

Science for Peace

October 23, 2023

President's Column



Dear Members,

This newsletter includes a statement by Science for Peace regarding the recent events in the Middle East.

Jorge Filmus
President, Science for Peace

**Science for Peace Statement on the
Israel-Hamas War**



Members of Science for Peace, along with worldwide communities and organizations, are appalled and horrified by the killing and suffering in Israel and Palestine. The murderous attack by Hamas on Israeli civilians, which has caused such trauma in that country and generated foreboding and fear in Jewish communities all over the world, is now being followed by Israel's genocidal assault on the people of Gaza. We stand with the Israeli families suffering their losses, and now we must stand with Gaza's citizens.

We join many others in a desperate plea to promote a ceasefire in a war being fought on the bodies of non-combatants, currently numbering 4800 in Gaza, with the toll increasing daily - a situation seemingly acceptable to both Hamas and Israel's military command. The death of an estimated 1000 children, alone, should be enough to force Western governments to send Israel an immediate stand down order. Unfortunately, it isn't.

The current war was predictable and preventable. The abuses occasioned by Israel's illegal occupation, are well documented by Israeli and Palestinian historians, UN Special Rapporteurs, NGOs such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, B'tselem, and many others. The longstanding humiliations and deprivations experienced by Palestinians, the incarcerations and torture, and the imprisonment and killing of children are the background to this terrible war, with its potentially dreadful geopolitical implications.

As an organization committed to non-violent solutions to conflict - negotiations, provision of urgent life-saving aid, and long-term societal changes to eliminate the causes of war - we urge the Canadian government to promote a ceasefire, and halt providing diplomatic cover for collective punishment. As history tells us, collective punishment only closes the space for peace partners to emerge and Canada must not continue to sanction actions that undercut the path to negotiations and long-term peace. We are inspired by Non-Violence International's Mubarak Awad and other Palestinian practitioners of non-violence, and by joint Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts like Standing Together and Combatants for Peace. We need to amplify the voices of those astoundingly compassionate Israelis who lost loved ones in Hamas's vicious attacks, and who in their weeping have asked that their government not perpetrate the same suffering on Gaza's civilians. We implore the Canadian government to:

- 1. Call for an immediate ceasefire and for UN intervention, including a demilitarized peacekeeping force.*
- 2. Use its influence to promote corridors for urgent humanitarian relief, including medical supplies, food and potable water, diesel supplies, emergency shelters, and the restoration of electrical power.*
- 3. Increase humanitarian aid to Gaza beyond the \$10 million just announced (for both Gaza and Israel) and the \$55 million annually sent to Gaza and the West Bank, and advocate opening the seaport of Gaza as a point of entry for aid under peacekeeping control.*
- 4. Pressure for the release of prisoners who have not been charged or who have not committed serious crimes (throwing stones at soldiers should not be seen as a serious crime), and for the release of hostages.*
- 5. Transition to becoming a major and uncompromising force for the promotion of global human rights by refraining from a selective noticing of their violation. Human rights are being trampled in Gaza as we speak - the bombing of civilians, the withholding of water and food, the destruction of homes, forced migration - and our government must be bold and forthright in its protest.*
- 6. These demands are essential to restore temporary peace in the region, but they will prove futile if a long-term solution is not accepted by Israelis and Palestinians. The Canadian government should offer help in the negotiation process that must resume.*

A Caravan for Peace: Unearthing the Pugwash Story

Dr. Jill Carr-Harris

International Peace Activist

A plan is afoot to hold a Caravan for Peace from Pugwash to Halifax in Nova Scotia in the autumn of 2024. This is to unearth the extraordinary story of Joseph Rotblat, Cyrus & Ann Eaton and all the scientists that stood for peace. This illustrates "when there is a will, there is a way". In this period of a renewed arms race, another call is needed for the abolition of nuclear weapons. This article describes the symbolism of the Caravan for Peace in the current times.

Christopher Nolan's Oppenheimer film reacquainted so many viewers to the horrors of the Manhattan project --the deployment of the atomic bomb and the beginning of a nuclear arms race. The film displays a skillful portrayal of the moral crisis of J. Robert Oppenheimer and the team he brought together to work on the project in the US. They were excited by the prospects of extending scientific discovery, and yet they were caught in the technological vise of producing atomic (and later hydrogen) weapons that had the power to destroy the world and all humankind.

One character who did not figure in the Oppenheimer film, but was in the Ed Bednarski Film, "The Strangest Dream" (2008), was British physicist Joseph Rotblat (1908-2005). Originating from Warsaw in Poland, Rotblat had been invited to work with the well-known physicist Professor James Chadwick at the University of Liverpool on the splitting of the atom. This was in 1939 just prior to the Nazi invasion of Poland. Rotblat was of Jewish descent and had married to Tola Rotblat, whom he lost due to the German captures of Jews in Poland. When Chadwick was asked to lead the British delegation to the Manhattan Project in 1944, Rotblat, his junior was keen to accompany him because he wanted to ensure that the Germans did not develop the atomic bomb first.

Joseph Rotblat was one of the youngest scientists in the Los Alamos atomic research project in New Mexico, code-named as 'Trinity'. When it was clear that Germany was defeated and there was an unconditional surrender in May 1945, he no longer saw it as a German nuclear bomb threat. Thus, Rotblat resigned from the Manhattan Project before the testing of the bomb, in spite of counter efforts by the US Military to have him stay, insisting that if he did leave, he would be seen as a traitor. Joseph Rotblat had the temerity to resign because he did not want to be associated with the development of a lethal weapon for a war that had been won in the European theatre.

