

# Science for Peace

**June 21, 2023**

## **President's Column**



### **President's Report to the Science for Peace 2023 AGM**

This AGM of Science for Peace is being held at a very difficult time. The illegal invasion of Ukraine by Russia has pushed the world closer to the abyss. Last January the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists set the Doomsday Clock at 90 seconds to midnight, the closest ever to nuclear holocaust. Antonio Guterres, the UN Secretary General declared last August that "humanity is just one misunderstanding away from nuclear annihilation".

One of the main goals of Science for Peace is the prevention of nuclear war by the elimination of nuclear weapons. It is obvious therefore that our organization is more necessary than ever.

The current war in Ukraine has also created an excellent opportunity for the pro-militaristic forces around the world to push for dramatic increases in defense spending. For example, Germany has decided to increase its military budget for next year by 10 billion Euros. There is tremendous pressure over the Canadian government to significantly augment its military spending. Yet the billions of dollars being spent in arms and wars are urgently needed to confront climate change, and to provide help to many developing countries, which are suffering serious food insecurity - largely as a result of the climate crisis. The pressure by the military industrial complex for ever increasing defence budgets needs to be confronted in Canada, and around the world. In our country 650 defence and security companies generated last year 12.6

billion dollars in sales.

Like nuclear war, global warming represents an existential threat for humanity, and the reduction of greenhouse gases emissions is another major goal of Science for Peace. We are certainly aware that there are many organizations in Canada which have a similar goal, but as a peace-promoting organization we are particularly concerned about the contribution of war and militarization to global warming. This is becoming a very serious problem, since the 2015 Paris Agreement left cutting military greenhouse emissions to the discretion of individual nations. So far, the Biden administration has not imposed hard limits on emissions by the Department of Defense. Science for Peace strongly believes that fighting against militarism and wars is one of the ways to fight against climate change.

During last year, Science for Peace was very active in promoting our goals. Through the activity of our working groups, we have organized 8 webcasts, published 20 articles, and produced 4 statements/ petitions. Our statement dealing with the war in Ukraine is of particular importance. It was the result of a vigorous debate within our organization, and we believe that it presented a balanced perspective on this conflict, something that not many other progressive organizations have been able to achieve. In addition to all these activities, Science for Peace supported 3 Blumenfeld Junior Fellowships who made significant contributions to the research and educational endeavors of our organization.

Some of the activities of Science for Peace were co-sponsored by other like-minded organizations, and we have also co-sponsored events promoted by these organizations. In addition, we have been co-signatories of statements/petitions launched by others.

During the last year Science for Peace has maintained an active presence in social media, and our articles and activities have appeared in Facebook and Instagram regularly. We have also renewed our web site, which we believe will help to better communicate our statements and activities.

As a result of the Covid 19 pandemic, during the previous 2 years the in-person events organized by Science for Peace were interrupted. We have resumed these in-person events by organizing two movie nights. Although it is undeniable that on-line activities allow the participation of people that otherwise wouldn't be able to do so, in the coming year we plan to increase the in-person activities to strengthen the connection among our Toronto-based members.

One of the main challenges that Science for Peace is still facing is the ability to incorporate young people to our activities and Working Groups. We have recently re-established our communication with University College, where we have our office. The College has agreed to include the announcement of our activities in its newsletters to the students. We hope that this will allow us to reach to young peace activists and to incorporate them into our organization.

Lastly, I want to recognize the contributions of all our members to last year activities. This is an organization run by volunteers, and without your contributions it would be impossible for Science for Peace to strive towards a peaceful and sustainable world.

*Jorge Filmus*  
President, Science for Peace

## Recent Activities

**MIGHT THE UKRAINE CONFLICT SPARK A NUCLEAR WAR?**  
**THURSDAY, JUNE 15TH, FROM 5-6PM ET**

MANY ANALYSTS HAVE EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT THE UKRAINE WAR COULD ESCALATE TO A NUCLEAR EXCHANGE. HOW PROBABLE IS THIS OUTCOME, AND HOW MAY THE RISK BE MINIMIZED?

REGISTRATION LINK:  
[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/54UB4Y7V](https://tinyurl.com/54UB4Y7V)

With speaker Robin Collins and chair/discussant Arnd Jurgensen.

Robin Collins is currently Co-Chair of the Canadian Network to Abolish Nuclear Weapons and Secretary of Canadian Pugwash Group. He has published short commentaries about UN reform, disarmament and a variety of global governance ideas.

Arnd Jurgensen lectures in international relations at the University of Toronto, and is also Chair of the Nuclear Weapons Working Group at Science for Peace.


SCIENCEFORPEACE.ORG

### Might The Ukraine Conflict Spark A Nuclear War?

If you missed this exciting webinar, please click below to view the recording.

Video

Science for  
Peace

**VIRTUAL MEETING** Thursday, June 15th, 4-4:50 pm ET 

**Our Annual General Meeting**

for Science for Peace is just around the corner. Tune in and contribute your thoughts on where SfP should be heading.

PLEASE NOTE: THE AGM WILL BE FOLLOWED AT 5-6 PM ET BY A DISCUSSION OF THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE UKRAINE WAR WILL LEAD TO A NUCLEAR EXCHANGE. THIS DISCUSSION WILL BE LED BY ROBIN COLLINS AND MODERATED BY ARND JURGENSEN. YOU WILL HAVE TO REGISTER SEPARATELY FOR THIS DISCUSSION. REGISTRATION LINK TO BOTH MEETINGS BELOW.

