

Science for Peace

# The Bulletin

April 2008

## *A note from the President*

Paul Hamel

Members of Science for Peace have taken up in a vigorous manner a considerable number of issues that have an impact on the understanding of the nature and consequences of climate change. From the Global Issues Project to recent forums, considerable discussion has taken place concerning climate change and how some of the proposed solutions can be promoted. These efforts have become all the more imperative given Canada's role as a leading producer of greenhouse gas emissions due in considerable part to the nature of the massive energy reserves which exist in this country.

It is history and geography, however, that prevent a serious change in the policies which lead to the increasing contributions Canadians make to possibly the greatest challenge humans have had to confront (given the previous track record of humans on nuclear weapons, famine and war, the outlook is bleak). Historical in the sense that control of the exploitation of natural resources is strictly a provincial responsibility, thus preventing the intervention of the majority of Canadians in determining what constitutes "polluting policies". Geographical in that the solid base of the far right wing ruling party (who received less than 25% of the possible votes (36% of actual votes) in the last election) resides in the same region where exploitation of these polluting resources generates handsome profits.

Not to be outdone, the agribusiness sector is now increasing massively the levels of crop production for the purposes of conversion to ethanol for fuel. That this has driven the prices

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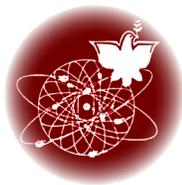
*International Peace Bureau in  
Alexandria, Egypt*  
- Janis Alton

of basic foods to new highs and due to the notion that the only people who are allowed to eat are those who can pay, new levels of hunger have reached all regions of the world. Furthermore, as two articles in Science Magazine have recently reported, the production of agrifuels actually results in greater production of greenhouse gases.

Lost, however, in this discussion is the fundamental role that an economic system based on growth has in driving these problems to their (likely) catastrophic conclusions. As is well understood, capitalism's various crises resulted in the well-organized generation of consumer societies where self-worth was measured in the number of toys one possessed ("health, liberty and the pursuit of toys" as articulated by the slave-owning Locke over 400 years ago). Thus, while individual choices concerning the amount of air travel in which we engage are suitable for personal aspects of reducing our "footprint", our program requires that we also work towards a fundamental change in the organization of our

society. Hoping that yet another on-line petition will somehow sway the folks on the Hill will never counter in any meaningful way the voice of the white men in the towers of downtown Toronto or Calgary. These same voices are those that continue to make Canada a warring nation in order to drive profits upward yet are immune to the consequences of their policies where, for example, we learn from the World Food Program that 2.5 million Afghans are at severe risk of famine despite all the "help" we provide. Likewise, there exists sufficient food in this country to ensure that no one goes hungry ever. However, this same consumer society denies food to those who cannot pay for it, a profound abrogation of our responsibilities to each other due to a system predicated on hoarding.

Thus, a profound connection between a system driving us to the collapse of the biosphere and our control of the "means of destruction" needs to be articulated if we wish seriously to alter the course of our history.



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## *Climate Change and Carbon Taxes*

Derek Paul

Climate change is now becoming widely recognized as a world emergency. It is not surprising, therefore, that the press in Canada gave prominence on 20 February 2008 to the announcement of British Columbia's program to take a step forward in dealing with climate change, and praising the plan for including the first tax in Canada that is applied equally to the burning of coal, natural gas, oil and other liquid fuels. The imposition of a carbon tax recognizes that greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced and that the tax mechanism, especially if combined with incentives to reduce emissions, can have the desired effect.

Five successive Federal Governments since the 1992 international conference in Rio have failed to act significantly on greenhouse gas emissions except through voluntary measures devised to make industries more efficient in their use of energy; and, during the intervening years, Canada's *per capita* emissions have risen annually.

Early in 2008, the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (NRTEE) released its 2007 report entitled, "Getting to 2050: Canada's transition to a low-emissions future." The report examines how a 65 percent reduction of greenhouse gas emissions might be achieved by 2050 through the imposition of a

carbon tax. In their study, it was assumed the details of technological change would be left to “market forces”, which, it was assumed, would adjust to the imposed, gradually rising taxes. Taxes are plural here, since there are many greenhouse gases to be taxed, but the tax on any one of them — and carbon dioxide is the most prominent — would be the same per tonne of the gas emitted, regardless of the source. Thus carbon dioxide would be taxed equally per tonne whether it originated from coal, oil or natural gas. I shall refer to a tax of this kind as a blanket tax, as distinct from one that targets a particular class of emitters, such as engines.

NRTEE’s report shows, according to computer modelings, that reductions of greenhouse gases of 65 percent could be achieved by 2050, though the carbon tax might have to be rather high in the latter years. The highest required tax rate to achieve the 65 percent reductions is scenario-dependent, that is, it depends how in detail the tax is increased in the earlier years. The finding that the tax alone can achieve such reductions without disastrous effects in the economy is impressive, since the measures considered by NRTEE did not include any incentives. And surely, sticks and carrots amount to more effective means than sticks alone. The BC Government’s inclusion of incentives is important to note in this context.

