

## President's Corner: Making Knowledge Scarce

by Metta Spencer

Most members of Science for Peace are workers in the sector now being called the “knowledge industry.” Along with other natural and social scientists, we are finding our situation changing when it comes to the control and evaluation of our own products: ideas.

These changes are especially evident today with respect to the situation of scientists working in Canadian government research institutions. However, their predicament is only part of a much larger trend, which is affecting knowledge work in universities,<sup>1</sup> hospitals, and private think tanks.

God must want ideas to flow freely, to judge from the way she constructed the universe. Whereas *objects* – things that occupy space, time, mass, and energy—are subject to the first law of thermodynamics (the conservation of energy), *information* is not. If I give you some of my time or property or energy, I will have that much less of it left. But if I give you my information and knowledge, I can still have it, and so can you, and everyone else with whom we share it. Ideas are not conserved. Indeed, you have to make a special effort if you want to keep them scarce. But nowadays there are new pressures that aim to keep certain kinds of knowledge scarce.

We worry most about the political and economic forces that are constraining the free flow of scientific information. However, professional peace researchers, public policy analysts, and other “knowledge workers” may try to widen or narrow the people with whom we share our special knowledge. Although we say we want maximum academic freedom, occasionally we prefer to keep our knowledge scarce.

### CONTENTS

1. President's Corner: Making Science Scarce  
by Metta Spencer

2. A Tribute to Major General (Ret'd) Leonard V Johnson  
by Walter Dorn

3. A Report on the Librarians and Archivists to Palestine Delegation, June 23-July 4, 2013  
by Blair Kuntz

4. Deep-sixing the Deep Geological Nuclear Waste Repository  
by Jim Deutsch

5. *America the Possible: Manifesto for a New Economy* -  
by James Gustave Speth  
review by Derek Paul

Let's explore those considerations here.

The control over a field of knowledge can be described in terms of a two-dimensional typology that I'll borrow from Thomas Medvetz,<sup>2</sup> who in turn borrowed from Max Weber.

The first dimension refers to the *autonomy or heteronomy* of a field of expertise, whereas the second dimension refers to its *openness or closure*. Medvetz illustrates these dimensions with respect to the medical profession. The autonomy-heteronomy factor refers to a physician's degree of independence. Doctors have especially high autonomy, for they normally evaluate their patients' needs and prescribe their treatment without regard to the patients' own opinions.

Experts usually prefer to maximize their autonomy *vis à vis* their clients, and they justify this by possessing esoteric knowledge that the client lacks. However, no expert's autonomy is ever total.

By contrast, the example of a profession that is highly heteronomous or dependent on the client is public relations. A publicist must promote whatever images of her celebrity clients they want the world to see.

Most knowledge workers are between these two poles, to some extent having to curry favor with our clients and employers. In such a balancing act, the safest place is often near the middle of the scale.

When a field of expertise becomes more competitive, its independence—its autonomy—may diminish. Thus whenever universities are competing to attract students or donors, professors may be pressured to adapt their curricula.

The second dimension in our typology is the openness or closure of the expertise. As Max Weber pointed out, closure isolates the specialist from the discourse of laymen. He showed that a group of experts often uses rigorous training and credentialing procedures to limit admissions to their profession so as to protect its prestige.

One might suppose that experts would always try to maximize closure, so as to retain control over their special knowledge. But no, for there can be advantages to having expertise that laypersons can recognize as useful, not just esoteric. When research addresses everyday problems, the public may recognize its value and call on the experts for advice. Thus, the openness of public engagement can have its own value. Here too, experts may prefer neither extreme but the middle ground.

Within the space defined by these two dimensions, Medvetz identifies four contrasting types of experts. His book, *Think Tanks in America*, describes social scientists working on public policy issues, as also

Science for Peace attempts to do collectively. Those at the “open” end of the spectrum are of two types.

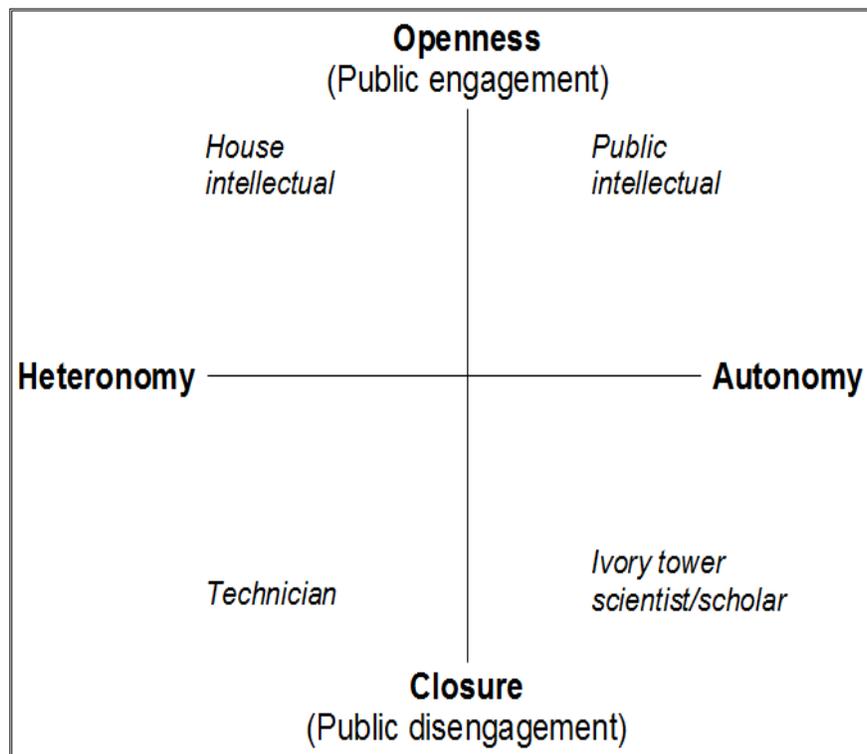
The “public intellectual” is the highly autonomous scholar who presents ideas that ordinary people can recognize as significant for contemporary society. (Medvetz names Walter Lippmann as an exemplar from earlier days and Paul Krugman today. Or we may think of Noam Chomsky as the currently prototypical public intellectual.)

The “house intellectual” is also engaged with public issues, but is dependent on sponsors, hence lacks the public intellectual’s autonomy of judgment.

Medvetz does not accuse house intellectuals of dishonorably “selling out” to vested interests, but instead he uses the term “elective affinity” to explain their conformity to the ideology of the institution that pays them. Birds of a feather do tend to flock

together—presumably by preference.

In the bottom half of the space are two other types of experts, both of whom remain disengaged from public issues and specialize in esoteric knowledge that may seem obscure to the public. For example, a mathematician working on number theory might belong in the “Ivory Tower” category, since her research will have almost no practical usefulness. By contrast we can take pride in Science for Peace, which was founded by natural scientists who were highly knowledgeable about nuclear weapons and who wanted to contribute to the public discourse during the disarmament movement of the 1980s. As “public intellectuals” they criticized their counterparts, the “Ivory Tower” scientists, for lacking an adequate sense of social responsibility.



Finally, there is the “technician” type—an expert who lacks both autonomy and engagement in public affairs. Unfortunately, I think this form of knowledge work is growing, especially as the public comes to base its evaluation of science on instrumental or commercial criteria. I have just attended a conference on science policy that showed just how far the business world and government have moved toward defining science as a technical pursuit of commercially applicable discoveries.

These categories are mainly useful for identifying trends. Russell Jacoby’s 1987 book, *The Last Intellectual*<sup>3</sup>, pointed out some disturbing changes among the American intelligentsia. He admired the “public intellectual” most, but claimed that it was a vanishing breed. For example, he took *The New York Review of Books* as the best organ of American public discourse, but noted that over time the contributors had become mainly foreigners. Why so? Because, said Jacoby, academic jobs had multiplied in America. People who previously might have become “public intellectuals,” living as bohemians in seedy urban areas, instead became buttoned-up “Ivory Tower” professors, publishing in journals that the public never reads.

Medvetz agrees that American public intellectuals have become less numerous, and he supplements Jacoby’s explanation by noting the emergence of “think tanks” in recent decades. Thousands of such institutions now support scholarly staffs — “house intellectuals” — whose research is engaged with public policy. They lack the autonomy that would enable them to serve as real public intellectuals.

