President's Corner

As far as we know, the first outstanding scientist to devote his talents to the design and development of weapons was Archimedes. It is said that the Romans besieging Syracuse expressed dismay whenever one of Archimedes' engines of war such as a new model of a catapult came into view. "Here comes that damned geometr again," they are reported to have grumbled. When the city was taken, a Roman soldier killed Archimedes, so the story goes, but not for his contributions to the war effort of the enemy. The soldier is reported to have given him an order which Archimedes, engrossed in a problem, ignored.

There was a time when a scientist could feel justifiably proud for contributing to the security of his city or country by solving problems related to defence. For the meaning of defence was unambiguous, and so was the identity of the enemy who came to the gates or invaded the country, looting and killing. The defenders fought these enemies. If they succeeded, the enemies were driven away; looting and massacres stopped for a while.

There was a time when professional warriors looked askance at weapons that killed at a distance. The knight did not regard the bow and arrow as a "fair weapon". The sword knew where it struck, the arrow did not. But fair play was no match for technology. Fire arms came to stay. For some time artillery was used almost apologetically. Throughout the eighteenth century cannon were placed to the left of the main body of fighting men to indicate that it was not to occupy a place of honour. It was Napoleon who promoted artillery to "Queen of Battle". But already in the seventeenth century rationalizations of this new terror weapon appeared. A Captain Michael Mieth in the service of the Emperor wrote in 1683:

"Before the discovery of gunpowder, both the Indies were in the jaws of hellish Satan and in the very darkest obscurity, more like cattle or wild beasts in customs and beliefs than like reasonable creatures of the Great God. Gunpowder has been the only means by which the command of Christ could be performed (Luke 14:23-24). "Urge them to come in that My (Cont. on page 4)"

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Tokyo, Ontario
April 1, 1986

To the Members of Science for Peace:

OFFICIAL NOTICE

is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of Members shall be held on May 10, 1986 at 2 pm in the Combination Room, Trinity College, at the University of Toronto, 6 Hoskin Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M5S 1A1.

To be considered are reports of the executive officers, including the annual financial report and recommendations from the Board of Directors, and such other matters as the members may choose to present for discussion. Election of the Board of Directors for the year ending March 31, 1987 will close the Annual General Meeting.

Immediately following the Annual Meeting of Members, the new Board will organize and elect the executive officers for the year.

John Dove, Secretary

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Demise of a 'useful thing'

Your headline Egd, Nothing's Sacred Any More, Singer To Drop Sewing Machines (Feb. 19) makes light of a story which is most unfunny and risks misleading the hurried reader about what is really happening. As the copy proceeds to tell us, Singer is getting out of sewing machines the better to devote its energies to the military business.

Mahatma Gandhi described the Singer sewing machine as "one of the few useful things ever invented." Modern instruments of war, of the kind which Singer now produces, are in contrast utterly useless and sheer waste. They are either never used (though themselves using scarce resources which could be put to productive ends) or, if used, are capable of wasting the world.

The real story here is less how Singer is moving with the times and more how the times have done in Singer.

Mel Watkins
London, England
THE GLOBE AND MAIL, SATURDAY, MARCH 15, 1986
Newsworthy

Michael Laphier represented SFU at an information meeting sponsored by the Soviet Peace Committee in Moscow March 15-16. His notes on the meeting are available in full from the national office. Some interesting items from the report:

The (USSR) Inst. of US - Canada Studies is closely linked with the decision - making powers within the USSR. There are 300 employees, 2/3 of whom are professionals. One section only deals with Canada - about 20 people. The Soviets perceive Canada in its sub - or sub-contracting status vis à vis the USA and see many involvements between the two countries as not subject to political decision.

The USSR was not invited to participate in France's Eureka program - question: are there military spin-offs expected?

Problems of inspection and verification re nuclear arms; USSR has only public "factories" which are open for inspection. US and western Europe use "private business" contractors - there must be agreement to declassify "industrial secrets" before equal access for inspection would exist.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

At the board meeting March 25 the nominating committee made the following interim report. It is published here at the request of the committee so that members may make additions or corrections before the final report is made to the AGM.

1. We recommend that the executive operate in such a manner as to separate clearly the roles of policy-making and administration.

2. That in addition to the BOD a council be established consisting principally of past board members. The Council would constitute a "talent pool" for the board. Council members would be welcome at all board meetings.

