

Science for Peace

October 29, 2020

President's Column



Dear Members,

We've made good progress during the past month. Thanks to Rob Acheson, Barb Birkett and the nuclear weapons working group for setting up our Symposium on Working for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. Don't miss the first session on "Global Efforts" with the redoubtable Ray Acheson on October 26th. (See below for registration.) The second webinar on "Canadian Efforts" will take place in November.

Meanwhile, the program committee of our Spring Symposium on "Overcoming the Climate Crisis" has met twice to design three linked webinars and identify potential panelists and speakers. Read below on Upcoming Events for some details. Thanks to Danny Harvey, Ellie Kirshner, Jorge Filmus, Ali Hashemi, Arnd Juergensen, Bill Browett and Melisa Kuc for your very productive labour.

We need more blog posts from you, our learned members and sympathizers. Also, be sure to follow Science for Peace on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. If you haven't already done so, please "Like" our Facebook page. Facebook is used for a lot of nefarious purposes, so please support us when we use it to advance the goals of the peace movement. Thanks to Bill Browett, Holly

Easton, and Rob Acheson for your work on social media.

You may be interested to know that we are now affiliated with World Beyond War and that I am a member of the coordinating committee to develop a network of peace activists in Canada. WBW is also co-sponsoring our third webinar next term on the "Peace-Climate Nexus." See you the 26th!

Richard Sandbrook
President, Science for Peace
Professor Emeritus of Political Science
University of Toronto

Recent Articles



Richard Sandbrook: Making the Impossible Possible: Coalitional Movement Politics in the Decisive Decade

This is the decisive decade for humankind and other species. We tackle dire trends now. Or we face a bleak future in which our constricted pandemic life now becomes the norm for all but the wealthiest.

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The Politics of a Just Transition to a Green Economy, 2020-2050

A Talk to Extinction Rebellion by Professor Richard Sandbrook In February 2020.

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Ray Acheson: It's been 75 years

Reaching Critical Will, a program of the Women's International League of Peace and Freedom, has released its new report — Assuring Destruction Forever: 2020 edition. This is its introduction, (edited here for publication timing), a powerful reminder of the lessons humanity has yet to learn, 75 years after the US dropped atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki...

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Recent Activities

Symposium on Working for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons: Global Efforts

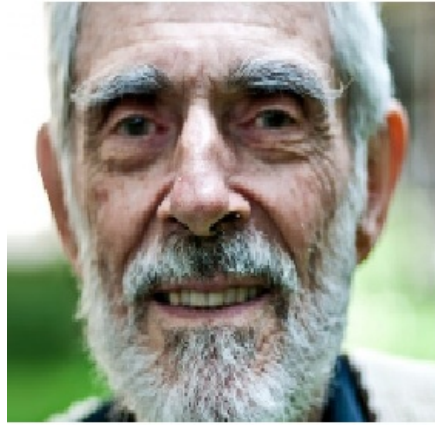
October 26, 2 PM with Ray Acheson. To view the full recording, please visit:

<https://youtu.be/Dwjn1XCyBf8>

Challenging Canada's \$19 Billion Warplane Purchase

October 15 @ 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Are 88 new cutting-edge fighter jets required to protect Canadians? Or are they designed to enhance the air force's ability to join belligerent US and NATO wars? How has Canada employed fighter jets in the past? What are the climate impacts of these jets?



Professor Emeritus, Mathematics, U of T, and an early member of Science for Peace

Science for Peace in Perspective

When Eric Fawcett gathered a nucleus of colleagues into a new activist organization, it was natural that most of us were in the so-called hard sciences. This was a replay of what happened in 1945, when a few of the scientists who had created new disastrously destructive weapons and left them in the hands of generals and politicians stepped back, aghast, too late, to see the effect on the world. But the horror at the reckless misuse of science is felt by many in all fields, not only by the whistleblowers in the fields misused; and it is felt not only by those who missed the moment to act to stop the destruction, but also by the next generation. I am sorry some of my non-scientist colleagues felt they were second-class members of Science for Peace, and I hope that many alert students will also know they are fully valued allies.

Science for Peace has not been a voice of the physicists' conscience, nor has it been primarily an information archive. Its value seems to me to have been as a channel for sharing concern among colleagues and seeking effective responses. This calls for welcoming all the like-minded, and respectful communication between us. It also calls for drawing on the skills and energy of the many organizations which have arisen with similar motivation. Let me recall briefly a few of the successful efforts which still seem in retrospect to have been a contribution to world peace--- along with a few ways where I feel we should have done more.

When Anatol Rapoport was the organization's President, he undertook, with permission from University College, to found and direct a new program in Peace and Conflict Studies. This was donated by us to the University of Toronto, for it was a valid for-credit program at no expense: Anatol drew no salary and UC contributed the office. With vagaries I will not detail, the program survived to this day, though our ties to it are much weakened. I am proud to have been part of this contribution, without endorsing all the turns it took.

We can be proud too that when Yugoslavia was falling apart, and governments of more stable states were behaving less than honourably (or just indecisively), Metta Spencer and John Valleau organized a Science for Peace symposium which in two days brought to campus a variety of knowledgeable analyses doing justice to the complexity of the conflicts.

Similarly, at a time when most media were tardy in reporting the greenhouse effect emergency, Judy Deutsch and others organized a Science for Peace meeting where James Hansen and Clayton Thomas-Muller told a full hall of its urgency. Here and in our later open letter calling for government action, we were able (though few of us are qualified specialists in relevant fields of science) to ensure that we were getting the climate science right.

We don't replace the Pugwash Movement and the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, and we don't aspire to. We do work closely with them, as in presenting Ray Acheson of ICAN at a recent meeting, and this should continue. In the same way, Canada has vigilant watchdogs on the arms industry in Project Ploughshares and the Coalition to Oppose the Arms Trade, and here it seems that Science for Peace should find more ways to help. We did sponsor a good meeting where Richard Sanders of COAT pled his case, but the issue deserves more attention from us. A third area which is well served by others is criticism of the nuclear power industry. In particular, Gordon Edwards of the Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility manages to cover all the bases very well indeed; but though he is a member of Science for Peace and we give him a platform on campus, we ought to be able to contribute more.

Can we maintain our watchdog role, along with our offshoot Our Right to Know and other groups, in sounding the alarm against attacks on support of honest research? Can we serve, along with the Canadian Association of University Teachers and the like, as guardians of campus independence and academic freedom? Can we open new avenues in struggle to refute racist pseudo-science?

And in all these efforts, should we stick to our de facto status as mostly a University of Toronto organization, or should we renew our attempts, mobilizing our many allies around the country, to spread our wings and become a truly national voice?

Upcoming



Symposium on Working for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons

November Webinar: Canadian Efforts

Science for Peace to co-sponsor a webinar with the Hiroshima Nagasaki Day Coalition and the Canadian Foreign Policy Institute with representatives of the political parties to discuss nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons abolition and how to get a meaningful debate on this topic in Parliament.

Symposium on Overcoming the Climate Crisis

Webinar 1 (Jan. 2021): What Needs To Be Done?

Speaker : Danny Harvey, Geography, U of T

Webinar 2 (Feb. 2021) Building Coalitions in Support of a Just, Green Transition

Panelists: Sue Ruddick, Geography, U of T and Avi Lewis of Leap Manifesto, and one more TBA

Webinar 3 (March 2021) The Climate-Peace Nexus

Panelists: TBA

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