Think tanks cover the entire political spectrum: In the US, examples are RAND, the Worldwatch Institute, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Hoover Institution, the Institute for Policy Studies, and the Brookings Institute. In Canada examples are Project Ploughshares, the Perimeter Institute, the Fraser Institute, and the Pembina Institute. Their researchers can, without insult, be called “house intellectuals,” and only rarely do their articles or books differ drastically in perspective from their colleagues. I think Medvetz is right in attributing the depletion of public intellectuals to the proliferation of less autonomous jobs in think tanks. The intellectual center of gravity has shifted. However, Canadian think

tanks lately have stopped expanding.

I don’t understand why university professors tend to avoid public engagement, but they participate in public discourse less than think tank writers. Television pundits on talk shows, for example, are often think tank intellectuals. Why do academics huddle in the lower right corner of this space as “Ivory Tower” types? A few years ago in his presidential address to the American Sociological Association, Michael Burawoy criticized his colleagues for shirking public engagement and rewarding each other professionally for publishing only in specialized journals instead of in newspapers, magazines, and on TV talk shows.

The trend in universities is toward commercialized research, especially in the “hard” sciences. This began with the Bayh-Dole Act of 1980, which allowed US universities to reap profits from research conducted with public funding.<sup>4</sup> The principle was soon imported to Canada as well and today all universities maintain offices for “matchmaking” faculty members with corporate partners for their mutual financial benefit. Clearly the result of this trend is for “public intellectual” and “Ivory Tower” scientists to become dependent on these partnerships, thereby shifting into the “Technician” category.

Canadians are currently alarmed because the government is keeping researchers from talking openly about their findings, especially where these could question state policies about such economically relevant issues as climate change. But commercial concerns have also been an unnoticed factor in university-based research for at least two decades.

Where are Science for Peace intellectuals located in this typology? We can take pride in the general integrity with which we continue our public engagement. Our discourse is overwhelmingly open instead of closed. However, I don’t think we are making much progress. Fareed Zakaria and Steve Paikin don’t invite us to be on their panels of pundits very often. As public intellectuals, we exert negligible influence on military and foreign policy, perhaps because we are located *too far* at the openness end of the spectrum.

To qualify as public policy experts we may need more special, esoteric knowledge that is useful in shaping

public policy, but which cannot be dismissed as mere opinion or ideology. Maybe we should scoot down a bit toward the closure pole and collect special knowledge that our competitors in political science and international relations have missed. For example, we need to produce more scholarly studies such as Steven Pinker's book, *The Better Angels of Our Nature*<sup>4</sup>, which accounts for the decrease in warfare, or Gene Sharp's immensely influential work, *From Dictatorship to Democracy*,<sup>5</sup> which describes how to depose autocracies, or Erica Chenoweth and Maria Stephan's book, *Why Civil Resistance Works*<sup>6</sup>, which shows the superiority of nonviolent resistance over armed insurrections. Such peace research is both useful and rigorous as scholarly work.

Still, there is a greater danger than the prospect of speaking publicly as activists without possessing genuine expertise. Even worse is the opposite possibility: that that of becoming *too esoteric*. Most of us should not retreat to the solitary status of "ivory tower scientists" or settle for tinkering around as scientific technicians. Instead, we should reaffirm our calling as public intellectuals, for it is in that realm that serious attention is required. We must participate in that discourse and sustain ourselves as a community of thinking people who know each other personally through gathering in meetings. It is not enough to share ideas online or in our email discussions. The domain of the public intellectual is dwindling away—partly through our own negligence—and we must defend it.

But the loss of autonomy for scholars and scientists is not entirely our own fault. It also results from the cutbacks in government funding for fundamental research. It comes from the official pressure on academics to generate knowledge as scarce intellectual property to be bought and sold on the world market. These are actual societal challenges that need to be studied and analyzed.

I hope that some of us will study the following four important questions:

First: How widespread is this trend toward making knowledge into property? Presumably it is worldwide. The World Trade Organization pays increasingly elaborate attention to patents and intellectual property rights. I'd like to see studies that compare these constraints across different countries and different

academic fields.

Second: Is there a connection between the commercialization of research and the *militarization* of research? Are we witnessing the transformation of the military-industrial complex into the military-industrial-scientific complex?

Third: What legal and institutional changes have taken place with regard to "intellectual property" and how much do these constrain researchers from sharing their findings and research tools with one another and, through the press, with the public?

Fourth: Are there scientific benefits to the commercialization of knowledge that we may be underestimating? Or (as I suspect) is that trend just a stupid historic mistake? If so, we public intellectuals may help to reverse it by defending the norms of free academic inquiry.

Science for Peace can contribute to the analysis of these global trends (which are certainly not restricted to Canada) by creating a network of the scholars studying them. This historical trend can be called the triumph of "neoliberalism" or of "corporate capitalism," though such terms are simplistic. We need a better analysis of what we are witnessing—the consolidation of power based on a self-serving, philistine approach toward knowledge.

It is the responsibility of intellectuals to develop an alternative, but equally coherent, worldview that valorizes science and scholarship for enlightening our understanding of the universe, rather than for short-term economic usefulness.

Science for Peace's ethics committee decided last spring to do so by inviting presentations by researchers who are studying current science policy and then by holding an academic conference to analyze these societal and legal trends. If you know scholars who will benefit from participating in such a network, please share this invitation with them. I hope that our project will end by generating a list of "best practices" to inform the institutions that organize knowledge work in Canada.

*Metta Spencer is Professor Emerita of Sociology at the University of Toronto. She is the President of Science for Peace and Editor of Peace Magazine.*

**References:**

- 1 Howard Woodhouse, *Selling Out: Academic Freedom and the Corporate Market*. (Montreal: Mc-Gill-Queen's University Press, 2009)
- 2 Thomas Medvetz, *Think Tanks in America*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).
- 3 Russell Jacoby, *The Last Intellectuals: American Culture in the Age of Academe*. (New York, Basic Books, 1987).
- 4 Stephen Pinker, *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined* (New York: New York Times Books, 2011).
- 5 Gene Sharp, *From Dictatorship to Democracy. A Conceptual Framework for Liberation*. Fourth U.S. edition. (Boston: The Alert Einstein Institution, 2011).
- 6 Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict*. Columbia University Press, 2011.

---

### A Tribute to Major General (Ret'd) Leonard V Johnson

*by Walter Dorn*

Major-General (ret'd) Len Johnson was a great inspiration to us in the Pugwash movement, both in Canada and internationally. He had a unique combination of military expertise and peace activism – which I later saw combined with spirituality. He could argue for nuclear disarmament with conviction and direct experience. He built a wonderful relationship with one of the pioneers of peace research, Anatol Rapoport, and even secured an honorary doctorate for the pacifist at the Royal Military College of Canada.



That relationship helped forge links between Science for Peace (where Rapoport was President) and Canadian Pugwash (where Johnson was chair). He brought new thinking to our nation's military leaders as Commandant (1980-84) of the National Defence College (NDC). When visitors come to visit me at the Canadian Forces College, I often point to his picture at the hallway containing NDC official portraits, and I praise his book "A General for Peace."

He was so committed to his cause that he ran for federal parliament in the 1988 election, making so

many good points as the Cold War was ending but so many others did not know it. The NDP proudly adopted "their general."

So many of his world views have borne out in world affairs. He was on the right side of history. Those of us who interacted with him drew strength from his convictions and activism. We owe him immensely. He exerted a powerful peaceful influence on my own maturation in international affairs. The world has lost one of its great generals for peace.

*Dr Walter Dorn is Professor of Defence Studies at the Royal Military College of Canada and the Canadian Forces College. At the CFC, he serves as the Chair of the Department of Security and International Affairs. He is also Vice Chair of the Canadian Pugwash Group.*

---

### A Report on the Librarians and Archivists to Palestine Delegation, June 23-July 4, 2013

*by Blair Kuntz*

From June 23 to July 4, 2013, I was privileged to be a part of a 16 member delegation of librarians and archivists from the United States, Canada, Sweden, Palestine, and Trinidad and Tobago. Calling ourselves "Librarians and Archivists to Palestine", our goal was to connect with colleagues in Palestine in order to investigate access to information in Palestine so that we could understand how Palestine voices reach us and how they are suppressed and do not reach us. Our purpose was to develop mutual aid and solidarity with the understanding that this was to be the beginning of a longer-term process of solidarity work. During our two-week tour, we had meetings with representatives of dozens of organizations, and we participated in a walking tours, discussions, and lectures which provided us with a more wide-ranging understanding of the realities of Palestinian life both inside 1948 Palestine (what has come to be known as Israel) and inside 1967 Palestine (the occupied territories of the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and the Gaza Strip). Unfortunately, due to the delegation's limited scope, we were not able to visit Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon.

