro-nuclear virus that has infected France for decades and has been given a boost orchestrated by the lobbyists.

The Bomb, an explosive subject

Nuclear power will enter the debate, say the media. Yes, but for the benefit of its partisans, and Macron first of all, and to the disadvantage of the nuclear arms issue which they will carefully avoid mentioning, knowing that it will lose them votes, because - tell this far and wide - the French people are against the Bomb!

If they were consulted, 85 % of French citizens aged 18 or more would answer YES to the following question : "*Are you in favour of France taking part in the abolition of nuclear and radioactive weapons and engaging with the other states concerned in negotiations aiming to draw up, ratify and implement a treaty to ban and completely eliminate nuclear and radioactive weapons, under mutual and international control that is strict and effective?*" (IFOP-ACDN poll of May 2018)

This poll result is worth gold. It proves that the huge majority of the French people agrees with the anti-nuclear

Stop the Nuclear Insanity!

groups, at least on this essential point: yes, France, in conformity with Article VI of the NPT which she signed in 1992, needs to negotiate with the other nuclear states to eliminate all nuclear weapons, including her own.

So that is the way whereby we can undo the military-industrial-nuclear coalition that dominates France. But don't count on convincing Jean-Luc Mélenchon or Yannick Jadot, the two high-profile supposed leftwing candidates who say that they are antinuclear.

For autonomous action by the anti-nuclear movement outside the political parties

In 2017 Jean-Luc Mélenchon, then candidate for the presidency, committed to supporting ACDN's referendum bill. When he became an MP we delivered this referendum bill to him in person; but he didn't sign nor did any of the four other MP's of his party whose pictures appeared on the site of the Popular Primary, despite numerous requests. Altogether only four of the 17 MP's representing this party (la France Insoumise) signed. Can you still believe the campaign promises of such a candidate?

As for Yannick Jadot, the Five Anti-nuclear Questions were sent to him on 20 August and again on 23 September between the two rounds of the Ecologist Primary, but he still has not replied, one month after he won... Will he reply one day? The Atom Bomb, the Exports of Arms - those are matters you don't touch when you are (or think you are) a serious presidential candidate.

For these candidates the important thing is "winning". Yes, but for what purpose?

Conclusion

To beat Macron and the other rightwing or extreme-right candidates (all pro-nuclear), we cannot count on the left, which is irremediably divided except for its unity (with a few exceptions) in avoiding the question of nuclear disarmament. There is only one solution: we must impose the question on the presidential debate, and demand that it be the subject of a Citizens-Initiated Referendum - like any other important question agreeing with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

With this major objective, I am willing to stand for the 2002 presidential election in order to speak, as I did in 2002, about the inextricable links between nuclear weapons and nuclear power, and to affirm the need for us to get rid of both, for the survival of humanity and the protection of the planet. This struggle is as important as the struggle against climate warming and degradation, and the one to restore democracy in a land living under Jupiterian authoritarianism. All of those struggles are vital communal ones and must be waged simultaneously.

Madame, Monsieur, if you want to live in a democratic France in a livable world - a peaceful world without carbon emissions, nuclear radiation or militarism, let us know rapidly if you endorse my candidacy and are willing to support it personally by all available means (for now, please don't send money!). If your reactions lead to this proposal advancing, we will tell you so, and together we will see how you can act to be effective in the presidential campaign.

The people is US. The people is YOU. Not the heads of state - neither the current one nor the next!

The fate of humanity, our destiny, is in our hands, let us grab it and not let anything go!

Your response may be crucial. Thanks in advance.

Cordially.

Jean-Marie Matagne, president of ACDN (Action des Citoyens pour le Désarmement Nucléaire)

www.acdn.net

Vidéo : [ITV Primaire Populaire](#)

Vidéo : [ITV 13 June 2012 Hunger strike](#)
