



Science for Peace

April 27, 2022

President's Column



Dear Members,

We have been busy during the past two months largely on organization-building ventures. Such activities are not exciting - far from it - but are essential in forging a more effective Science for Peace.

One outcome is our just-released new website - do please check it out at scienceforpeace.org. Please delete any links on your devices to scienceforpeace.ca. The old website will remain visible; it is a repository of our important and extensive archives. Do note that our "analysis" is now organized according to our four working groups: on nuclear weapons, militarism and climate change, NATO, and nonviolent resistance. The new website would not have been possible without the dedicated work of Adnan Zuberi.

We have also reorganized SfP both to make the position of president less onerous and to release the board members to pursue our high-level goals. The latter have often remained unattended owing to the day-to-day exigencies of running SfP. High-level tasks include recruiting experts, fostering relations with the media, providing timely research reports on key issues, undertaking fund-raising, and developing a coherent program of webinars/lectures/seminars. This reorganization involves both the hiring of a new national coordinator and a collective leadership model.

While our highly valued Melisa Kuc will remain an executive coordinator, I'm pleased to announce that Allison Sippel will begin as our part-time national coordinator (programs) on May 2nd. Allison is a graduate of McMaster University, with relevant course work in social justice and human rights,

environmental studies, and peace studies. She has also had extensive experience with NGOs, both as an undergraduate and since graduation. She is currently developing her skills as a writer.

Both these coordinator positions are leadership positions, taking on some of the tasks formerly undertaken by the president and others. We have worked out a division of labour that, we think, will work well.

The other part of the reorganization is collective leadership. Each member of the executive has responsibility for a certain key task, with the coordinators reporting to the executive every two months on their areas of responsibility. One key goal is to ensure that a president with a full-time job can handle his/her duties in 6-8 hours per week. With this assurance, the pool of potential presidents can expand beyond the ranks of the currently retired members.

I realize that organizational dynamics is a boring subject for people dedicated to a peaceful and sustainable world. I, too, would prefer to work on more interesting subjects. But, without the proper foundations, we won't sustain Science for Peace. We have come back from a precarious position in the past few years, and we look forward to playing a larger role as a think-tank for the people.

Richard Sandbrook
Professor Emeritus of Political Science
University of Toronto

Upcoming Events

We are launching a new website soon.
Please visit us at www.scienceforpeace.org.

Recent Events

Science for Peace Calls for a Peaceful Settlement in Ukraine

Science for Peace condemns the Russian decision to launch military action against Ukraine and its efforts to depose a democratically elected government. Although Russia has plausible security concerns about NATO's eastward march to Russia's borders, these concerns do not justify this all-out military offensive.

[Read More.](#)

Recent Articles



Richard Sandbrook: How Nonviolent is Nonviolent Action?

The relationship between violent and nonviolent action is not as clear-cut as it may at first appear. In principle, as nonviolence guru Gene Sharp repeatedly reminds us, violence must not be combined with nonviolent action.

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Arnd Jurgensen: Bringing an End to the Conflict in Ukraine

The images we are seeing of the conflict in Ukraine continue to shock and generate understandable sympathy for the people of Ukraine that find themselves in the middle of this nightmare. It is entirely understandable that the first instinct of the people of Ukraine is to fight the invaders with everything they have.

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Richard Sandbrook: The Viability of Nonviolent Defence Today

“Non-violent defence” is an oxymoron. Or so it appears to many people. You hear the word “defence”, you think of “military”. You hear the term “national security”, you think of a state’s military strength (and perhaps diplomacy).

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Focus on Members

Glenys Babcock



Pragmatic Peace Maker, Policy Analyst, Data Scientist

In 1983, I took a year off from Queen's University to do volunteer work in Kolkata. What I had expected to be an informative venture, turned out to be a profound lifechanging experience. I saw and felt the commonality and unity of life.

When I returned to school, I switched from my beloved theoretical physics to social sciences university courses that I believed would give me the knowledge and skills not only to be a peace activist, but an informed and influential voice for peace. I joined the anti-Apartheid movement and other human rights causes. And with the nuclear arms race heating up. I dedicated my life to the peace movement. A deeply spiritual commitment that remains at my core these 39 years later.

A few years later as an international relations grad student at the University of Toronto, I regularly attended Science for Peace lectures. These lectures were an invaluable intellectual source of information on nuclear weapons, nuclear deterrence, and philosophical approaches to peace and nonviolent activism. Professor Anatol Rapoport's unmatched intellect and wisdom inspired me, as they inspired so many other peace activists.

On my path to being an informed and influential peacemaker, I made the decision to work for the RAND Corporation in the hopes that I would gain insight into the thinking of those kind, intelligent individuals who believed tactical nuclear weapons, small nuclear wars and mutually assured destruction made sense.

A few years ago, I returned to Science for Peace. I came home. But home had changed.

Today, I am a strong and consistent critic of the organization these days (as Science for Peace President Richard Sandbrook will ruefully attest). As a behavioural scientist, I feel Science for Peace must move beyond its cacophony of contradictory information and opinions and take a clear methodological approach to priorities, policies and advocacy if we are to be successful in countering the prevailing logic of nuclear weapons, promoting

nonviolent citizen-based defence, exerting influence on matters of war and peace.

Although Science for Peace is wholly ineffective today (in part because it is unclear what specifically it wishes to be effective on), I believe that this special organization and its members have an extraordinary potential to make a real difference in public opinion and public policy in Canada. I believe that that Science for Peace has the potential to turn Canada away from the militaristic path of violent destruction and to be an international role model for a collective approach to nonviolent citizen defence. Opinions and egos need to be set aside in favour of setting clear achievable goals along with step-by-step workplans to achieve them.

Peace *is* possible.

Glenys

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