## The Legacy of the Nakbah and the "Great Book Robbery"

Any discussion of the fate of libraries and documents in current-day Palestine must begin with a remembrance of the theft of books and archival materials during the *Nakbah*, or the "catastrophe" which resulted in the Zionist expulsion of over 800,000 Palestinian refugees in 1948. During the *Nakbah*, the *Hagana* militia, the pre-cursor to the modern day Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), was followed by teams of librarians from the National Hebrew Library at Hebrew University who collected books, manuscripts, and newspapers from private family homes whose inhabitants had fled to escape fighting and massacres perpetrated by the *Hagana* and other Zionist extra-judicial militias. It is estimated that 30,000 books were stolen in Jerusalem, which was populated by many wealthy and educated Palestinians, alone. Today, there are only five or six private libraries left in East Jerusalem. Another 40,000 books were stolen from Haifa, Yaffa, and Nazareth. The looted books included those from well-known Palestinian intellectuals and writers such as Khalil Sakakini, an early Palestinian educator, whose library was confiscated and the whereabouts of which remain unknown today. The library also visited the library of the Nashashibi family whose library has been reconstructed based on new donations. These stolen books were then incorporated into the general collection of Hebrew University. About 6,000 of the 70,000 stolen books were marked AP (Abandoned Property). The Israeli government maintains that these books were not looted, but rather "collected". However, today, over sixty years after the looting, no books have been returned to their original owners. Thus, the books remain an important part of historical cultural heritage that is not accessible to Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza or in the refugee Diaspora. Nor are these materials under the control of the 1.5 million Palestinians who are the descendants of those who remained in 1948 Palestine. A documentary film entitled *The Great Book Robbery* recounts this theft of books during the *Nakbah*.

Many archival materials such as personal papers, manuscripts, and newspapers were also stolen during the *Nakbah*; for instance, a pillaged British-mandate era newspaper collection that is one of the most complete in the world is likewise now located at Hebrew University. During our visit, we met with the Israeli non-governmental organization *Zochrot* whose name means "remembrance" in Hebrew. *Zochrot* champions the Palestinian refugee right of return and works to educate the Israeli population about the reality of the *Nakbah* including conducting tours of destroyed villages with *Nakbah* survivors. The group also produces maps of destroyed villages in Hebrew and Arabic. *Zochrot* researchers told us that many significant collections of documents pertaining to the Ottoman era and British mandate are now also located in the Israeli state archives. These materials include administrative records, population censuses, and documents from religious and social organizations. Furthermore, information at the Israeli Military Archives concerning the Israeli Army and the pre-state militia are restricted, censored, and closed. These materials are supposed to be opened fifty years after the time of creation, but if deemed harmful to the state—a familiar excuse—they can be restricted indefinitely. During the *Nakbah* of 1948, archival items stolen from Palestinian homes were deemed "controlled confiscation" indicating that articles from Palestinian homes could be seized by the Israeli forces for military purposes. In reality, this meant that Israeli soldiers could take whatever they wished from Palestinian homes. It is estimated that in 1948 there were approximately 100,000 manuscripts in Jerusalem; today, only 10,000 remain. There is much looted materials in Israeli archives, most of which is filed under the term "Arab" rather than "Palestinian"; for instance, "Arab files in the land of Israel, pre-1948." It is also worth mentioning that the *Hagana* simply destroyed much Palestinian archival material which was lost and never recovered.

During the meeting with *Zochrot*, we learned that the Military Archives also contains photographs gathered by Jewish military scouts before 1948. The military

scouts' mission was to gather files about and photograph Palestinian villages, structures, roads and drinking wells. The *Hagana* and other Zionist militias would then search for, for instance, the wells based on the photographs when they invaded the village. The Zionist militias also conducted textual surveys of Palestinian towns and villages seeking demographic information, such as educational facilities, and geographic information such as information on water resources and buildings. While conducting their surveillance missions, these Jewish photographers would often describe themselves as Arab, and this information was sent to the Jewish intelligence forces. A third survey took aerial photographs of the villages which were important for gauging geographical information for the occupation forces. After the war ended, these same Jewish photographers proceeded to take individual photographs of the Palestinians who remained inside 1948 Palestine for purposes of surveillance and control. According to researchers at *Zochrot*, archival material used to expose Zionist strategy and participation in war crimes is often restricted. For instance, original materials used in research can subsequently only be seen via computer, while access to other historical materials are simply closed after the research is published—sometimes this happens even during the research—when the government archivists understand the parameters of the research project. It must be remembered that this restriction of access is being done by seasoned Israeli government archivists who control the image context and deny freedom of information and access.

Another factor which must be mentioned is the lack of access to Palestinian researchers to their own historical materials. For example, the Israeli State Archives, located in Jerusalem, are not accessible to Palestinians from the West Bank who may not be allowed to cross checkpoints, and certainly not to those in the Gaza Strip to whom the border is closed entirely. Needless to say, Palestinian refugees in Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan are also denied access while even refugees with Western passports can also be denied access to Israel (and will certainly be

subjected to lengthy interrogation upon arrival) based on their Arabic surname. The travesty of Israeli Archives holding stolen Palestinian archival material and then asking Palestinian researchers for money for copyright must also be mentioned.

The second event shadowing the delegation was the targeting, looting, and destruction of libraries, archives and media centers throughout Palestine during the Second Intifada, especially in the spring of 2002 when the Israeli Army damaged Palestinian libraries, archives, files and computer systems. A Palestinian Task Force Initiative indicated that in the majority of cases the libraries, archives and Palestinian ministries were invaded long after the fighting had ceased and it concluded that the destruction was purely deliberate. The library delegation visited the library building of the Orient House which the IDF targeted in 2001. Orient House was the headquarters of the PLO in East Jerusalem in the 1980s and 1990s and it housed a significant library and archive collection. Part of the collection was ironically materials that had been recovered from the looting of the PLO archive in Beirut during the brutal Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982. The confiscation of materials and the closure of the building occurred despite Israeli assurances during the Oslo Peace process that Israeli officials would not interfere with the daily operations of the library. Betraying its promise, the library was closed in 2001 using an Ottoman era law which is renewed every six months and posted on the front door of the building. A significant portion of the building's archival collection was confiscated including materials related to the Jerusalem negotiations and a photo collection representing a unique body of materials relating to Jerusalem's nineteenth and twentieth century history. A significant newspaper collection was also confiscated.



*Orient House in East Jerusalem has been closed by Israeli authorities since 2001.*

### **Inside 1948: "As If We Were Still Under Occupation"**

Inside 1948, the delegation witnessed a similar Israeli government denigration of its Palestinian population, who are officially designated as "Israeli Arabs". In turn, in a move clearly motivated by the old colonial tool of "divide and conquer", the "Israeli Arabs" are further split into Druze (who serve in the Israeli Defense Forces and are chosen to act as policemen over other Arabs), Christians, and Muslims. At a meeting of school librarians at the *Mada al-Karmal* foundation in Haifa, we learned that there is no official Palestinian archive inside 1948; instead, there are only private papers and files. In Israel, the most important papers related to Palestinian life inside 1948 are held in the National Archives in Jerusalem. In Haifa, such documents are located inside the municipal archives in Haifa. The *Mada al-Karmal* was the first Arab research center established after 1948.

There are seventy Arab public libraries inside 1948, but strangely, in Haifa, which the Israeli government trumpets as a model of co-existence between Jews and Arabs, there is no Arab public library although there are 21 Jewish libraries. The one Arabic-language public library is funded by a non-governmental organization, not by the Israeli government. The librarians informed us that the Israeli system has also worked to decrease and hide Palestinian archival materials. During our meeting with Arabic-language

school librarians, we learned too how kibbutz archives, which contain much material on life in Palestine prior to 1948, use the familiar excuse of "security laws" to dissuade those perceived as "security risks" (especially Arab Muslims) from using them. Every kibbutz has an archive containing very rich information about the surrounding Arab villages.