The NRTEE scenarios have five enabling conditions, the first of which is that “Canada will have to act in consort with the world.” This first condition can surely not be met in the short term, and would be hard to bring about within a few years, so that it would be foolish to rely on its fulfilment when planning reductions of emissions, More important, Prime Minister Harper

has said that he will not impose a carbon tax.

In addition, Jeffrey Simpson stated in *The Globe and Mail*, 8 January 2008, that the data contained in NRTEE’s report reveal that the Federal Government’s current plans for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 65 percent by 2050 will not achieve their aim.

\* \* \* \* \*

Since a national carbon tax seems rather remote, and other Federal plans inadequate, it is worth a quick look at what else can be done. The main burden of dealing with climate change within Canada thus falls, for the time being, on provincial governments, municipal govern-

ments, individuals, institutions, businesses and industries, and will require excellent collaboration among these.

The next dimension in planning the reductions of greenhouse gas emissions includes the sectors of the economy together with plans on

what to do in each sector.

Yet another dimension is that of bringing about a change in public attitudes, so that conservation will become a new focus.

Lastly there is the time dimension, since much that needs to be done requires long lead times. For example, it is foreseeable that, in order to reduce emissions sufficiently from truck transport, it may be necessary to revive or reinvent the railways, so as to displace much of what is found on today’s major road arteries onto a system that could be electrified. The new infrastructure needed to do this is considerable, since execution of such a plan could take 20 years. Therefore, the planning would need to start soon.

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The fact that BC's climate change plan contains incentives as well as taxes may indicate that the Province is on the right track. However, a tax of \$10 per tonne of carbon dioxide is so modest that its main effect may merely be to alert people to the higher levels of tax to follow. When higher levels are implemented, the effects of non-fulfilment of NRTEE's first enabling condition will start to be felt. Carbon burned in BC will be taxed, but what about imports from far away places? Will BC attempt to impose a tax at ports of entry, to match the carbon tax on manufactures in BC? Will it also attempt to impose a tax on the long-distance transport of imported goods? These factors will be increasingly important since, if they are ignored, they will amount to subsidizing foreign products. An even more difficult problem will arise when products from across Canada arrive in BC from provinces that do not have comparable taxes. How will the Government of BC impose the equalizing taxes?

The BC Government has had the wisdom to precede its imposition of the new tax with a gift to each of its citizens. And it has legislated that the tax must be revenue-neutral, so that all funds raised will go back to individuals and to businesses in BC — a factor that was important in gaining political support for the tax. It also has been planned with some regard to those with the lowest incomes, since any blanket tax affects most those who are near or below the poverty line.

The part of the rebate benefiting individuals needs eventually to be slanted toward the lowest incomes, perhaps as illustrated in fig.1.

The style of rebate illustrated in fig.1 obviously benefits the poorest most of all. It would benefit young adults in post secondary education increasingly as the tax rises.

Not all those who favour a blanket carbon tax are in favour of it being revenue-neutral. Some would prefer to see a portion of the tax retained for essential research and infrastructure development related to climate change, and there is wisdom in that too.

Apart from Quebec, which has imposed a targeted carbon tax even smaller than that of British Columbia, the other provinces have not yet introduced such taxes. In Ontario, members of the Global Issues Project of Science for Peace are endeavouring to stimulate more action to address climate change at the provincial level. In addition there is much activity at the municipal level and with individuals and businesses. Members of Science for Peace could do well to look at the website: [www.toronto.zero-footprint.net](http://www.toronto.zero-footprint.net).

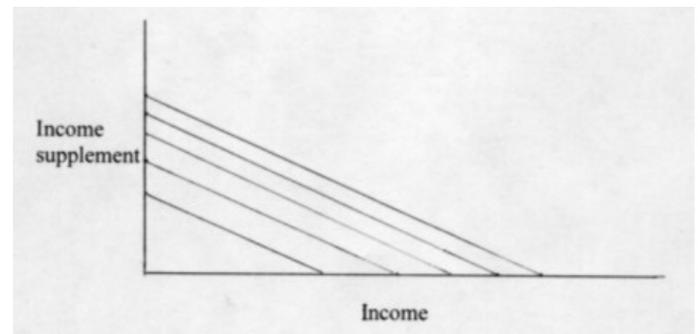
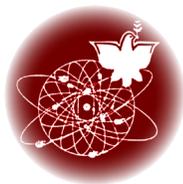


Fig.1 A hypothetical slanted income supplement shown as a function of income and of level of funding made available from the carbon tax. Each diagonal line represents an equal step increase in the funds made available, on the arbitrary assumption that the pre-supplement income distribution is flat.



## *Zerofootprint's Emissions Calculator Launched in Toronto - 26 February 2008*

Derek Paul and Adele Buckley

Science for Peace, through its Global Issues Project has become the 55<sup>th</sup> partner of Zerofootprint Toronto.

On 26 February, Zerofootprint's Community Partner Program held an official launch, with Toronto's Mayor David Miller speaking to an audience of Zerofootprint partners, Zerofootprint staff and the press. The Mayor noted that his council had voted unanimously to make Toronto the first participating city, adding that unanimity is rare on city councils. The aim is to be the world's leading city in addressing climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The goal is to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases by 80 percent by the year 2050, and he said that the city was budgeting to \$1 billion toward this in the next five years. Mr Miller emphasized that the cost of the Zerofootprint partnership to the City of Toronto is nil.