3. That each Chapter nominate at least one member of the BOD, and that the following Chapter officers stand for the BOD for 1986-87:

Y. Joshi, St.F.X.; Philip Ehrenszt, Michael Horwood, Quebec; G.P. Semeluk, Margarida Krause, New Brunswick; David Roulston, Cynthia Folzer, Frank Thomson, A.B.; Chapter officers to remain on the Board are M. Pearson, Quebec; Israel Unger, New Brunswick; A.B. Mingarelli, Ottawa; James Gardner, Waterloo; George Spiegelman, Luis Sobrino, Michael Wallace, B.C.; Eric Fawcett, Toronto.

All Nominations should be sent to Committee Chairman Lynn Trainor, Physics Dept., U. of Toronto, or to the national office.

Exploding the bomb

(Known nuclear tests, 1945-1985)

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Since 1962 British underground nuclear tests have been conducted jointly with the United States in Nevada.

Source: U.S. Natural Resources Defense Council

Letters

Ottawa


The author, who is highly qualified, presents an analysis of its ineffectiveness on technical grounds, and its contribution to further instability.

- J. Scrininger

(The SF national office will copy the article for you upon request.)

Washington, D.C.

I've read Science for Peace with great interest and find it of tremendous value in offsetting the insane viewpoint of our Reagan administration. How grateful I am (and everyone should be) to A.R. and the Board and all the members.

- E. Linson

Mauai, Hawaii

HAWAIIANS ASK CANADA NOT TO SHELL THEIR SACRED ISLAND

I want to reinforce my feelings against the frequent bombings of Kaho'olawe Island. It is bad enough that Kaho'olawe is bombed by the American military, but the continued military participation of several foreign RIMAPAC nations embarrasses our American government and angers many people of my county and throughout the state.

Please stop the bombing of Kaho'olawe by foreign governments and work toward an early cessation of the bombing of Kaho'olawe by our own forces.

Letter to Pres. Reagan

by Hannibal Tavares, Mayor, County of Mauai

Dundas, Ontario

I've just read through your BULLETIN (March edition). What a great source of information. Congratulations.

Enclosed is a notice for your April edition. So far I've received responses from Science for Peace Toronto, B.C. and Brock. If you could encourage your members in other chapters to respond before the end of April, there would be an even greater SAP presence in the finished book.

- Christine Peringer

Peace Research Institute-Dundas

(CPRI-Dundas is compiling a resource book of Canadian peace group activities. If you have lost the questionnaire you sent, write freely a description of what you are doing and send it to CPRE-Dundas, 25 Dundas Ave., Dundas, Ont. LH9 4E5)

Toronto, March 25

MESSAGE TO MIKHAIL GORBACHEV, GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE SOVIET UNION:

The initiatives taken by your government to stop and reverse the arms race and particularly to prevent the development of new weapons have raised the hopes of humanity. The negotiation of a comprehensive test ban preceded by the withholding of further tests and accompanied by a willingness to consider new approaches to verification represents, in the view of the undersigned, the key to reversing the drift to disaster that threatens us all.

We hope that pending a considered response by the Western democracies, you will not be compelled to change your course by the refusal so far by the United States to resume negotiations for a comprehensive test ban, which is essential to end the arms race.

George Ignatieff
John Polanyi
Anatol Rapoport

From the Stanley Foundation conference report on The United States, the United Nations and the Future:

"The group (1985 conference) believed that the strongly anti-UN policies of the early Reagan years had a profound effect on the Hill (U.S. Congress), triggering an unleashing of years of pent-up congressional frustration with the United Nations' perceived anti-Americanism, its extravagances and inefficiencies and the abuse meted out to Israel in its plenary bodies. As the overwhelming vote in favor of the Kasse amendment demonstrated, erosion of support for the United Nations now includes many moderates and liberals of both parties - parts of the political spectrum that have been strongly internationalist in the past. If the United States is to avoid losing the United Nations to opponents of multilateralism in the United States, and to opponents of the United States in the United Nations, the administration now has no alternative to aggressive and constructive leadership."

Copies of the complete report are available free of charge from the Stanley Foundation, 820 East Third St. Muscatine, Iowa 52761, U.S.A.

REMINDER

Conference on ACCIDENTAL NUCLEAR WAR
MAY 26-30, 1986 UBC, VANCOUVER

Science for Peace Ottawa, as announced in the March BULLETIN, is sponsoring awards at the annual Youth Science Fair this year. Judges are Angelo Mingarelli, James Neelin and Wm. McGowan, all officers and members of the chapter. Like New Brunswick they offer both a junior and a senior prize.

The two chapters will extend their experience to the establishment of national prizes next year. It is reported that there will be a Science for Peace Month in the Youth Science Fairs calendar for 1986-87. Other chapters or individual members interested in this project should contact either of the chapters at the addresses listed on page 4.