The school librarians informed us that books on topics the Israeli government deems sensitive in the education of the Arab population, for instance, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), are censored and not permitted in classrooms. There is a separate Arab education system, but Palestinian Israelis are not in charge of their own education. Indeed, since 1948, teachers in Arab schools are vetted and monitored by the Israeli government and are dismissed if they discuss issues of Palestinian self-determination inside the classrooms. This system is enforced by a structure of collaboration in which the head teacher spies on fellow teachers. Any subject dealing with Palestinian culture and history is not allowed to be taught in the school system. Thus, even answering a question such as "What is the PLO?" can result in the teacher's dismissal. In order to avoid discussing Arab nationalism in Arabic literature classrooms, the literature which is taught is that written before the advent of Islam. In essence then, this is a system of anti-education.

Moreover, the Arab education system is underfunded with Jewish schools receiving twelve per cent more money than their Arab counterparts. Indeed, while the first school libraries for Jewish schools were established in 1927, the first school libraries for Palestinian Israelis were established only in 1992. Arab school libraries are in turn underfunded; for instance, one school librarian told us that her library's annual budget was \$250. Furthermore, Arabic-language children's books in Israel are not imported from Arab countries; instead, most are translations of Hebrew-language children's books. Books on sensitive subjects—for example, those dealing with the PLO—are censored or not permitted

at all. At the post-secondary level, there are no Arabic-language universities. In practice, this means that even if there is only one Hebrew-speaking student in an Arabic literature class, the class is taught in Hebrew. In essence, the Arabic language school system is still run as if it were under occupation; moreover, there is a real problem of the "Israelization" of Palestinian Arab children who sometimes prefer speaking Hebrew and English rather than Arabic.

### **Inside the West Bank**

The situation for libraries and archives in post-secondary institutions in the West Bank (and also Gaza which the delegation did not visit) is also fraught with difficulties as a result of the Israeli occupation. Since 1967, the Israeli occupation forces and officials have harassed, censored and denied access to post-secondary institutions. Indeed, in December 2008 the Israeli Air Force bombed in six separate air strikes the Islamic University of Gaza destroying 74 scientific laboratories.

Birzeit University near Ramallah, which the delegation visited, has, like other post-secondary institutions in the West Bank, been the target of Israeli harassment, closure, and bureaucratic entropy. The Israeli occupation regime has closed the university, which has approximately 8500 students (6,000 of them undergraduate), seventeen times since 1967 for a total period equaling seven years. Like other libraries in the West Bank, libraries and schools are not able to order books and other materials directly from Lebanon, where many high-quality Arabic language titles are published, because Israel considers the country a hostile entity. Moreover, when Arabic books are ordered, they tend to be of lower quality while Israeli censorship dictates that even a poetry or fiction book with a prohibited word in its title can be prohibited. Such practices naturally raise disturbing questions about academic freedom. When Arabic-language books are ordered, they are held in quarantine at the border, a process which can take up to a year. Adding insult to injury, the institution which has ordered the books must pay a storage fee to the

Israeli government for the period the books have been quarantined. In practice then, Palestinian libraries end up paying triple the price for books. Even importing equipment can be a process lasting up to six months and then, once again, the university must pay for the equipment's sequester. In typical fashion, a simple procedure thus becomes a "security clearance." Together with the cost of shipping the books, it is therefore more difficult for librarians to develop their collections.

The situation is much the same for al-Quds University in Abu Dis whose boundaries are separated by the illegal wall which Palestinians popularly frame as the Apartheid Wall. Librarians at both Birzeit University and al-Quds remarked on the difficulty of establishing librarianship as a profession in the West Bank. For example, there are no post-undergraduate library schools in the West Bank; therefore, it is difficult to find professional librarians and archivists. Furthermore, there is no unified Palestinian union library catalog because it is too expensive. Thus, each university must pay to maintain its own catalog. A further problem of the lack of a union catalog is that there is no interlibrary loan. Inevitably, the Palestinian Librarian Association is not so active because Israeli checkpoints make it difficult to cross checkpoints and attend meetings. In turn, this situation leads to a lack of training courses.

At an international level, support for alleviating the problems faced by libraries and archives is tepid. For instance, a recent report issued by the International Federation of Libraries and Archives (IFLA) compares Israeli and Palestinian libraries and archives as if they existed on an equal footing without acknowledging Israeli destruction and ongoing harassment of Palestinian libraries and archives. IFLA's stance is that it must wait until problems are "resolved" and it even states that Israel has legitimate "security fears."

Many books in the West Bank are charitable donations; a phenomenon the delegation learned can

be problematic. At al-Quds University, for example, a donor has contributed money for a brand new library building; however, there is no money in the budget for furniture. The library had recently received a shipment of 30,000 donated titles, but the books were primarily general text-books which were not currently even used at the university. The donation also included many duplicate titles. After librarians had sorted through the titles and weeded the collection, only 300 or 400 of the titles were chosen for the collection. Obviously, this charity model of collection development is an example of how aid can be unhelpful if it does not allow librarians to direct their own destinies.

A visit to the El-Bireh Public Library also demonstrated the high cost and the arbitrary nature of Israeli occupation. The El Bireh Public Library was in fact built just before the Israeli occupation began in 1967. The library soon discovered that books from the wider Arab world were banned from the West Bank. By 1993, the Israelis had banned 5,000 books including those by Agatha Christie and the poet Samih al-Qasim (who is from inside 1948 Palestine and who holds Israeli citizenship but whose career has been marked by harassment and imprisonment inside Israeli jails). Nonetheless, in 1973 El-Bireh Public Library opened the first children's library in all of the Middle East. In 1982, however, when the Israeli government assumed the governance of municipalities, Israeli government officials shut down the library and dismissed library employees. After the signing of the Oslo agreement in 1996, the library moved to a new building and today the library employs six employees. Many leaders in the current Palestinian legislative assembly were graduates of the El Bireh reading program. However, it is clear that Israeli claims of "security" used to harass and intimidate librarians are laughable. For instance, librarians told us of one instance in which Israeli occupation forces became concerned because children from the library would hang their drawings in the public square. As parents and other adults would attend the events, the Israelis would become

concerned that it was a popular gathering and would prohibit the gatherings. Another surrealistic episode witnessed the Israeli occupation forces raiding the library because a Palestinian historian was giving a reading program on Zionism to the children.

### **Prisoners' Libraries**

During a presentation by the Addameer ("Conscience") Prisoners' Rights Association, the delegation learned of the truly desperate situation of prisoners detained by the Israeli occupation forces. For example, since 1967, Israel has detained 800,000 Palestinians, a statistic which includes twenty per cent of the population of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and forty per cent of the male population. Palestinian prisoners are subject to torture (both physical and psychological), administrative detention (i.e. detention without charge), and isolation. There are four interrogation centers and three detention centers, all of them inside Israel, a condition contravening international law which states prisoners must be held in close connection. The prisoners also include women and children. It is also important to mention that 320 Palestinian prisoners have died in Israeli prisons since 1967.

It is therefore perhaps unsurprising that special collections in Palestinian libraries are devoted to Palestinian prisoners. The Nablus Public Library, for example, holds a book section of approximately 8000 books and 870 handwritten notebooks from two now-closed prisons which operated from 1967 to 1996 and were closed after the Oslo Accords. When the prisons were closed, the Palestinian Authority collected the books and notebooks and donated them to the Nablus Public Library. A prisoner's family was allowed to buy two books every month for detained family members; however, these books needed to be approved by the prison authorities first. The books remained in the prison when the detainee was released or transferred to another prison. Sometimes books would be smuggled inside another book, for instance, a cookbook. The library collections were also helped along by Red Cross volunteers who would bring in

books about Marxism, Communist theory, and socialist thought as well as religious books. These books helped to organize the three intellectual trends that emerged and spread among the detainees: a patriotic and nationalist movement; a communist and socialist movement; and a religious and Salafi movement. Detainees also copied books and sent them to other prisons. The books are filled with personal and political annotations in the margins. The books help to reveal gain rich insights into the development of pre-Oslo Palestinian intellectual trends that encompassed the various events occurring from 1967-1996.



*Prisoners' Section archivist and librarian describe the collection, Nablus Public Library*

Another important prison collection is contained in the Abu Jihad Museum of Prisoner Movement Affairs which was established in 2007 at al-Quds University. The Museum archive holds 55,000 court cases (about 10,000 of which have been digitized), almost all in Hebrew. The museum is now working to digitize the entire collection. Indeed, because the museum is located in what is known as "Area C", the Israeli Army could enter at any time and confiscate the entire collection. The museum therefore ensures that there is also a computer backup for every document in Jerusalem, Ramallah and abroad. The museum exhibit details the lives of Palestinian prisoners and it also contains both books from a former prison library as

well as other archival materials related to Palestinian prisoners.

