

# Common European Peace

*Jeremy Corbyn  
interviewed by  
Reiner Braun*

*Jeremy Corbyn, Leader of  
the Labour Party in  
Britain, received the 2017  
Seán MacBride Peace  
Prize, awarded by the  
International Peace  
Bureau in Geneva. Reiner  
Braun is the Co-President  
of the International Peace  
Bureau.*

*Jeremy Corbyn answers questions on reaching a nuclear-free world and disarmament, as well as how western countries can establish a more co-operative relationship with Russia. This interview was conducted on 8 December 2017, the same day Jeremy addressed the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development in Geneva and, later, received the Seán MacBride Peace Prize.*

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**Reiner Braun [RB]:** *Jeremy, thank you first of all for coming to the IPB today and for accepting the MacBride award. We are very proud to give you this award. I have some questions for you concerning the actual political situation. The first is that ICAN will receive the Nobel Peace Prize for their activities against nuclear weapons. What do you think are the most important next steps in our fight against nuclear weapons and for getting a nuclear free world?*

**Jeremy Corbyn [JC]:** ICAN got the prize because of their work on the Nuclear Ban Treaty and for the work they have done in the United Nations on this. I've known ICAN for a very long time and worked with them at the Humanitarian Effects of War Conference in Vienna some years back and their support for other Humanitarian Effects of War conferences. Where we have to go is to support the principles behind the Ban Treaty, to adhere to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and to work to bring about a nuclear-free Korea in order to get North Korea back into the NPT system.

The only way forward is like that, likewise for India and Pakistan.

Some time ago there were proposals put very strongly at the NPT review conference that there should be an end to weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and that a conference should be arranged on that. That is what was required of the NPT and was actually unanimously agreed. The Syrian War has put that on hold. There is, I hope, the prospect of a political settlement in Syria beginning and I hope that it will lead to a meaningful ceasefire. I hope that then we can return to [the NPT] proposal. But if the world walks away from the Iran Nuclear Deal, that will be very bad indeed. So, I would say the priorities are: Ban Treaty, Non-Proliferation Treaty, Korea, and protecting the Iran Agreement on the non-development of nuclear weapons. That was a great achievement by a lot of people who put in a lot of patient work.

**RB:** *The world is spending 1.7 trillion [dollars] for military purposes every year. We know that children are dying every single day. NATO want 2% of GDP [from member states], which will mean doubling the military spending of most European states. How can we return once more to the disarmament process, because we really need this money?*

**JC:** To help bring about peace and security by negotiation, by diplomacy and by agreement. So, having a meaningful dialogue with Russia, having a meaningful process on Iran, a meaningful process on Korea, we start to look then at a world in which we are looking at peace in the future rather than the growing expenditure on nuclear weapons and the growing dangers of military build-up. In the case of Europe that means on the sizeable border with Russia. This means serious dialogue. The Seán MacBride award that I'm very honoured to receive is also about Human Rights. All governments must challenge Human Rights abuses within their own countries, as well as through trade treaties and diplomatic pressure. This is something I tried to set out today [8<sup>th</sup> December 2017] in my speech to the United Nations here in Geneva.

**RB:** *Will a Labour government reduce the military budget in Great Britain?*

**JC:** What we're looking at is how we can use our military skills in helping with humanitarian support, such as helping with the refugee crisis in the Mediterranean, or the crisis in the Caribbean where the hurricanes have been. So, it is about using the skills that are there for entirely peaceful

purposes. I want us to be a country that promotes peace around the world, that intervenes for peace and justice.

We cannot call it a world of peace when there are sixty million who are refugees, when there are millions of people – possibly a quarter of the world’s population – living in a level of insecurity ... a world of peace is one that invests in all of its people and doesn’t turn a blind eye to the obscenities of grotesque levels of wealth in the wealthiest minority.

**RB:** *In Europe we are facing, more or less, a period of confrontation. Some are saying even that we are in a second Cold War period. What do you think could be steps to have again co-operation with Russia? What should the Western countries, NATO countries, do for more co-operative relations with Russia?*

**JC:** The Council of Europe provides a forum for Russia, for Ukraine, for Germany, France, Britain, Turkey. It provides a forum that transcends both the borders between Russia and Europe and transcends the borders of countries in the European Union and other countries in Europe. That seems to me a good place to start to build that diplomatic relationship with Russia. It does mean challenging those that abuse human rights, it does mean challenging the rise of the racist far-right in some parts of Europe, but there has to be a relationship with Russia. Reduce the tension, reduce the military build-up, and work together for a common European peace. We cannot have a return to what happened in the 1970s and 1980s with the build-up of all the Cold War rhetoric and all the costs that came with it.



International Peace Bureau

*Jeremy Corbyn in Geneva*