



Science for Peace

April 27, 2023

President's Column



Dear Members,

One of the many tragic consequences of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine is that pressure to increase military expenses by Western countries has dramatically increased. One example of this is the recent letter by more than fifty of Canada's former top security officials, and some former defense ministers, asking the Liberal government to significantly increase military spending. The letter states, "Now is the time to fully discharge the commitments we have made to our allies and partners in sharing the burden of the collective security, commitments which are essential to safeguard our peace, prosperity and way of life".

Jens Stoltenberg, secretary general of NATO, has recently said that many NATO members are now regarding the benchmark for members' defense spending, two percent of the gross domestic product (GDP), as the "floor, not the ceiling".

Currently, Canada spends 1.29 per cent of GDP in defense. The signatories of the letter to the Canadian government are thus asking for a tremendous increase in military spending. This massive expenditure in the military will significantly reduce the capacity of the Canadian government to invest in our health care system, housing, and the support of indigenous communities. We all know how urgent these investments are.

Although it may sound utopian, Science for Peace strongly believes that the reduction of the threat of war should not be based on an arms race. Instead we propose to create a common security system in Europe that could include the Western countries and Russia. We also believe that if such a common security system would have been created at the end of the cold war, the current war in Ukraine could have been avoided.

It has been recently reported that Prime Minister Trudeau is resisting the idea of a dramatic increase in military spending demanded by NATO. The pressure of the Canadian pro-NATO lobby is very strong. We call all members of Science for Peace to make public our support of this stance by Trudeau.

Petition

The petition initiated by our Board member Gilles Fecteau asking the federal government to restrict Canada's oil exports reached sufficient signatures to require a response from the Minister of Natural Resources.

Non - violence

During April we had the last session of a series of workshops on the Tactics and Strategies of Non-violence. The recording of all the sessions can be found at scienceforpeace.org.

Jorge Filmus
President, Science for Peace

Recent Activities

Non-violence: The Tactics and Strategies of Winning Campaigns: Nashville: We Were Warriors

March 20, 2023

In the 1960s, Gandhi's nonviolent weapons were taken up by black college students in Nashville, Tennessee. Disciplined and strictly nonviolent, they successfully desegregated Nashville's downtown lunch counters in five months, becoming a model for the entire civil rights movement.

View recording [here](#).

Non-violence: The Tactics and Strategies of Winning Campaigns: The case of Chile

March 20, 2023

In 1983, Chilean workers initiated a wave of nonviolent protests against the military dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet. Severe repression failed to stop the protests, and violent opposition failed to dislodge the dictatorship—until the democratic opposition organized to defeat Pinochet in a 1988 referendum.

View recording [here](#).

Recent Articles



Richard Sandbrook: Disinformation, or

Debating with a Bot

“Disinformation” undoubtedly exists as a form of warfare in this contentious age of artificial intelligence. But how do we know disinformation when we come across it? The obvious danger is that officials and activists will dismiss strongly opposing views as disinformation, not to be taken seriously, or, at worse as potential sedition to be investigated.

[Read more](#)

Martin Klein



My Involvement with Science for Peace

I was 11 years old in 1945 when two events shaped my life. The first was the liberation of Nazi concentration camps. The pictures horrified me. The second was the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It was difficult to comprehend the magnitude. Six years later, five days at an interracial conference added a third side to my political triangle. For the next 75 years, I was torn between a commitment to these three issues and a passion for the life of the mind. I tried to keep those two passions separate, but the issues of time kept imposing themselves. In the late 50s and early 60s, it was the American Civil rights movement. I became a correspondent of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee and when I did a term at the University of Wisconsin, I started a fund-raising campaign. In the mid-60s, the issue was Vietnam. In 1965, I took a position at the University of California in Berkeley. Though liberal, many of my colleagues resented the ways politics interfered with the struggle for tenure. I tried to do both. I took part in countless marches, vigils and rallies. I was a member of the Faculty Committee on Viet Nam. In 1968, we were divided on strategy. I had always believed in political action. I got involved in the Eugene McCarthy campaign and for three months was co-chair working with an exceptional group of students and colleagues. I worked hard to prevent supporters of Gene McCarthy and Bobby Kennedy from attacking each other. The issue for me was ending the war. For me, there were no enemies on the Left. I spent the next year in Africa, and when I returned to Berkeley, I had been turned down for tenure. My last months in Berkeley, I worked in the campaign that elected Ron Dellums, a progressive black city councillor to the US Congress. Ron was both a civil rights and a peace activist.

When I took a job in Toronto, I felt that I was bugging out of the struggle for peace, but Natalie Davis put me in touch with her husband, Chandler Davis and he put me in touch with the Toronto Anti-Draft program. I worked with them for four years, mostly raising money, sometimes taking part in meetings and toward the end, occasionally manning the phones. When the war ended and TADP closed down, I got involved with the NDP and the Toronto Committee for the Liberation of Southern Africa. When Science for Peace was formed, I did not join because I was not a scientist. No one told me that I did not need to be a scientist until Metta Spencer asked me if I wanted to go on the board. A year later, I was vice-president. I did not do a good job and did run for re-election, but I still have a commitment to the ideals of Science for Peace. Age has slowed me. I am trying to wind down my career as a historian, but I am still committed to the ideals that defined much of my life. Many comrades like Frank Cunningham and Chandler Davis are gone, but others have stepped forward. My only regret is that I did not join Science for Peace sooner. In recent years, a fourth issue has become important, the environment. For much of my life I feared nuclear disaster. That fear is still real, but there are other ways we may be destroying the world we live in.

Martin Klein, Professor Emeritus of History, University of Toronto

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