The library has a network of employees who travel throughout the West Bank to various towns and villages and meet with ex-detainees who have been recently released from prison. The ex-detainees can donate the original copy of their journal to the library or they can keep the original and allow them to keep the original. The digitized notebooks are not accessible on the Internet but can be viewed at the library.

This passion for digitization in order to increase access to the material was very evident in many of the institutions we visited in the West Bank such as the Palestine Archive Project at Birzeit University and the Institute for Palestine Studies. Digitization is important because it allows Palestinians in the West Bank to circumvent Israeli travel restrictions and it also allows access to the Palestinian Diaspora and the wider community of researchers. Furthermore, digitization also ensures protection against Israeli destruction and theft of original materials.

### **Creative Responses to Israeli Occupation and Violence**

The delegation was also very fortunate to visit various examples of responses to the detrimental effects of Israeli occupation and daily violence, often in the face of incredible odds and a paucity of financial resources.

In the Balata Refugee Camp, a camp that sits on 2.5 square kilometers of land near the city of Nablus in the northern part of the West Bank, for example, the delegation visited the Yaffa Cultural Centre which was founded in 1966. Today, almost 22,000 people live in this severely overcrowded piece of land. The Balata Refugee Camp has been a central point of resistance to Israeli occupation and both the first and second Palestinian Intifada began here. Israel targets Balata and Nablus and both places have paid a heavy price for their resistance. Indeed, the Israeli Army

continues to arrest Palestinians in the camp on an almost daily basis, most often at night. Actually, on the night the delegation stayed at the centre's guest house, the Israeli Army entered the camp to arrest Palestinians involved in an altercation with Jewish religious fundamentalist settlers making provocative moves against the nearby historic Jacob's Well complex. Typically, instead of arresting the settlers for their violence and incitement, the Israeli Army targeted the victims of settler violence.

Established in 1950, the camp was initially intended to be a temporary tent city, offering short-term housing for refugees from 65 towns and villages in the Yaffa area (including Al Lyd and Al Ramleh) and members of Bedouin tribes. However, as time passed and the Palestinian refugee problem remained unresolved, Balata's residents replaced the tents with concrete buildings. Situated very closely together, the apartments in the building are small with thin walls, offering little privacy. The crowded conditions also leave little room for demographic expansion, and almost 5,000 refugees now live outside the camp. The Yaffa Cultural Centre offers a range of programs meant to address the needs and wants of camp residents who face a wide range of challenges including domestic violence, drug abuse, unemployment, poverty, and inadequate healthcare. The camp's schools suffer from overcrowding and the illiteracy rate is forty-five per cent. The Centre hosts a children's library to serve 300 children living under the most oppressive conditions of occupation. The centre also hosts a diversity of programming meant to serve local, social, educational, and psychological needs.

Similar conditions exist at the Aida Refugee Camp located in Bethlehem which was named after a woman who owned a coffee shop near the camp and who was a great supporter of the refugees who eventually settled there. As in Balata, the refugees lived in tents because they believed that the internationally-recognized right of return for refugees would allow them to return to their homes. However,

eventually when they realized that they were not being allowed to return, they built concrete apartment blocks. Today, the Apartheid Wall (which is built far beyond the so-called 1948 "green line") prevents the community from accessing nearby olive groves which had been used for relaxation, studying, animal grazing and agriculture. The delegation learned that in 2004 daily demonstrations stopped the building of the wall for two weeks after which the Israelis arrested teenagers who were resisting and tortured them. Eventually, Aida youth discovered how to light fires against the wall in order to soften it, and then hacked it with tools. Eventually, this action led to breaking holes in the wall and then the complete torching of a "security" tower. Conditions at the Aida Camp are much the same as those at the Balata Camp. For example, the camp has one United Nation Relief and Work Agency (UNRWA) school but the children are not allowed to use it after class. Moreover, the classes are so overcrowded that the classes are broken into two shifts. In 2005, the Israeli Army in fact killed teachers inside the school.



*A view of the Apartheid Wall (and confiscated land and olive groves) from the Aida Refugee Camp*

As in Balata, Aida now hosts a cultural centre called the "Lajee" (Refugee) Centre which contains a library and very successful media centre. The centre gives the camp children cameras, teaches them photography, video production and how to produce radio programs. The centre is also creating an atlas of the Aida camp (although the Israeli Army has in fact already completed a mapping of each home in the camp so

that it can carry out its frequent incursions, arrests, and assassinations of camp residents with greater ease).

Another community initiative that the delegation visited was in the Wadi Silwan district which has become the main center for Judaization in East Jerusalem. Wadi Silwan currently has 55,000 Palestinian residents. During the first Intifada (1987-1991), 296 houses were stolen using the Absentee Property Law. As the Jerusalem Municipality refuses to grant permission to build homes here, the district is the scene of frequent home demolitions of houses the Israeli authorities claim have been built illegally. In fact, residents have little choice but to build illegally considering that only twenty building permits have been issued to Palestinian residents since 1967. Meanwhile, Jewish settlers are allowed to build without difficulty, and more than 3,000 apartments have been built for Jewish settlers who build walls around their colonies. Many observers have commented that the home demolitions and the ongoing harassment are in fact designed to make life so miserable for East Jerusalem residents (who cannot afford to hire expensive lawyers) that they will move to the West Bank and forfeit their Jerusalem identity cards. The main impetus for Judaization is the City of David Archaeological Project which tunnels under the Palestinian residents homes causing damage. Israeli planning authorities are in fact in the process of approving plans to raze homes and turn the area into an archaeological park.

Spearheading the movement to Judaize the Wadi Silwan neighborhood of Wadi Hilweh are 400 Jewish settlers who now control 6,000 Palestinians. The settlers have their own militias and have shot Palestinian residents. There are now also 550 security cameras scrutinizing the movements of Palestinian residents of the neighborhood. Meanwhile, social conditions in Wadi Silwan are much like those in the Balata and Aida Refugee camps of the West Bank. In Wadi Silwan, there are nine elementary schools and only one high school. 11,000 students a year have no

place to study. Most of the schools do not have libraries, and children must pay money to use the municipal library in Silwan. There are no clubs, community centres or parks, and while there are 3200 playgrounds and parks in West Jerusalem, there are only twelve in East Jerusalem. As in the Balata and Aida refugee camps, the Wadi Hilweh Creative Centre was established in 2007 to be a safe place, and it now serves 450 children between the ages of 6-12. The centre also contains a musical room consisting of 150 instruments, a crafts room, and a hip hop room with its own studio. The Israelis tried to stop the opening of the centre, forcing it to hire a lawyer to defend its interests.

Another focus of creative resistance the delegation visited was the Tamimi Press in Nabi Saleh, a village near Ramallah, where residents hold a weekly non-violent demonstration against the takeover of a spring which included the whole side of a hill including their olive groves. Their weekly protest has been met with extreme violence by Israeli authorities who in Orwellian fashion claim that the protestors are threatening the settlers' lives. Out of a village of a total of 600 people, 400 have been injured, and 140 have been arrested, including children. 180 children have also been injured. Children are likewise taken in for interrogation and some are imprisoned and released only after their parents pay a heavy fine. Israeli forces have used five or six kinds of tear-gas against the protestors including phosphorous, skunk spray, and pepper spray (which have correspondingly been used against children). Two residents have been killed including Mustafa Tamimi, a member of the Tamimi family. The community has responded by using video to document the violence they experience, including posting them on YouTube. The videos are also used to counter false accusations in court. The videographers take great personal risk to document the violence, including experiencing violence themselves, and facing arrest and imprisonment. The use of video to document Israeli military violence has also been used in other communities the delegation visited. Indeed, in the Aida Refugee Camp, the Israeli

army recently shot a young videographer in the face and then arrested him after his release from hospital. Video has also been used to document Israeli violence by the Wadi Hilweh Information Centre. In each instance, the video is used by these communities to document and communicate their experiences, and it also has the potential role of lessening military violence.

The delegation also visited many other places and met many other people including a walking tour of the city centre of Hebron where Palestinians are not allowed to walk or drive on Shuhada Street, a once thriving centre of market and social life. Meanwhile, Israeli settlers are allowed to go anywhere.



