

Science for Peace

May 21, 2024

President's Column



Dear Members,

Several of us from the Executive of Science for Peace have visited the student encampment at the University of Toronto, on more than one occasion, to express our support for their cause. We communicated our solidarity with the students' demands for

divestment in Israeli companies by the University, and we placed signs expressing SfP support of the objectives of the encampment.

Pro-Israeli organizations and media are accusing the encamped students of antisemitism; they contend that the protesters are hostile to Jews and make Jewish students feel unsafe. This charge is untrue. In my two visits, I walked extensively around the area occupied by the protestors, and I could verify the peaceful and inclusive nature of the protest. Furthermore, a significant number of the protesting students is Jewish, and across the encampment there are several supportive signs from Jewish organizations, including the Jewish Faculty Network. During my first visit, I had the opportunity to talk to two members of this Network. They both indicated not only that they never felt unsafe, but also that they were always included in all the activities organized by the protesters. Based on statements by Jewish students and Faculty who participated in other encampments across North America, there is no encampment-sanctioned hostility towards Jews.

In some encampments, there have been isolated expressions that could be considered antisemitic. But these unacceptable expressions by fringe elements were not supported by the vast majority of the students, who have been vigilant in preserving the peaceful and non-discriminatory nature of the encampments - even in the presence of counter-protestors and provocateurs. Off course, these isolated incidents have been magnified by the pro-Israeli mainstream media and various provincial governments. They have also been used to demand the removal of the protestors, something that has already happened in Alberta.

Notably, a recent submission from Jewish students to the House of Commons Standing Committee of Justice and Human Rights, regarding antisemitism, states: “ We are Jewish students across Canada who support the call for a permanent ceasefire, an end to genocide in Gaza, and full human rights for all Palestinians. Our immediate concern is for the hundreds of thousands of Palestinians currently facing full-scale military invasion in Rafah, and all Palestinians facing escalating violence and genocide at the hands of the Israeli military”.

“We are Jewish students begging our governments not to support genocide in our names. We are Jewish students begging our universities not to invest endowments with arms manufacturers, whether the weapons are used by the Israeli military or elsewhere. We are Jewish students begging our elected representatives not to implement repressive policies that criminalize and silence dissent in our names. We are asking you to understand that Jewish people are not a monolith. That we have a wide range of political opinions and views. We are asking you to understand that anti-Zionism and criticism of the state of Israel are not, in and of themselves, antisemitic. Support or criticism of Israel is not a matter of Jewish identity but of political opinion, with Jewish students on both sides.”

The student encampments at universities across Canada are part of a large movement in our country and the rest of the world that is demanding an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. This is more necessary now than ever. In the last few days, the Israeli army has restricted even more the already inadequate delivery of food, fuel and medicine to the population in Gaza. By May 15, Israel had killed more than 35,000 Palestinian and left more than 70,000 injured, while destroying an already weakened healthcare system. Seventy- five percent of Gaza’s population is displaced, and over 60 percent of Gaza’s housing units have been destroyed or severely damaged. In the meantime, the Israeli settlers and the Israeli army continue to submit the population in the West Bank to violence and land-seizures. How is it possible for the US and its Western allies, including Canada, to allow this genocide to continue? What happened to the law-based international order?

On May 15, we had another episode of our Peace and Conflict Lectures, Winter 2024, at the Cadario Conference Centre, University College. Paul Jay, a journalist and filmmaker, presented a lecture entitled “How to stop a nuclear war”. The lecture included clips of a documentary that Paul is working on, and which is based on Daniel Ellsberg’s book “The Doomsday Machine”.

Jorge Filmus
President
Science for Peace

HOW TO STOP A NUCLEAR WAR

SCIENCE FOR PEACE
PEACE AND CONFLICT LECTURES, WINTER 2024

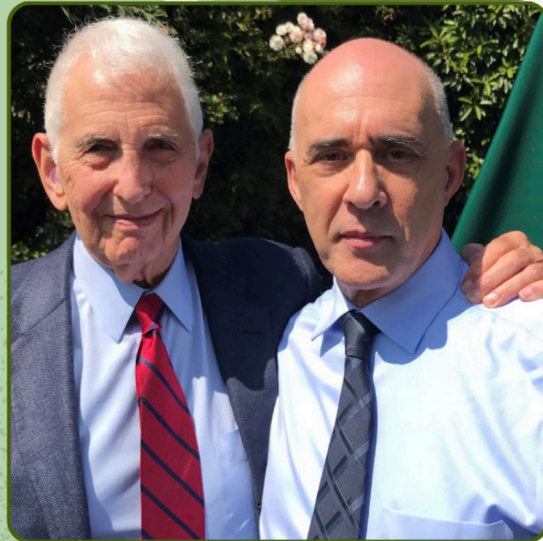
WEDNESDAY, MAY 15
5:00-6:30PM ET

WITH SPEAKER PAUL JAY

LOCATION (HYBRID).
IN-PERSON AT THE PAUL
CADARIO CONFERENCE
CENTRE, UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
AT U OF T, AND ON ZOOM

REGISTRATION
IN-PERSON:
<http://tiny.cc/6a1rxz>

ZOOM:
<http://tiny.cc/pa1rxz>



DANIEL ELLSBERG

Paul Jay is a journalist and filmmaker and the founder of theAnalysis.news. He is the past chair of the Documentary Organization of Canada and was the founding chair of Hot Docs! Jay was the co-executive producer of "counterSpin" on CBC Newsworld. He is working on a documentary titled "How to Stop a Nuclear War" based on Daniel Ellsberg's book "The Doomsday Machine," narrated by Emma Thompson.



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Richard Sandbrook: Why 'Green Growth' Is Not the Answer to the Climate Crisis

Green growth, the dominant approach to climate mitigation, holds that growth can continue while emissions rapidly decline. It is a dubious proposition.

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Richard Sandbrook: System Change, Not Climate Change?

If you mean by “system change” that capitalism must end to overcome the climate crisis, then the slogan is wrong. Capitalism is not inherently growth oriented, as often thought; there is a sustainable form of capitalism. But many political obstacles to its attainment exist.

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