Zerofootprint is an organization founded and led by Dr Ron Dembo, and the *calculator* (see below) is its latest and most ambitious product. Zerofootprint boasts 15 workers in the Toronto area, but there are also branches in Boulder (Colorado), Seattle and elsewhere, and Dembo is building a worldwide network. The goal is to mobilize and empower large groups of individuals, through their businesses, non-governmental organizations, and universities and promote collaboration among them and governments, especially municipal governments. Working together, through partnering organizations, individuals pledge specific actions to reduce their collective carbon and ecological footprint. This is done by harnessing the power of social net-

working, the Internet and software.

What the program offers is an interactive *calculator*, which anyone can access at [www.toronto.zerofootprint.net](http://www.toronto.zerofootprint.net). This website enables its users to assess their own carbon footprint, to compare it with average footprints for people in other cities and to plan to reduce their footprint. The footprints are measured in tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per person per annum. The *calculator* offers a wide range of lifestyle options, for example in travel, food consumption, home energy usage, and each choice yields a numerical result, since it computes the reductions that a selected option would bring about. Users of the website can create their own portfolio within it, which will keep track of their progress.

Members of Science for Peace who want to use this website should first register and log-in, then click on "my communities", followed by "my group"; then search for the "Science for Peace" icon in the right-hand tool bar and click on that.

Dr Dembo said he has been working on this project for three years, and that collaboration was an absolutely central element of the approach of Zerofootprint, essential if it is to make a real difference. Deborah Kaplan, Vice-chair of Zerofootprint, stated that about 20,000 individuals are presently in the system. Their plan is to create many community partnerships in cities throughout the world.

***Members of Science for Peace are urged to follow suit and to persuade their friends, collaborators and extended families to do the same.***



## Step One: Reducing the Ecological Footprint by Changing Technology

Helmut Burkhardt

### Is homo sapiens in trouble?

The Global Footprint Network<sup>1,2</sup> tells us that our ecological footprint is 1.4 times bigger than the ecologically productive area our planet has to offer and half of that is the carbon footprint that results from burning coal, oil, and natural gas. Therefore, our technology-based civilization in its present form is not sustainable. The extinction rate of species is one indicator of the seriousness of the situation. At present between 20,000 and 100,000 species are disappearing per year.<sup>3</sup> The gravity of this becomes clear when comparing this with the natural extinction rate of some three species a year in the pre-technology era. Without radical changes and swift sapient action humans may be among the disappearing species.

### The root causes of our problems:

It is necessary to understand and to eliminate the root causes of the problem. Human-kind's environmental impact (I) is determined by three factors. Population (P), affluence or consumption per person (A), and the kind of technology used (T). The famous IPAT equation by Ehrlich and Holdren summarizes the

root causes of environmental destruction<sup>4</sup>

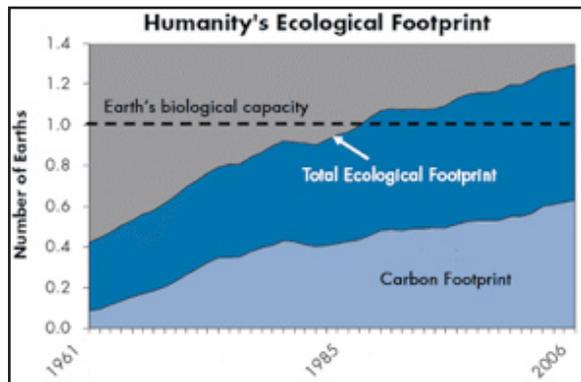
$$I = P * A * T$$

Each of the factors is of importance for the total impact. Using the Ehrlich-Holdren formula, our present technology factor can be illustrated by taking the extinction rate of 30,000 species per year as a measure for humanity's environmental impact, the global average energy consumption rate of 2.3 kW/cap, and the present world population of 6.5 billion humans. The result is: T

= 2 species per year extinct for each GW of energy used by humans. By comparison, Ontario's energy use is some 120 GW, and thus we are responsible for the disappearance of some 240 species a year.

### The solution:

James Lovelock claims there is no solution. Climate change will destroy our civilization, and therefore, the action he recommends is to enjoy life while we can.<sup>5</sup> With due respect for Lovelock's scientific contributions, we should not give up so easily. The Wasan Action Framework on Climate Change and Energy<sup>6</sup> indicates the solutions to choose as well as the directions to avoid. What can be done about each of the three root causes of our problem?



