



# Science for Peace

**January 13, 2021**

## **President's Column**



Dear Members,

The executive has been busy lately. We received final reports from our two fine interns, on nuclear weapons, Nicholas Lovrics and Pitasanna Shanmugathas. You can read and listen to the products of their research work on our website. Just this week, Jorge Filmus and I selected two new interns on the climate and militarism issue. From among seven strong applicants, Sara Beiruti and Daniel Hoogsteen emerged on the top of our lists. You will be hearing from these two young scholars and activists in January, as they join us in pressing forward our program on dealing with the climate crisis.

I draw your attention to Holly Easton's contribution under Focus on Members. Holly, the youngest member of the executive, has learned some lessons about social media that she wishes to share with us. Her idea of forming task forces on various issues to channel relevant images and ideas to our social media, is potentially an important contribution that all interested members can make.

Such task forces would focus directly on our goal of popular education and research on peace issues. We would aim to foster communities of interest online whose members will continue the conversations we begin. We must learn to be more interactive, as a top-down broadcasting of our positions is no longer effective in the digital universe.

Finally, PLEASE renew your memberships via the Join/Donate button on our website (or send a cheque by post). If you can bring in new members, please do so., We are running a financial deficit, and we need your financial as well as intellectual and moral support.

In the longer term, we must find donors who permit us to hire a full-time executive director. Our operation is now simply too complex to be run wholly by volunteers, together with Melisa Kuc's invaluable part-time assistance.

Richard Sandbrook

President, Science for Peace  
Professor Emeritus of Political Science  
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## Recent Articles



### Richard Sandbrook: The Pandemic Within

Strangely, reading Albert Camus' *The Plague* (1947) during the pandemic did not depress me (further). Instead, I felt exhilarated. Yes, Camus depicts widespread despair in Oran (Mediterranean city in Algeria) as it undergoes months of quarantine. Fear and unrest rise as bubonic plague kills thousands each month. But, as usual with Camus, his ideas are engaging.

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### Andrew Pakula: Battling Hate

Hate drives war and war drives hate. Hate, abetted by legions of liars, human and virtual, leads to governments acting, to different degrees, directly against public interest, against our survival, against our environment. Governments, some more than others, are acting in the interests of powerful economic interests, willing to murder the future in the name of greed.

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## Recent Activities

### Open Letter to the Prime Minister on Military Expenditures



Dear Mr Trudeau:

Your government signed a contract with Lockheed Martin, prior to covid-19, to purchase 15 naval warships, tabbed as Type 26, at an estimated cost of about \$60 billion dollars. These ships are not meant to simply patrol our northern waters; they are extremely robust and well equipped for fighting wars.

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## Focus on Members: Rob Acheson



I am not an academic, never went to university, and spent most of my life just working to provide for my family. Because I had a decent job, I was happy and felt I was fulfilling my calling even though I knew there was a lot wrong with the world. Pretty basic and maybe self-centred.

I discovered Science for Peace after the mortgage was paid off and the kids were out of university. I would drive in from the burbs after work to attend the Wednesday evening lectures at University College. I found them fascinating and enriching. The thinking presented by the speakers was revolutionary. If applied, it could change the world. But as I hung around, I didn't see it getting outside the walls of University College and the couple of dozen people that attended the lectures.

During this time, I also became involved with the Campaign to Establish a Canadian Department of Peace. The idea of a Department of Peace captured my imagination and I thought it worth promoting. I began making appointments with MPs across the GTA and talking to them about the idea. I visited about 70 of all political stripes for that campaign and many of them listened, argued, offered advice, even shared the idea with their caucuses. People like Bob Rae, Stéphane Dion, Michael Ignatieff and Borys Wresnewskyj called me back for more meetings and discussion. Yes, I was naive. I didn't know their positions on everything, or what they stood for or didn't stand for, or what they had done that I didn't agree with. I just knew that if this was going to happen, we needed their support. A Department of Peace is not a reality yet, but I believe these people generated the conversations in Parliament that helped lead to the new office of the Canadian Ambassador for Women, Peace and Security established in 2018.

Science for Peace roots are in a group of scientists who worried about the danger of nuclear war and my involvement with Science for Peace is as an activist trying to raise public awareness and political support for eliminating this heinous threat. I guess I probably have not paid enough attention to who I involve if they are willing to lend a hand or their name for that goal. None of the articles or information I use in the nuclear weapons work is original to me. I am not writing papers with a unique perspective or scientific expertise but simply sharing what I come across in reading books or on the internet. I do not have a reputation that carries any weight in garnering attention or gaining an audience, so I rely on those who do and use their name to raise the profile of our cause. I may have upset a few Science for Peace members along the way. However, politics has always made strange bedfellows and will continue to do so.

With the scourge of patriarchal imperialism still dominating our politics, the threat of nuclear war as imminent as ever and the looming multiple catastrophes from climate change before us, we need to all do whatever, and work with whomever, to solve these threats to human civilization and life on our planet. Whether we are academics or businesspeople or duplicitous politicians, it will take all of us, together, to bring about change. I know that Science for Peace has an important role to play. We have the people and the knowledge to contribute to the solutions to these existential threats. But we must work together, despite ourselves.

**Upcoming**

# SCIENCE FOR PEACE PRESENTS



A three-part webinar series, starting in January, on overcoming the climate crisis. Please read on to find out more!

Most of us realize that we are in the middle of a climate crisis. What we want to know is what, realistically, can we do over the next decade to forestall the catastrophe. These three webinars, in combination, suggest where we need to go, and how we might get there. Getting there will require organization and united action on the part of civil society organizations.

## Symposium on Overcoming the Climate Crisis: Webinar 1 (Jan.26, 2021, 7-8 pm)

### What Needs to Be Done

Speaker (15 minutes): Prof Danny Harvey, Climate Scientist, U of T

Commentators: Allie Rougeot (Toronto Fridays for Future), Sara Beiruti (SfP Student Campus Group)

Moderator: Richard Sandbrook

Format: Panel, music, video, contest, Q & A session.

## Webinar 2 (Feb. 23, 2021, 7-8:30 pm)

### Building Coalitions in Support of a Just, Green Transition

Panelists: Avi Lewis, The Leap Prof. Sue Ruddick, Geography, U of T : expert on coalition-building and Ian Haney Lopez, Law Professor at Berkeley: focuses on building coalitions across race and class

Moderator: Richard Sandbrook

Format: Begins with 3-minute video. discussion among panelists.  
Q & A follows panel.

## Webinar 3 (March 13 or 14, 2021, 7-8:30) \*Joint webinar with World Beyond War \*

### The Climate-Peace Nexus

Aim: to explore the complementarity between the anti-militarist objectives of the peace movement and the efforts of the climate movement to bring about a just and green transition. Climate justice and peace are indivisible.

Panelists: David Suzuki invited (TBA)

Kasha Slavner: young activist and film-maker working on a documentary "1.5 Degrees of Peace" Clayton Thomas-Muller: "Stop at the Source" Campaigner, 350.org, and founder of Defenders of the Land / Others TBA

## Webinar 1 (Jan. 26, 2021 7-8 pm): What Needs To Be Done?

Register Here:

<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/overcoming-the-climate-crisis-what-needs-to-be-done-tickets-129583127623>

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