AGM Register Here:  
<https://tinyurl.com/bdm2awy7>

The Ukraine War Discussion Link:  
<https://tinyurl.com/94ub4gy7>

## Annual General Meeting

### Focus on Members: Judy Deutsch



#### Why I joined Science for Peace

I came of age in 1960's Los Angeles. The 1960's were one of those brief periods after WWII of considerable intellectual ferment during the Vietnam War, the civil rights movement, Silent Spring. It was a period of vast revelations (e.g. I.F. Stone), thorough research, eloquent literature (e.g. James Baldwin), of great opening to interdisciplinary knowledge. This was followed by decades of reaction, of retreat into Panglossian culture, militarism, managerialism, quantification. A possible turning point came again in 1988-1990 with the collapse of the USSR, but unfortunately the 'end of history' turned into a race to do what's wrong. Nuclear weapons and greenhouse gases proliferated, laws and justice transmorphed into 'rules', economic paradigms dominated the social sciences. The center did not hold and things continue to fall apart. However, there is a separate world, obviously not used by decision-makers, of inquiry, research, knowledge.

My first exposure to SfP was through Phyllis Creighton and joining with her to oppose nuclear weapons and nuclear reactors, and through Chandler Davis in opposition to Israeli apartheid. They both invited me to SfP, and probably because I strive to be dutiful and reliable, I was soon asked to be a member-at-large, then SfP vice-president, and then president. I joined SfP when many of the original members were still alive. I am not a scientist. I studied intellectual history and am a psychoanalyst.

The conceptual frame of Freudian work is about complex interactions and multiple determinants, changing functions, varied sources of observation and information. I find such conceptual complexity in James Hansen's climate work, in historical reconstructions that consider many possible processes of change, in Ellsberg's work on the doomsday machine.

My experience in groups and organizations is that there are often quite huge shifts in direction and aims. In SfP there are shifts between focusing on multiple vs single issues, shifts in prioritizing knowledge vs increasing the membership. In many organizations there are shifts in political policy: major environmental NGOs (ENGO) supported the B.C. boreal forest agreement with forestry corporations and without any First Nations participation, ENGOs supported Kyoto+ 2C temperature rise, arguing for political feasibility vs scientific evidence, and major ENGOs advocated natural gas as a transition fuel. Amnesty International obfuscated Israel's atrocities in 2014 Operation Protective Edge and even invited war criminal Madeleine Albright to be a keynote speaker, while now there is a complete turn-around in Amnesty International's report on Israeli apartheid. The UN Charter is centrally about ending the scourge of war, but soon after its inception sanctioned the Korean War.

These shifts can reflect lost complexity. [1] the search for single explanatory causes – such as the preoccupation with finding a unique event causing the birth of the universe, positing a single catalyst of historical change such as the great man theory, class conflict, manufactured consent, human nature, a shift in energy source, wars, AI. [2] single fixes proposed for the climate: shifting to renewables (the panacea of EVs), carbon capture, cap and trade, geoengineering, net zero (with various inconsistent base lines and target dates), biochar, carbon tax, reducing consumerism, wilding, vegetarian diets, keep coal/oil/gas/methane in the ground, shareholder action, international law. [3] the focus on single tactics that can be incommensurate with the enormous complexity, urgency, and uniqueness of the current situation. [4] psychological simplicity such as promising that political/economic changes will bring happiness, self-fulfillment, free time; political action does not necessarily require hope – slave rebellions and prison and labour strikes may reflect indignation about hopeless situations.

With regard to the climate crisis, necessary changes that are eminently doable without any new technology are largely absent from discourse: abolish the military and weapons manufacturing; ration the necessities of life; until renewable energy can fully fuel these processes, place a moratorium on manufacturing non-essential products, restrict international transportation to essential goods and services; shift factory farming to non-fossil fuel regional agro-forestry, with regional decision-making about markets and land distribution; climate justice must also include the abolition of third world debt imposed by international financial institutions; open borders to refugees and migration.

My sense is that SFP could contribute much by documenting human death caused by nuclear weapons, uranium mining, weapons testing, depleted uranium, and human death caused by climate change, impoverishment, closed borders. There are innumerable hockey stick graphs but none on human death. Even progressive voices like Noam Chomsky write abstractly about the threat to “organized civilization as we know it”, or Naomi Klein on “system change”, or socialists on the ‘longue duree’, or the UN framing of ‘it could be a humanitarian disaster.’

Here are some essential sources about the whole picture:

- Ecoshock Radio (interviews with major climate scientists, and hear this fascinating interview with Daniel Schmachtenberger on AI),
- James Hansen’s Storms of My Grandchildren
- Brief summaries about the climate in Greta Thunberg’s Climate Book (though the proffered solutions are inadequate),
- Jean Ziegler’s Betting on Famine,
- Many excellent books on borders –(such as Todd Miller’s Empire of Borders)
- Ellsberg’s The Doomsday Machine,
- Marilynne Robinson’s Mother Country on Britain’s mishandling of plutonium (Sellafield) and the shocking dehumanization of the poor starting with 14th century Poor Laws,
- Steve Keen on the lethality of neoclassical economics (e.g. Nordhaus climate budget),
- Quinn Slobodian on the frightening emergence of sovereign free-economic-zones (Crack-up Capitalism),
- The unbearable commodification of children by the neoliberal state (Daniel Hatcher Injustice, Inc.),
- Books by Mike Davis (Late Victorian Holocausts, Planet of Slums),
- The Science for Peace book on UN Reform,
- The complexities of human life and death in Tolstoy’s War and Peace.

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