1 Global footprint: [http://www.footprintnetwork.org/index.php/blog/af/what\\_exactly\\_is\\_the\\_carbon\\_footprint](http://www.footprintnetwork.org/index.php/blog/af/what_exactly_is_the_carbon_footprint)

2 Footprint details for Canada: [http://www.wwf.ca/LivingPlanet/WWF-Canada\\_LPR.pdf](http://www.wwf.ca/LivingPlanet/WWF-Canada_LPR.pdf)

3 Extinction rate of species: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holocene\\_extinction\\_event](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holocene_extinction_event)

4 Root causes of environmental impact: [http://ip-at-s.kb-creative.net/IPAT\\_and\\_ImPACT.html](http://ip-at-s.kb-creative.net/IPAT_and_ImPACT.html)

5 Lovelock's non-solution: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/theguardian/2008/mar/01/scienceofclimatechange.climatechange>

6 The Wasan Action Framework on Climate Change and Energy: <http://www.pugwashgroup.ca/events/documents/2008/2008.01.04-wasan-action-framework.pdf>

First: the number of people. On a global scale, it is practically impossible to reduce the number of people, because life and procreation are basic rights for everyone. When resources run out, and anthropogenic climate becomes hostile, will human numbers be reduced by WW3? I have no idea on how to deal in a peaceful way with population as a cause for the collapse of our civilization. Any suggestions?

The UN population conferences are a start. The recommendations of the last one in Cairo in 1994 were on educating and empowering women with regard to the reproductive process. However, these were not fully implemented. Two religious groups, the Catholics, and the Muslims did not sign the agreements to begin with, and the money pledged for implementation did not come forth either.

Much more attention must be given to the population question by all sectors of society. I suggest that Science for Peace Global Issues Project put a serious effort into the planning of a population Roundtable, which in turn should follow up with promoting an intensification of the UN population discussions with great urgency.

Second: the per capita consumption of vital natural resources, including energy. Efficiency is a key word for all. Improving the overall efficiency requires better technology, but also better societal infrastructure, and better individual attitudes. Changing of technology requires financial means for research, development and implementation. Changing infrastructure and personal habits is even harder to achieve, and will take time. Unfortunately, more conservation can only be asked of the rich. For the sake of global justice the more numerous poor should be allowed to consume a bit more per capita, to lift them out of miserable poverty. Therefore, it is likely that the global average of consumption per capita will rise in the future, even with the rich tightening their belts.

Third: Technology as a root cause of homo sapiens' problems. The kind of technology we

are using today severely burdens the ecosystems; in particular, the environmentally damaging fossil fuels based energy technology. This technology change is feasible, is urgent, and must be done as quickly as possible if we are not to exhaust the ecological capital of our planet.

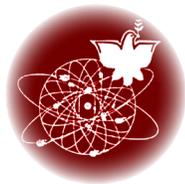
It is a scientific certainty, that renewable energy resources alone can drive the world economy now, and in the long term. The main resources that are technically feasible too are solar, wind and geothermal energy resources. The swift and forceful development and implementation of these technologies can solve our climate change and energy problems by removing the carbon part of our ecological footprint. This technical fix can make our technology based civilization sustainable for some time, until the other two root causes can be addressed. Inevitably, the question of economic feasibility of the technology change will arise. My answer is that it is more economical than the alternative: what is the cost of Armageddon?

In addition to knowing the right direction it is essential to know where not to go. Nuclear power should not be used, because it makes us vulnerable, and leads to nuclear weapons proliferation, as experience shows in India, Pakistan, Israel, and likely Iran. Large scale biomass use should be avoided, because it competes with food, and is environmentally destructive. Branson's Virgin Airlines are bragging about the first transatlantic flight of their Jumbo Jet with 'green' biofuels. I figured out, that in one day of flying the 'hungry' Boeing 747 gobbles up the amount of biomass that could supply the daily bread for 1.5 million people.

#### **The path to the solution:**

Scientists and engineers must convince the media and all educators that there are feasible solutions. All together must then educate the public, and the decision makers that the world economy can be driven by renewable energy resources alone. One essential task on the way to implementation of feasible solutions is to remove the obstacles to change created by social

inertia, and vested interests in the existing system, which may bring short term financial gains by using up the global ecological capital of the global commons.



## *The Science for Peace Carbon Tax Committee*

Metta Spencer

Since October, a Science for Peace committee has been conducting monthly meetings in a Chinese restaurant to study the pros and cons of a carbon tax. Our goal, from the outset, was a finite one: to prepare ourselves to give presentations to other organizations and promote a carbon tax — though of course if we had come across a better solution, there was no reason not to choose it instead.

Fortunately, several energy experts who do not belong to our organization consented to give talks to us, then they all continued participating until the end. Peter Victor, especially, was a helpful contributor. He and David Bell, another participant, have been deans of the faculty of environmental studies at York University. Peter began by putting us through an experiential role playing event, giving each of us a batch of carbon permits and a budget for our imaginary companies. We learned the “cap and trade” approach by calculating whether to buy or sell our carbon permits to other members of the group, so that every participant’s business firm was better off for trading its rights.

In the end, the group generally came to the view that the carbon tax approach is, overall, preferable to the cap-and-trade system. We wanted some training so that we could offer this information to community groups, and again Peter Victor came to our rescue. He prepared a Power Point presentation (though we had to use paper hand-outs for lack of a projector), and we discussed it at some length.

At about the same time, Lynn McDonald joined our group and asked us to jointly work on circulating a petition, to be submitted to parliament. Unfortunately, she went on a research trip to Britain before we had reached a complete consensus about this petition, though its phraseology has already been approved by parliament, a preliminary phase that seems to be required of all petitions.