1986 officers of the B.C. Chapter are George Spiegelman (president), Luis Sobrino (1st vice president), Michael Wallace (2nd vice president), Colin Bell (treasurer), Frank Nesil (secretary). Vera Webb, (membership secretary). Jim Pouls (RAR 1st liaison).

The chapter is involved in the hosting of the May International Conference on Accidental Nuclear War (See flier that accompanied the March BULLETIN and in conducting a nationwide survey of materials and teaching aids available for the publication of a Canadian counterpart to the esteemed U.S. Peace and World Order Studies: A Curriculum Guide. CIIPS is funding this study. (The questionnaire enclosed with the last BULLETIN should be filled out and returned, as requested PLEASE, asks Dr. Bell, project director.)

Science at Paix Quebec will hold its annual meeting in Montreal on May 14. Speaker will be Jocelyn Coulon. Details of time and place will appear in the next BULLETIN.

Many chapter members are among speakers at the April 21-23 Montreal conference on Illusions and Realities in the Nuclear Age.

Annual meeting of Science for Peace - Toronto will be at 8 pm April 17, at Trinity College at the University of Toronto, Toronto.

The chapter is hoping to publish papers delivered in its highly successful lecture and seminar series this year.

Secretary Arnold Simoni received a CIIPS grant for the preparation of the paper on regional conflict listed under BOOKSHELF this month. Awarded a Killam research fellowship for this year was Ian Hacking (U. of Toronto).

Two chapter presidents will be on sabbatical next year: James Gardner (Waterloo), Michael Pearson (Quebec).
President's corner

The image of the adversary as an Evil Empire is a manifestation of the same need to reconcile deliberate preparations of the final Holocaust with the concept of an extenuating responsibility as a human being, in particular as a scientist. In a recent exchange of views in Physics Today one enthusiast of Star Wars wrote:

...from our point of view, there is no such thing as a good political relationship with the Soviet Union...War is the norm, not the 'abnorm' for them...They are combined intellectually, politically, and ideologically, that the only way for Mother Russia to be safe is for her to be totally in control of the world. All other peoples must be subordinated to Mother Russia...The Soviet view comes centuries in the past and gaseous centuries into the future...

Once the adversary is dehumanized, the voice of conscience is stilled, or else one resorts to denial. Here is Colin S. Gray's comment on the contention that nuclear war would be a catastrophe unparalleled in human history:

Nuclear war may or may not be a catastrophe unparalleled in world history, but it is unlikely to be the functional equivalent of the cataclysmic biblical flood, notwithstanding the recent claim advanced by some scientists to the effect that nuclear war would probably trigger climatic changes that could be fatal to life on earth. The new apocalyptic vision of the nuclear winter. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the Mongols and the Inca plagues were viewed in much the same eschatological terms in which many people today view nuclear war. These visitations from God were terrible, but mankind remained in business. As Herman Kahn sought to establish more than twenty years ago, catastrophe...can come in different sizes...

Dehumanization of the adversary and distortion (or denial) of reality are not the only ways of coming to terms with conscience. There is a third way: simply shutting the world of people out of one's sphere of vision. One can escape into a modern equivalent of the monastery—the war research laboratory, a world as inspiring to a certain type of young, brilliant scientist of today as the world of fasting, prayer and ascetic self-denial must have been to the anchorites of another age. A vivid and frightening view of these devotees of death technology is given by William J. Broad in STAR WARRIORS, subtitled, "A penetrating look into the lives of young scientists behind our space age weaponry"...These young scientists have cut themselves off from the world of ordinary human concerns. Broad writes:

...The fabric of friendship extended even in the language they spoke. Classified projects led to classified jokes. After a while, the young scientists began to be cut off from the spontaneity of the outside world...It was like the Gulag...High-tech Gulag such as O group are seductive...The prisoners are there of their own accord, serving both science and war, creating in order to destroy, part of an elite, yet pams in a terrifying game...

There is an account of how a young scientist and his girl friend drifted apart. It was weaponry that broke them up...

"My view of weapons has changed," Peter recalled. "Until 1980 or so I didn't want to have anything to do with anything. Back in those days I thought there was something fundamentally evil about weapons. Now I see it as an interesting physics problem."

Success and proximity to power must have played a major part in the young scientist's conversion (or seduction). Peter's devices worked. "All power corrupts," said Lord Acton. "Nothing fails like success," said Kenneth Boulding.

1) Cited in S.Vegt, A HISTORY OF MILITARISM, pp. 46-45.
2) Correspondence section in PHYSICS TODAY, February, 1986.
4) Dr. Hans Blumenthal has called my attention to errors in last month's column: Guillotin was misspelled as was l'égalité. All Accents were also missing. Apologies.

A.R.