Returning to London, he became acquainted with Bertrand Russell who was an anti-war advocate. In the spring of 1955 Bertrand Russell drafted a manifesto for the end of nuclear war which was signed by eleven top scientists across the iron curtain including Joseph Rotblat. Albert Einstein also signed it before his death in April of 1955. Known as the Russell-Einstein Manifesto, this foundational document was produced in July 1955, and was a call for the prevention of nuclear war as a step towards the abolition of war.

In implementing the Russell-Einstein Manifesto, it was decided to bring twenty-two top scientists together who could plan the regulation and end to the very weapons they helped to create. Cyrus Eaton, a Canadian from Pugwash Nova Scotia who lived in the US, organized the first meeting in the Nova Scotian village in July 1957 with his wife Ann. The Eatons developed what they called the "Thinker's Lodge" a safe space for the twenty-two scientists to come together and begin a multi-year process of discussions towards the control of the production and use of nuclear weapons.

The first meeting in Pugwash was held at the height of the cold war while the US was gripped by McCarthyism. Holding such a meeting in Canada with three of the twenty-two scientists coming from across the Iron Curtain was a bold step. Neither the US nor the Soviet Union publicly supported this meeting. The discussions which took place in this small Nova Scotian village then and in subsequent years as Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, were friendly and open; they brought scientific authority to policy makers to restrict nuclear weapons and eventually eliminate them. They influenced international treaties such as the banning of nuclear atmospheric testing and the treaty for the Non-Proliferation of nuclear weapons^[1]. As a result of all this work Joseph Rotblat and Pugwash were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1995.


In addition, we recall the contributions that were made by Joseph Rotblat and Pugwash at a critical moment in history, which may have saved the planet from possible destruction. This seems apt in the current times when we again confront the redeployment of more advanced nuclear weapon systems.

To reinvigorate the efforts of the Canadian Government towards nuclear disarmament, and the signing of the Treaty for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), the Caravan for Peace is one such initiative along with many others, that recalls the words of Joseph Rotblat and the Russell-Einstein Manifesto: "Remember your Humanity and Forget Everything Else...".

[1] Pugwash was notably involved in the promotion of the Partial Test Ban Treaty of 1963, the Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968, the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty of 1972 and SALT I accords, the Biological Weapons Convention of 1972, the Intermediate-range theater Nuclear Force (INF) Treaty, as well as the Chemical Weapons Convention of 1993.

Upcoming Events

SCIENCE FOR PEACE
PEACE AND CONFLICT LECTURES, FALL 2023



CESAR JARAMILLO: "TICKING TIME BOMBS: ESCALATING GLOBAL TENSIONS AND THE NUCLEAR THREAT"

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 24TH, 2023, 5-6:30PM


LOCATION: HYBRID SESSION: IN-PERSON AT THE PAUL CADARIO CONFERENCE CENTRE, UNIVERSITY COLLEGE AT U OF T, AND ON ZOOM

TO REGISTER:

IN PERSON [Register for in person](#)

ON ZOOM: [Register for Zoom](#)

Cesar, Executive Director of Canada's Project Ploughshares and current Chair of the Canadian Pugwash Group, is a prolific author and speaker on peace issues). He has addressed, the UN General Assembly First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament, the UNCommittee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, as well as states parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and to the Arms Trade Treaty



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Register for: 'Ticking Time Bombs: Escalating Global Tensions and the Nuclear Threat'

[Eventbrite in person attendance](#)
[Zoom](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Science for Peace
Peace and Conflict Lectures,
Fall 2023



Location/Time: Hybrid session: in-person at the Paul Cadario Conference Centre, University College at U of T, and on Zoom, See Registration links on next page

5-6:30pm

Oct 24th	Cesar Jaramillo: "Ticking Time Bombs: Escalating Global Tensions and the Nuclear Threat"
Nov 21st	Dr Vladimir Zhagora: "The Challenges of Forging Peace in Sudan"
Dec 5th	Dr Jill Carr-Harris: "Nonviolent Social Action: Sharing Experiences in War, Conflict and with Climate Change"

Scienceforpeace.org

Recently Published Articles



Judith Deutsch: Psychological Complexities of Violence and Revenge: Israel/Palestine

Preventing recurrent, predictable catastrophes must come with eliminating their causes, including complex psychological motives for both revenge and violence. Unlike the Holocaust defense of “not knowing”, people in Israel and defenders of Israel cannot claim ignorance about Israel’s scorched-earth wars on a captive civilian population.

[Read Article](#)



Arnd Jurgensen: Can a Change of Narrative Prevent the Worlds Descent into Suicidal War?

At the recent meeting of the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore Chinese Defense Minister Li Shangfu, in the context of rising tensions between the U.S. and China argued that a conflict between the countries would be an “unbearable disaster” for the world.

[Read Article](#)



Arnd Jurgensen: Remember your Humanity: How Can the Cycle of Violence in Gaza Ever End?

Gandhi, in response to the cycle of violence accelerating during India’s struggle for independence, stated that the logic of an “eye for an eye” that was driving the violence (in that case between Hindus and Muslims) would eventually leave everyone blind.

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