In any case, most members of our group feel reasonably prepared to give public talks, using the 20-minute Power Point presentation that has been worked out. We will make a “trial run” at the March board meeting. We also encourage everyone to invite us, individually or as teams, to present it to groups of your friends or any other organization, whose members are concerned about climate change. Phone Helmut Burkhardt (416) 694-8385). Mel Watkins 416-975-0156, Adele Buckley (416) 491-9307), or any other member of the group, or email the Science for Peace office ([sfp@physics.utoronto.ca](mailto:sfp@physics.utoronto.ca)).

Also, in the late spring we may start another similar study group if there is enough demand. Again the purpose will not be merely to learn about carbon taxes for our own personal interest, but as a preparation for political engagement with the issue. Those interested should contact Metta Spencer, the project’s organizer (416/789-2294), before April 13 or after May 20.



## Gaza - Humanitarian Emergency and the Threat of Nuclear War

Judith Deutsch

Bruce Cox, national director of Greenpeace, recently spoke at an Amnesty International conference in Toronto about the reversal in the meaning of “reality” in establishment discourse in that claims of being “realistic” now indicate manipulative deceit. The emergency in Gaza, a siege and now an invasion, is a catastrophic culmination of massive deception and convenient untruths. Gaza is a man-made tragedy of psychotic proportions and distortion of reality.

Israel, with its U.S. and Canadian supporters, claims that Gaza poses an existential threat to Jews. Israel has the fourth largest military in the world and President Bush’s FY2009 budget request to Congress includes \$2.55 billion in military aid to Israel, a 9% increase over actual spending in FY2007. According to Seymour Hersh, Israel has at least 500 nuclear warheads and would actually use them as a “Samson option.”<sup>1</sup> These distortions, this sense of entitlement to perpetrate aggression, was heightened when Labor M.K. Deputy Minister of Defense Matan Vilnai threatened Gaza with a holocaust (BBC News, 2/29/08).

The actual facts of Israel’s criminal acts are highly accessible and reliable:

- Regarding the danger of Qassam rockets, as of January 2008, 2,677 Palestinians from the Gaza Strip were killed by Israel, and 11 Israelis from Siderot have been killed by Qassams since 2000 (UN/OCHA). Air and land bombardments have killed 101 Palestinians since 27 February, and injured hundreds of others (Palestinian Centre for Human Rights).

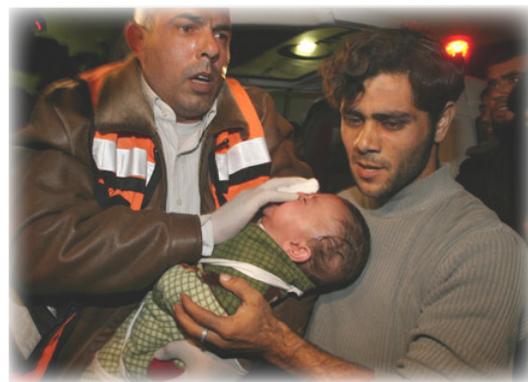
- Israel “withdrew” from Gaza in 2005 but maintained control of all air, sea, and land access, control of water, and left 40% of the

land buried in rubble and uncultivable. According to UNRWA, 2007 saw the closure of 95% of Gaza’s factories due to the siege.

- Dr. Eyad El-Sarraj, Director of the Gaza Community Mental Health Programme, has called for an international effort to end the siege of Gaza. He writes that 85% of Gazans depend on humanitarian aid for securing their basic needs of survival, and writes of the “critical humanitarian and mental ramifications of this siege on the civilians which threaten their life and significantly deepen[ed] their suffering.”

- Physicians for Human Rights/Israel documents how the Israeli army deliberately delays its responses to allow seriously ill patients to leave Gaza for life-saving treatment, and Amnesty International states that dozens of Palestinian patients have died because of refusal to allow passage.

- Defense for Children International/Palestine Section (DCI/PS --BBC report) states that 40% of children suffer from insomnia in Gaza. Many children have known nothing but conflict and poverty in their lives and the ongoing cycle of poverty and violence is having a devastating impact. Rates of anemia caused in part by a lack of food and adequate nutrition has increased since 2007, with 70% of infants aged nine months now suffering from anemia. Diarrhea is on the increase, partly due to lack of clean water and the lack of hygiene. The most recent figures indicate that 13% to



1 Hersh, Seymour (1991). *The Samson Option*. Faber and Faber, Boston.

15% of Gaza children are stunted in growth due to malnutrition. This NGO details the circumstances of each child's death, usually by deliberate Israeli military operations or through unexploded ordnance.