*Tear-gas canisters the Israeli Army has used against the residents of Nabi Saleh hanging outside the Tamimi home*

### Concluding note

The delegation's closing statement Issued the following conclusions: While the delegation has ended, our work will continue. We will seek out and convene events in our home communities where we can share our knowledge about the effects of occupation and colonialism on libraries, archives, and Palestinian society; we will publish reports, articles, and zines that document the challenges faced—and the amazing work being done—by Palestinian information workers; we will develop an international network of information workers to facilitate skill-sharing, solidarity work, and community workers among librarians and archivists in Palestine and

abroad; we will lobby national and international library and archival organizations to take tangible steps against the occupation and in support of Palestinian perspectives in information work; we will join Palestinians, Israelis, and international activists in campaigns for boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) against Israeli apartheid and colonialism. We will continue to learn and adapt our strategies to changing realities and will engage in critical examinations of our own positions of privilege. Through these activities we will work to support access to information in and about Palestine and Palestinian self-determination.

*Blair Kuntz is the Near and Middle East Studies Librarian at the University of Toronto*

---

## Deep-sixing the Deep Geological Nuclear Waste Repository

*by Jim Deutsch*

**What follows is an edited version of my recent submission/intervention to the Joint Review Panel Hearing on the proposed Deep Geological Repository adjacent to Lake Huron. This project is intended to segregate “low- and intermediate-level” nuclear reactor waste from the environment for the hundreds of thousands of years required.**

First, a quote:

*A MESSAGE TO PEOPLE WHO LIVE NEAR NEVADA TEST SITE:*

*UNITED STATES ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION, JOINT TEST ORGANIZATION, CAMP MERCURY, NEVADA, February, 1955*

*"Some of you have been inconvenienced by our test operations. At times some of you have been exposed to potential risk from flash, blast, or fall-out. You have accepted the inconvenience or the risk without fuss, without alarm, and without panic. Your cooperation has helped achieve an unusual record of safety. ...*

*"I want you to know that in the forthcoming series, as*

*has been true in the past, each shot is justified by national and international security need and that none will be fired unless there is adequate assurance of public safety." (1)*

The harebrained idea of shooting nuclear waste into the vastness of space, to get rid of it, has fortunately been shot down. But now the Panel is being asked to approve, in effect, ejecting nuclear waste out into the vastness of time! This is far from reality-based problem-solving.

Science for Peace has a more than 30 year history of working towards nuclear disarmament. The threat of nuclear weapons nonetheless persists and even increases. Attention has broadened to the entire nuclear chain with the understanding that the nuclear power industry arose out of the military, and that the attendant secrecy has had significant influence on both academic and political/societal processes. By "nuclear chain", I refer to the entire cycle: starting from mining and refining - including depleted uranium weapons as a by-product - through fission and eventual decommissioning, to storage and disposal, or to reprocessing and nuclear weapons.

Science is a process of sensing and knowing reality. Infants, it has been shown, can perceive physical reality accurately, but, in keeping with how the child's developing mind works, the sense-making may be distorted in characteristic ways. As adults, it is our responsibility to make efforts to understand and correct distortions that may persist, especially when under stress or a sense of pressure or threat of whatever sort.

My intent today is not so much to add to the flood of data and details, but to support reflection on the complexity and the implications of any decisions that result.

The public knows that decisions regarding radiation, including the various components of the nuclear fuel chain, are a matter of life and death. The public asks: How is it that an x-ray can cause cancer, but nuclear medicine can at the same time treat cancer? Why does the general public not know how much and what type of radioactivity was released by above and below-ground detonations? Or, where all the disposal and burial sites are for low, medium, and high level waste?

Or, what has become of such burials or other forms of disposal? And why is there not open data on the numerous releases, accidents, and near-catastrophes? And what qualifies the people that decide on the standards for determining what is "safe and acceptable"?

Are the ads to attract retirees to Elliot Lake (a uranium mining site) consistent with the standard of informed consent regarding medical risks? And how informed were the neighbours of the GE-Hitachi uranium pellet manufacturing plant in downtown Toronto? How is the public, or for that matter the Panel, to evaluate applicable studies that involve biased selection, complex statistics and unclear underlying assumptions?

It is tempting to give up when faced with the plethora of units and terms; with the frequent lack of clarification of whether one is talking about external or internal exposure, or immediate or delayed effects, and with standards, that seem to change over time, promulgated by bodies with links to the industry. And, what do the terms "high, low, and intermediate-level waste" really mean?

This Joint Review Panel is commended for providing this forum for public input. Also deserving of credit are the many people, who have, over the years, pressed for such a forum. I was disturbed to hear that this may be the last such proceeding, as Canada descends further into what may be called a new dark age of suppression of accessibility to knowledge. In order to make a realistic decision, this Panel needs reliable information, especially that which bears on life, illness, and death.

Like the tobacco, fossil fuel, and pharmaceutical industries, the nuclear and weapons industries have refined the art of obscuring reality. For example, there is frequently a reference to "normal background radiation". This obscures the fact that the newly created radiation is in the form of new elements, many of which exert their toxic effect once they are incorporated into the biological organism, rather than irradiating the organism from the outside. Because they mimic naturally occurring elements, these new elements are incorporated (often greatly concentrated) into the tissues, organs, and cells of the organism. Those that emit alpha-particles are especially damaging, as they carry out their destruction from

extremely short range.

The state of knowledge regarding the medical aspects of exposure to external and internal radiation is at an early stage. Recent discoveries regarding epigenetic and whole-genome effects call for a fresh, urgent look. Increasingly, it is clear that not only cancer can result (after significant delays) but also teratogenic effects, chromosome damage, and heritable diseases, along with a general increase in disease susceptibility, all of which may appear only after generations.

The nuclear power industry arose out of the nuclear weapons industry, with a lack of an arms-length relationship between the military, industry, regulatory bodies, governments, and various global health agencies, universities, and research institutes. The imperative to proceed at full speed and the accompanying aura of secrecy have greatly distorted the scientific and regulatory process. For example, the World Health Organization (WHO) must first receive approval from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) prior to addressing and disseminating information on nuclear-related health issues, under what is essentially a business model. The IAEA represents itself as a quasi-official entity while it baldly issues misinformation on nuclear risks. Reputable medical journals continue to cover the sequellae of Chernobyl and Fallujah, Iraq. The illness and death from Fukushima won't be evident for years or decades.

As what has been wrought is so truly horrible, perhaps there has been an extra effort to magically undo the horror. This is partly done through the various glowing promises that have accompanied the massive proliferation of the nuclear industry. It has also meant that when things go wrong in the reactor, the public is often kept in the dark. In such an atmosphere, proper studies of the short and long-term health effects cannot be done. It also means that people cannot consent to being subject to the impacts of nuclear products in any situation. They can never be fully informed. Studies can be easily manipulated statistically and in terms of experimental design, such that the conclusions that are desired can be "supported".

Other easily obscured facts: These poisons are not just inert chemicals that dissolve in water evenly, or distribute themselves uniformly in the ecosystem.

Biological organisms concentrate or magnify these elements, and hence, their potential damaging effect up to several orders of magnitude. A single atom of uranium, plutonium, or other radioactive element is not labeled "made in Canada". Who is responsible, then, for its ultimate use, for example, for bombs, or as depleted uranium (DU) munitions that are causing so many fetal abnormalities in the Middle East? And there are the immense piles of mining tailings giving new meaning to singer Bob Dylan's "Blowin' in the Wind". We humans evolved with most of the uranium in the ground, safely away from our DNA.

Shamefully only a few, such as physicist Joseph Rotblat of the Manhattan Project, have spoken out. Those who have done so are often shunned by colleagues and pushed out of their positions. More insidious is the pervasive self-censorship.

It is our opinion that the panel has a duty as well as an opportunity to examine the numerous unsuccessful and/or harmful attempts to cope with the problem of mounting nuclear waste globally.

Any decision regarding any step in the nuclear chain must take into account the implications for the entire chain, including both civilian and military aspects; the impossibility of predicting behaviours of distant future generations; the effect on the inhabitants, especially children, growing up exposed to the ever-increasing human-induced "background" internal radiation; and the cumulative results of irresponsible decisions that assign little value to the lives of those in the future, let alone of those currently living, especially the vulnerable and dispossessed.