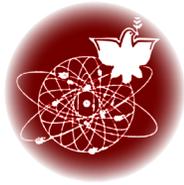
This is only a partial report of facts on the ground, an account that consistently eludes our major media. In February, 2008, McMaster University took the position that the phrase "Israeli apartheid" was unacceptable and inflammatory and barred its use on campus. But in Israel, the country supposedly threatened with annihilation, over one hundred Israeli intellectuals went a great deal further in criticizing Israel in what is known as the "Olga Document": "The State of Israel was supposed to tear down the walls of the ghetto; it is now constructing the biggest ghetto in the entire history of the Jews. The State of Israel was supposed to be a democracy;

it has set up a colonial structure, combining unmistakable elements of apartheid with the arbitrariness of brutal military occupation."<sup>2</sup>

The manipulation of reality to justify aggression appears to be a callous perquisite of people in power. It involves an intolerable distortion of reality and it is now rampant.

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2 In June 2004 Israeli activists and scholars met in Givat Olga. The result of a series of meetings resulted in a new initiative called "The Olga Appeal". In this document they state their unity "in the belief that peace and reconciliation are contingent on Israel's recognition of its responsibility for the injustices done to the indigenous people, the Palestinians." Among its endorsers are Prof. Anat Biletzki, Andre Draznin, Haim Hanegbi, Yehudith Harel, Michel (Micado) Warschawski, Oren Medicks, Prof. Kimmerling and Meron Benvenisti.



## *Governments Lie*

Jean Smith

At the end of a lecture to journalism students I.F. Stone always left them with two words of advice that they should never forget: "Governments Lie!" A recent promotional piece sent out by the Federal Conservative government has to be viewed with that in mind.

Against a background of a faded picture of a Canadian soldier and a clear one of an enormous tank is the message, "THEY PROTECT US." From whom, one wants to ask; but they avoid answering.

In another space is the question: "Do you support the Harper government investing in the Canadian Forces and giving them the tools they need?" Above that are pictures of two planes, the new one being much larger than the old one. For what do they need new and larger planes? Is it to drop more bombs to kill more people and destroy their homes?

There is no implication that it is to help Afghans and yet Peter MacKay is quoted as saying: "We can all be proud of the great work that the Canadian Military is doing, both here at home and overseas, in places like Afghanistan."

The final insulting statement is, "With a strong military, we have a safe and secure Canada. The Harper government is making sure that our True North stays strong and free. We are again a leader on the world stage and are ensuring that Canada's voice is heard."

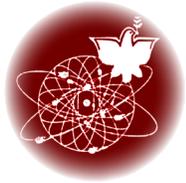
I think you will agree that I.F. Stone's words are an appropriate retort to all that nonsense.

To protect us we need support for more and better public services such as public transit, education, housing and infrastructure. More money for the military to kill other people who

have done us no harm is an obscene waste of resources and very cruel.

Revenue from a peace tax could provide a measure of real security whereas more military

action jeopardizes that security. (Contact Conscience Canada: [www.consciencecanada.ca](http://www.consciencecanada.ca)).



## *What the Presidential Candidates Say - and Don't Say*

Metta Spencer

Both Russia and the United States have been undergoing presidential electoral campaigns of quite different forms. Will there be any significant change in the governance of the two countries? The question is worth contemplating.

The new Russian president, 42-year-old Dimitry Medvedev, has already been elected in a landslide. He is almost alone in Vladimir Putin's inner circle with no history in the KGB (or, as it is known today, the FSB). Medvedev is a lawyer by training, but most recently headed the immense Gazprom company. He is reputedly far more liberal than Putin, who picked him as his successor. Almost everyone expects him to do the bidding of his mentor, who is becoming his subordinate, the prime minister. (Medvedev could resign very soon, enabling Putin legally to run again for the presidency.)

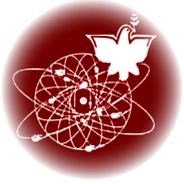
Despite being considered a cipher, Medvedev's campaign speeches indicated a relatively democratic outlook. For example, he said: "Russia is a country of legal nihilism. No European country can boast such a universal disregard for the rule of law." He also stated that: "Freedom is inseparable from the actual recognition by the people of the power of law. The supremacy of the law should become one of our basic values." And further: "One of the key elements of our work in the next four years will be ensuring the independence of our legal system from the executive and legislative branches of power." (That will be progress.)

Turning to the United States, the most

forward-looking candidate is Barack Obama. While he gives inspirational speeches, he is often accused of providing few specific details. True, but he spells out his commitments on his web site, [www.barackobama.com](http://www.barackobama.com). (Click on "issues" at the top of the page.) Thus you may be surprised to discover that he intends to reduce carbon emissions by 80 percent by 2050 and will invest heavily in clean energy. Obama is the only candidate who opposed the Iraq War (Hillary Clinton voted for it and John McCain still supports fighting it).

Unlike the other presidential candidates, Obama remarkably promises to work toward the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. A section titled "Toward a Nuclear Free World" pledges: "Obama will set a goal of a world without nuclear weapons, and pursue it. Obama will always maintain a strong deterrent as long as nuclear weapons exist. But he will take several steps down the long road toward eliminating nuclear weapons. He will stop the development of new nuclear weapons; work with Russia to take U.S. and Russian ballistic missiles off hair trigger alert; seek dramatic reductions in U.S. and Russian stockpiles of nuclear weapons and material; and set a goal to expand the U.S.-Russian ban on intermediate-range missiles so that the agreement is global."

Don't hold your breath, but a year from now, there may be two leaders in the world who will sit down together and sensibly address the dangers that face our planet. There's hope!



## *UK CND goes mainstream - Golden Anniversary Meeting*

*Global Summit for a Nuclear Weapon-Free World  
London, February 16-17 2008*

Peter Nicholls

To commemorate the first CND meetings and Easter March to Aldermaston in 1958 the UK's Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament organised a Global Summit at London's City Hall. Since 1958 the world has changed and CND has changed.<sup>1</sup> In 1958 we were in the midst of the cowboy era of nuclear weapons testing, with madly massive H-bombs, tens of megatons in size, exploded in the atmosphere, and generating huge quantities of radioactive fall-out. But in 1958 the UK had tested only a rather unsatisfactory H-device the previous year and had very few weapons of its own.

Japanese fisherman Aikichi Kuboyama had been killed by fall-out from the March 1 1954 H-bomb test on Bikini atoll<sup>2</sup> - a test which had not even been announced - the exclusion zone for which was far too small, and whose bang was much bigger than the scientists expected (they had ignored one of the key reactions - bomb tests were real in those days). Nothing like that could happen now. Today the nuclear weapons business is circumscribed by treaties that ban proliferation, that promote disarmament, that block all testing, that limit shorter range N-weapons and that set up nuclear weapons free zones (with hard-wrung negative security assurances from the remaining NW

states). These progressive legal changes would not have occurred without political action such as that engaged in by CND. Yet CND has itself since moved from a radical left pressure group to a technically sophisticated campaigning organisation with political links, collegial relations with thinktanks and coordinating with other campaigns and peace and human rights groups.

The summit saw plenary talks from Sergio Duarte (UN Disarmament High Representative), Bianca Jagger (UN Human Rights ambassador) and Abdul Minty (South African disarmament ambassador). Technical sessions were coordinated by key figures in the NW abolition area including Canada's Douglas Roche, still putting in an immense effort on the part of the Middle Powers Initiative. US participants included Amb. Thomas Graham and George Perkovich of the Carnegie Endowment. While keeping the faith in eventual nuclear abolition, we do work on smaller issues that help



circumscribe the usefulness of nuclear weapons or threats of NW use – getting a NW Convention onto the negotiating table, supporting moves towards an Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty, pressuring the UK in particular and NWS in general to adopt more disarming postures with respect to UN disarmament resolutions.

I was impressed by the work of the IPFM<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kate Hudson (2005) CND – now more than ever (Vision Paperbacks, London).

<sup>2</sup> Richard Hudson & Ben Shahn (1965) Kuboyama and the Saga of the Lucky Dragon (Yoseloff, New York).

<sup>3</sup> IPFM (2007) Global Fissile Material Report ([www.fissilematerials.org](http://www.fissilematerials.org)).

described by Zia Mian (Pakistan and Princeton). He pointed out the problems – that control and eventual elimination of fissile material will require something more extensive than the current ideas for an FMCT. We were made aware of the tension between NW abolition and continued use of nuclear energy; there is too much overlap to be sure of effective control – a NW-free world would be more stable if there were no NE plants. But NE seems here to stay at least at some level – the NW-free countries that demand action on nuclear disarmament also demand the help in developing NE promised by the NPT.

The meeting was welcomed by London Mayor Ken Livingstone. He is in a closer contest than expected for the mayoralty and has

faced criticism for his donation of City Hall facilities for meetings such as this. If his main rival were to be elected the price for such a day would rise to £25000. CND also organised a Saturday evening reception to honour the class of '58. Of the six original sponsors on Kate Hudson's poster only one is still with us. Now in his nineties Michael Foot is too frail to come any more but sent his best wishes. Other stalwarts of the fifties and early sixties were there, including Dorothy Thompson, Tony Benn, Pat Arrowsmith and Bruce Kent. It made your correspondent - who was (briefly) on the second (1959) but not the first Aldermaston march – feel young.



## *International Peace Bureau in Alexandria, Egypt*

Janis Alton

Once more, fabled ancient Alexandria has a magnificent library. It's more than a library – it is home to six (!) institutes, permanent and temporary exhibit space, a cinesphere, a shop, a cafeteria, a dining room, and spacious, comfortable conference rooms. It was the perfect place for the International Peace Bureau to host a conference last November entitled “Books Not Bombs: Sustainable Disarmament for Sustainable Development.”

There were many new faces – students, Egyptians, even a representative from the government of Saudi Arabia. (This government, we heard, now wants to break out of its isolation.) The Saudi diplomat was certainly not familiar with a new human right for woman - UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) which sets out, among other things, that women must be included in all decision-making related to peace and security from prevention to post-conflict reconstruction. But then, almost all governments

to date are only paying lip service to this new obligation. Ever optimistic, I felt a small measure of satisfaction in informing him over lunch of this advance.

The intention of the Alexandria conference was to exchange ideas on issues related to global over-armament and underdevelopment. Another, was to bestow the Sean McBride Prize on an individual pushing the disarmament movement forward. This year it was Jayantha Dhana-pala, a strong UN civil servant who headed the Department for Disarmament Affairs, serves as an honorary IPB President and current President of Pugwash International. He was a runner-up in the recent search for a new UN Secretary General. He is a promoter of gender parity and civil society.