It is like Russian roulette: There may be a large number of barrels in the gun. But at least one of them does have a bullet in it. Any death is tragic, but in the case of the nuclear industry, what is being hidden is the potential for unimaginably massive catastrophes. We must keep in mind that a single nuclear reactor contains and produces vastly more nuclear poison than was released by any of the nuclear bombs.

Rather than probabilities and predictions, let us shift our focus from what *might* happen to what has *actually* happened. I have listened to the dictaphone recording retrieved from the situation room at Three Mile Island where we hear that, rather than inform the public, the first thought was not to cause public panic.

Where is public health in this picture? And what about the innumerable actual or potential “sacrifice zones” of Windscale/Sellafield, Hanford, Oak Ridge, Savannah River, Chalk River, Fukushima, and maybe Greater Toronto?

I would hope that this Panel will demand an answer to the question: Why do you not have the information that you need in order to make a responsible decision? Every decision we make about energy production and energy use is affecting the future of humanity in unbelievably rapid ways. The nuclear bomb was horrible, and so is the nuclear industry. It is not a miraculous answer to the world's problems. Everyone must be involved in figuring out: What do we do now with the damage that already has been done? People *can* take responsibility for the land, distant peoples, and future generations. An example is the indigenous concept of caring for seven generations.

The Committee for Future Generations calls on us "to hold the nuclear industry to account for knowingly putting all life on this planet at risk, while continuing to create the most lethal man-made substance on earth." (2)

The child gradually acquires a realistic sense of time, and of the future. As adults, you can think realistically of a distant time and people. If we don't commit collective suicide through war and climate catastrophe, there will indeed be real people, living real lives, connected to us in some way.

In conclusion, I would like to address the members of the Panel. Should you decide to recommend approval of this scheme, your names will remain forever connected with the consequences. This may include releases or contaminations, but also in effect giving the go-ahead, whether you intend to or not, to further such repositories. It is not just limited to low or intermediate level waste. There is nothing to stop the nuclear industry from using your decision as a signal to proceed with more nuclear development, as it might then be argued that there *is* a “safe place” to put the poisonous products.

I return to my beginning quote from the letter to the unwitting guinea-pig “downwinders”. At the time, it was known that radionuclides could kill. Currently, Canada's government not only decreases regulation, but actively promotes lethal industries such as

asbestos, destructive mining practices, and extraction and transport of dangerous petroleum products. China and South Korea, whatever their other failings, have said “no” to food imports from contaminated areas of Japan.

If you make a considered decision against this repository, a small but crucial component of the nuclear chain, you will be taking an important and necessary step of finally saying “No”.

*Jim Deutsch MD, PhD, FRCP(C) is Board Member of Science for Peace. He would like to thank Judy Deutsch, Gordon Edwards and Chandler Davis for helpful suggestions.*

### **References:**

- (1) [http://www.fourmilab.ch/etexts/www/atomic\\_tests\\_nevada/](http://www.fourmilab.ch/etexts/www/atomic_tests_nevada/)
- (2) <http://committeeoffuturegenerations.wordpress.com/>

Rosalie Bertell (1985) *No Immediate Danger: Prognosis for a Radioactive Earth*. Toronto: The Women's Press

Kautzlarich D and Kramer R (1991) *Crimes of the American Nuclear State: At Home and Abroad*. Northeastern University Press.

---

## **America the Possible: Manifesto for a New Economy by James Gustave Speth**

(Yale University Press 2011) hard cover 249 pp.

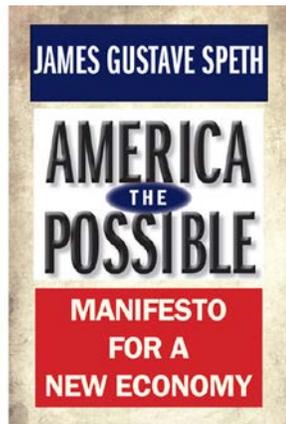
*Review by Derek Paul, July 2013*

The importance of this book is such that Americans can ill afford to ignore it, while the rest of the world can derive many useful concepts from its middle chapters. Speth's career has earned him distinction and we should be thankful he has turned his hand to “bring together,” in Herman Daly's words, “the best thinking on the American political economic crisis and related policies.” Since air, waterways, ocean and often land link us all, the problems are global and ultimately the solutions must be global. Gus Speth is outlining the part the USA must play in inventing the New Economy for the world.

The United States occupies a special place among nations of high ecological footprint, namely, that it is among the very few such nations that could reduce its footprint quickly through a change in its handling of resources and resource use. Sustainability could be

achieved through various steps, the principal one being to stop burning fossil fuels, a technological and economic challenge that the US is clearly capable of responding to (my assertion, not Speth's), easier though much grander than the Manhattan Project of the 1940s, and even more urgent.

Speth's book shows clearly what stands in the way of such an ambition: very successful lobbying by the fossil-fuel industries in a political arena where only money now talks; and he discusses the whole gamut of campaign funds, electioneering, and the lack of cohesion of the political left in his country to force a revision of the system.



The first 65 pages of his book (Part One) and the last two chapters ("Realizing Democracy" and "The Movement") are directed at American readers and what they need to face up to and achieve politically.

It leaves for the rest of us the three middle chapters – Five through Seven – dealing with generalities and specifics of

the New Economy, a mere 83 pages; but these direct the reader to 186 footnotes.

In those central chapters Speth maintains the careful tone, as did Victor and Jackson before him [1,2], to prevent arousal of a strong gut reaction to the idea of cessation of growth. Since there are many who deny the need to slow down the throughput of primary resources and eventually eliminate growth, it is important to stress the no-growth concept in physical terms, because it is the throughput of primary resources from source to landfill or pollution that must cease to grow and then decline. There need never be an end to growth in terms of wellbeing. But current economics measures neither; growth is determined from GDP, which tells us little that is useful, since GDP includes goods and *bad*s, evaluated in terms of money. It is the pollution that must above all be reduced and a major reduction in pollution, even this late stage, could make a huge difference and rekindle hope.

The three central chapters cover or touch upon all the policies that will be important to achieving a post-

growth economy: social wellbeing, shorter working hours (where relevant) labour protection, rights, new designs for corporations embracing rechartering, a new order of things for advertising, local and locally owned production, rigorous environmental health provisions, human health, greater economic equality, and so on. If the GDP should drop, then it is the quality of life that must improve, "and that's what matters."

Speth puts jobs and meaningful work at the top of his list "because unemployment is so devastating." He further puts emphasis "where there is a huge backlog of needs."

On p.98 he lists the rules for keeping the scale of economic activity sustainable; and on p.100 there is a brief discussion of the Ownership Solution, relating to workers' ownership of enterprises. From there the discussion goes on the co-ops, and several groundbreaking patterns in the current US economy. The foregoing imply that the new economy is already being created piecemeal, before some of its eventual requirements and details have begun to be worked out.

Chapter Seven deals with "Transforming the Market" and "Transforming the Corporation", leading to Marjory Kelly and Allan White's six new principles of corporate design (pp.109-10). This knowledge and these ideas approach much that is needed in the New Economy.

Next follows "Transforming Money and Finance", in which it was gratifying to find so much detail already in print, especially the 2001 report: "How to Liberate America from Wall Street Rule." But the results are not entirely convincing, because Korten, Greider and their fellow travelers, to whom Speth gives appropriate attention, are missing the most important of the needed fiscal steps. This is easier to understand in the global context than in the strictly American one, which could explain why they missed it, and it is this, which I offer as item 4a) to replace their item 4), which deals with changes in banking:

4a) Create a publicly owned federal bank to replace the Fed, or nationalize the Fed.

The purpose of 4a) is to promote a duality in banking, wherein normal banking for individuals and businesses requiring loans would remain similar to what we already have. But there is a host of public needs for which chartered banks cannot possibly be asked to create funds at nominal or zero interest for

the public good, at least not unless the terms of their charters were radically altered. The second channel in banking would thus amount to a federal channel in which major infrastructure improvements would be funded at nominal interest federally as would be *restoration of the commons*, a huge field that has been ignored altogether by economic commentators and fiscal commentators since the 2008 crash. Yet the need is there, and there is massive employment to be created in these endeavours. Note that these are not profit-making enterprises, but nevertheless create wealth. The present economy sacrifices wealth for profit. The New Economy may sacrifice some profit (here and there) but *must* concentrate on rebuilding wealth, and this can be achieved through a federally owned bank. This is the point that most writers have missed in recent years.