One concrete example of his passion for disarmament and peace is the pioneering link he forged between the UN Office of Disarma-

ment Affairs and the CSO Hague Appeal for Peace to introduce peace education curriculum to young children in Albania, Peru, and several other countries.

It was three days of inspiring speeches, (a little short on women presenters), discussion, and workshops. We were reminded:

- that the USA, responsible today for 46% of world's military spending, has spent 5.8 trillion dollars on the military since 1945;
- to mainstream the idea of HUMAN security
- to address the relationship between poverty and conflict;
- to vigorously address the misallocation of resources;

- to examine the development and environment link;
- that the UN itself must stop working in "silos" (the Millennium Development Goals failed to incorporate any commitments to disarmament!)

Jayantha Danapala characterized the reality of the international community's efforts to address disarmament and development as "ritualistic", "whimpers," "banal."

Education at all levels is key! And civil society is essential. Alyn Ware, a conference speaker from New Zealand, reminded us of the greater strength of civil society when and if we build collaboration of movements!

I came away with a very full peace bibliography from the Alexandria library. (Copies available. Contact [janis.alton@sympatico.ca](mailto:janis.alton@sympatico.ca))



## *Science for Peace Forum: Can I Have a Say in Our Future?*

On Friday, February 29, at OISE, an enthusiastic audience heard from six speakers:

Tony Clarke spoke on Changing Paradigms: why we must rethink the role of the State and Corporations in Response to the Crisis of Peak Oil, Climate Change and the Depletion of Water. He addressed "three deadly dynamics": climate change, peak oil and depletion of natural resources.

Eduardo Sousa addressed the Security and Prosperity Partnership and the Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement – Moving Beyond Doublespeak Acronyms into the Real World of Hope and Meaning. He spoke of the long-term goal of our business community and the military to harmonize regulations down to US levels. He also alerted us to the Civil Assistance Plan for American troops in Canada in the event of a public disturbance.

Professor Peter Victor spoke on Managing

Without Growth. He noted that the economy is a subsystem of the biosphere and 60% of the ecosystem is in decline.

Professor Bill Vanderburg spoke on Can we Find Our Way out of the Labyrinth of Technology? He argued that specialization blinds us to the overall problems. Real solutions will come from different perspectives.

Jocelyn Thorpe addressed Temagami's First Nations Land Claims: the Place of Indigenous People in Environmental Justice and Sustainability. She showed us pictures of Temagami and outlined the problems.

The Very Rev. Lois Wilson talked about Persistent Activism. She urged us not to give up but to find new ways to influence policy-makers.

Another forum is planned. For a \$10 DVD of the event contact Jean Smith at 416- 535-6605.

## Book Nook

The following books may be of interest to Science for Peace members.

Ashford, Mary-Wynne and Dauncey Guy. *Enough Blood Shed: 101 Solutions to Violence, Terror and War*. New Society Publishers: 2006.

Korten, David C. *The Great Turning: from Empire to Earth Community*. Berrett Publishers Inc. and Kumarian Press: 2006.

Homer-Dixon, Thomas. *The Upside of Down: Catastrophe, Creativity and the Renewal of Civilization*. Vintage Canada: 2007.

McQuaig, Linda. *Holding the Bully's Coat: Canada and the US Empire*. Doubleday Canada: 2007.

Caldicott, Helen. *Nuclear Power is not the Answer*. The New Press: 2006.

*Heat* by George Mombiot and *Collapse* by Jared Diamond are also must-reads.

### Reminder!

Science For Peace (Towards a Just and Sustainable World) depends on its members for funding by membership fees and donations. Please be generous. Please encourage more people to join us.

## news in brief

Ottawa City Council has asked the Ontario government to put a moratorium on further uranium prospecting and mining in Ontario. **Robert Lovelace** was sentenced to six months in jail and a \$25,000 fine for obstructing the mining company at Sharbot Lake.

**Louise and Percy Schmeiser** have been awarded the Right Livelihood Award for their opposition to Monsanto's claims of Genetically Modified Seeds on their farm.

## In Memorium

Two former members of Science for Peace passed away last year.

**Harold Koehler** received his B. Sc. (Eng) in 1948 at the University of Toronto. As a mechanical engineer he worked for A V Roe, Orenda Engines and Hawker Siddeley on the Avro Arrow. He quit the military industry and became research engineer at Ontario Hydro. He died at age 83.

**John Buttrick** left his teaching position at the University of Minnesota to protest the war in Viet Nam and came to York University. He was a well-known economist. He died at age 88 in a car accident.

## Upcoming Events

**Saturday, March 29 at 1 p.m. at Port Hope High School:** Jim Harding will address the topic "Uranium: Anything but Clean and Green." He is the author of *Canada's Deadly Secret: Saskatchewan Uranium and the Global Nuclear System*.

**Saturday, May 31 from 1 to 4 p.m. at Bloor Street United Church:** An Afternoon with Rosalie Bertell on "War and Weapons."