When 4a) is taken in the global context, it takes the form of item k) in the list a) through m), below.

Under Transforming Social Conditions, I sensed much optimism, but witnessed again the usual aversion to arithmetic when it came to negative income tax, which is a form of guaranteed annual income (GAI) first proposed decades ago. The problem with all guaranteed income schemes is that their proponents work out the advantages of the scheme but then don't follow through with the considerable arithmetic needed to show the net cost and calculate the new taxes required to implement the scheme. They also don't factor in the political opposition their scheme is likely to meet, irrational though that opposition may be. The 11<sup>th</sup> North American Basic Income Guarantee Congress, held in Toronto 3-5 May 2012, contained several discussions of negative income tax, but there was not one paper showing the arithmetic for any country. An Irish couple, Sean Healy and Brigid Reynolds, however, put forward a fully worked-out, practicable scheme for Ireland, but it was based on a *demogrant* [3], not negative-income tax.

Next follows "Transforming the Measure of Progress". The case against the GDP has been made many times by economists these last 20 years or more, but it is naïve to attempt to replace GDP with a single new composite index. Nevertheless, this is what most authors are proposing, and it turns out various progress indices can be shown to be much preferable to GDP. Such indices, however, do not remove the need for separate wealth indices representing specific resources or types of resource. The creators of New

Economics would be therefore wise to adopt a range of resource or capital indices in addition to a progress index. Speth would have done well to delve into this.

The section entitled "Transforming Consumption" deals principally with consumerism, which it carefully differentiates from consumption that satisfies basic needs. The problem of what is basic then takes one into wellbeing and what, economically, brings happiness, complex matters that have been extensively studied these last decades. Speth says it should be possible to build a project counteracts American consumerism, aimed at something better, for example: reducing America's ecological footprint, expanding investment and public goods, bolstering retirement security, reducing corporate power, and so on. I have cut Speth's list at this point simply because he and other authors generally fail to say how to confront corporate power, a question wisely raised by Ely Culbertson many years ago [4]. That need is however always present in discussions of New Economics, though it isn't ountered.

The section ends with a well-referenced discussion of advertising, a matter of great importance in the reduction of consumerism. The confrontation could be maximal here as it is advertising that underlies the style of operation of many a corporation.

Chapter Seven ends with sections entitled "Transforming Communities", which includes a box on the measurement of community programs, and "Transforming Foreign Affairs", which refocuses the text to what is happening within the USA. The view from within is by no means unimportant, but I leave off describing details here since I believe that it is the view from without that has exposed the way in which the deliberate choice of a wrong economic theory has consolidated neoliberal thought in the USA, to the point it now occupies a place parallel to religious fundamentalism in US affairs. There would appear to be two ways out of this entrapment: the soft though strong path adopted by Speth and by Smith and Max-Neef [5]; or a sharper but jarring statement that neoclassical economics must be abandoned because it is driving civilization to an early collapse at the maximum rate; and it is driving the planet to its next extinction, which has already begun, though the whole process may not yet be irreversible.

Throughout the text, the thoroughness of Speth's scholarship is remarkable. I nevertheless feel bound to comment on deficiencies in his list of key features in a

steady-state economy, ignoring for the present that fact that a sustainable economy needn't be steady-state; in fact the steady state might be moribund in one of several ways. His list of key features is stated on p.98 to be:

- 1) sustainable scale
- 2) fair distribution and equal opportunity
- 3) efficient allocation of resources
- 4) deferral to matters that really matter.

Apart from the fact that 3) doesn't go far enough and 4) is too vague, I would suggest that a more detailed list would be useful in addition, to include:

- a) assessment and measurement of wealth in terms of resources – natural, built and human capital – and accounting both nationally and by corporations in these terms
- b) use of new indices to replace GDP in terms of the above, a)
- c) an end to fossil-fuel burning
- d) minimum extraction of primary resources, including trees, and maximum recycling
- e) adoption by industries of Extended Producer Responsibility
- f) an end of planned obsolescence
- g) controls on advertising and awareness of it
- h) encouragement of benefit corporations and perhaps global standardization of their legal basis; and encouragement of other ecologically benign enterprises
- i) establishment of publicly owned banks in all single-currency areas
- j) maintenance as far as practicable of full employment
- k) restoring the Commons
- l) greatly reduced social inequities
- m) establishment of population policies in all regions.

Items i), j), and k) may not be found in any parallel lists up to the present but these are vitally important. The need for duality in the global banking system has been explained above; see 4a).

Restoring the Commons is essential in an economy that is fast declining because of past neglect; and only publicly owned banks that need not make profits can be given the responsibility of funding such work. Because of the lack of a nationally owned bank, restoring the Commons in the United States has not advanced significantly.

In Speth's last two chapters, it is clear that the new social movement must become cohesive so as to force government to reverse its present path to oblivion. But nowhere is it suggested that the movement form a new political party. Seen from across Lake Ontario, outside the USA, the need for a new political party looks more obvious than it does to Speth. It may be that the Republican Party is more hawkish than the Democratic Party, but both cater to addictions to weapons, militarism and greed, diseases that are wasting the planet. Speth himself draws attention to the trillion dollars spent annually on defence and comes down heavily on the wastefulness of it as well as militarism's other social woes. The annual trillion feeds the addiction. An Occupy Party would change that. Historically new political parties have arisen, and it will be easier to obtain real reforms from a new party than to teach an old one to change from within.

*Derek Paul is Professor Emeritus, University of Toronto and a long-time member of Science for Peace.*

### Notes

1. Peter A. Victor, *Managing Without Growth: Slower by Design, not Disaster* (Edward Elgar Publishing 2008) 260pp. including bibliography and index.
2. Tim Jackson, *Prosperity Without Growth: Economics for a Finite Planet* (Earthscan 2009) 264 pp.
3. A demogrant is an income supplement that is given to everyone, regardless of other income. Negative income tax is an income supplement that has a maximum for those of zero other income, and decreases gradually to zero for those with increasingly higher other incomes. Negative income tax supplements are by definition not subject to income tax. Elsewhere I have named analogous income supplements that *are* subject to income tax, "wedge supplements," and have argued that they are preferable to negative income tax because they cost less and, unlike negative income tax, do not give rise to disparity in income tax thresholds. The OAS in Canada is a wedge supplement.
4. Ely Culbertson, *Total Peace* (Doubleday, Goren and Co. 1943) 344 pp.
5. Philip Smith and Manfred Max-Neef, *Economics Unmasked: from Power and Greed to Compassion and the Common Good* (Green Books 2011) 200 pp.

# Vital Discussions of Human Security

*Free public lecture series*

**Thu Jan 9:** *Education for Democracy in Peirce, James, Dewey, and Mead*  
Irving Zeitlin, Professor Emeritus of Sociology, University of Toronto

**Thu Jan 16:** *Nonviolence as Political Action*  
Jill Carr-Harris, Development worker in India on women's empowerment

**Thu Jan 23:** *Armed Conflict and Food Insecurity: A Global Challenge*  
Mustafa Koç, Professor of Sociology, Ryerson University

**Thu Jan 30:** *Patents & Progress: What to do about Corrupt Medical Research Practices*  
James R. Brown, Professor of Philosophy, University of Toronto

**Thu Feb 6:** *Building Peace in the 21st Century: Reflections over 30 years*  
Peggy Mason, Formerly Canada's Ambassador for Disarmament

**Thu Feb 13:** *Constitution and Strategy: Understanding Canadian Power in the World*  
Irvin Studin, Asst. Prof. in the School of Public Policy and Governance, U of T

**All lectures are at 7-9pm in  
Room 179 - University College  
15 King's College Circle, Toronto**

More info and events at:

**www.scienceforpeace.ca**

#### The Bulletin

Editor: Blair Kuntz / Distribution: Bryan Eelhart  
ISSN-1925 170X

The opinions expressed in *The Bulletin* articles are those of the individual authors and may not represent the views of Science for Peace members or the Editor.

#### Science for Peace



Email  
Phone  
Web  
YouTube /  
Facebook

info@scienceforpeace.ca  
416-978-3606  
www.scienceforpeace.ca  
Science4Peace

University of Toronto  
15 King's College Circle  
Toronto, ON, M5S 3H7

*Towards a just and sustainable world*