



Science for Peace

June 22, 2024

## President's Column



### Report to the Science for Peace 2024 AGM

In my report to the 2023 Science for Peace AGM I expressed our alarm over the world's state of affairs. This was due to the fact that the threats to humanity survival posed by nuclear weapons, and the climate crisis had been exacerbated by the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine. Unfortunately, this 2024 AGM finds us in an even more dangerous situation, since we are dealing now with two major military conflicts: In addition to the war in Ukraine, the world is facing now the devastating assault of Gaza by Israel. Notably, these two military conflicts are not only generating immense human suffering, but they both involve nuclear-armed states, and they could expand to other countries in Europe and the Middle East. In addition to these major military conflicts, Sudan's civil war has displaced 900,000 people and threatens Darfur's inhabitants with genocide.

Soon after the attack of Hamas in Gaza on October 7, Science for Peace made a public declaration. We stated: "Members of Science for Peace, along with worldwide communities and organizations, are appalled and horrified by the killing and suffering in Israel and Palestine. The murderous attack by Hamas on Israeli civilians, which has caused such trauma in that country and generated foreboding and fear in Jewish communities all over the world, is now being followed by Israel's genocidal assault on the people of Gaza. We stand with the Israeli families suffering their losses, and now we must stand with Gaza's citizens".

Eight months after October 7, the brutal Israeli attack on Gaza continues. Tens of thousands of innocent Palestinian civilians have been killed or wounded, including children and women, and the rest of the Gaza population is suffering from hunger and disease. More than 70 % of the houses in Gaza have been destroyed or severely damaged. Nothing in Gaza has been spared from the Israeli bombing, including Hospitals, Universities and schools.

Science for Peace has included as part of our Peace and Conflict Lectures two talks that

dealt with the Palestine conflict. The first speaker was Michael Lynk, a former rapporteur for the United Nations on the Middle East, and the other was the Palestinian lawyer, Jonathan Kuttab. Members of the Science for Peace Executive have visited the student encampment at the University of Toronto to express our support for the students' demands for divestment by the University from Israeli companies that support the war effort on Gaza. In this regard, it should be noted that the University students' encampments are part of a very large world-wide movement that is demanding an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, with the liberation of all hostages and prisoners. Although at the time of this AGM this goal has not been yet achieved, it is clear that this movement is putting enormous pressure on the supporters of Israel's war effort, including the US government, which is the main supplier of weapons for Israel. This pressure has also been felt by the Canadian Government, which has reluctantly started to express some support for a ceasefire.

The war in Ukraine is the second major military conflict that the world is currently facing. Science for Peace has condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and has also criticized the role that NATO's expansion had played in creating the conditions for Russia's attack. More than two years after Russia's invasion, it has become evident that there is no military solution to this conflict, and that the prolongation of the war increases the risk of the use of nuclear weapons. A peace agreement that respects the will of the people living in the disputed territories could offer the possibility of ending the death and destruction caused by Russia's invasion.

Europe's climate agency has just announced that May marked the 12th consecutive month of record-breaking global temperatures. In reference to this announcement the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres stated in a recent speech "We are playing Russian roulette with our planet, and we need an exit ramp off the highway to climate hell... The truth is the battle for 1.5 degrees will be won or lost in the 2020s under the watch of leaders today, and all depends on the decisions those leaders take – or fail to take – especially in the next 18 months. It's climate crunch time".

Given this scenario, it's very alarming to see that pretty soon we could have elected governments in the US, Canada, and many countries in Europe that either deny the existence of a climate crisis, or that are extremely reluctant to impose limits to fossil fuel use. There is, however, a glimmer of hope. Renewable energy generation, primarily driven by the dynamic forces of solar radiation, wind and the water cycle, has surged to the forefront of climate action for its potential to achieve decarbonization targets. In 2023, renewable capacity additions increased by almost 50% from 2022, for a total of 510 gigawatts (GW) – the highest rate observed in the past two decades.

During last year Science for Peace has continued to develop multiple activities to promote our goals. We organized 8 lectures at the Cadario Centre in the Univ. of Toronto. The technology available at the Cadario Centre allowed us to return to in-person attendance while continuing with the use of Zoom to broadcast lectures. Combining in-person and on-line attendance our lectures were listened by about 100 people on average. In addition, the corresponding Youtube videos were viewed to date by an average of 200 people each.

In addition to our Peace and Conflict lectures, Science for Peace has published 19 articles on our website during the past year, and we have supported 2 Blumenfeld Junior Fellows to do research on subjects that are central to our mandate. Science for Peace has maintained an active presence in social media, including Facebook, Instagram, and more recently X. We also produced a couple of short animated videos that explain the goals of Science for Peace, and which we are using in social media.

One of our weaknesses during last year has been the lack of regular meetings of our Working Groups, with the exception of the one on nuclear weapons. We will be discussing within the organization how can we re-activate these groups, or if there are alternative ways to foster membership participation.

Science for Peace used to have a Student Club at the University of Toronto. Unfortunately, the club has not been active during the last three years. During last year we decided to work towards the re-establishment of the club. We participated at a fair in the University where different Student Clubs presented their activities. As a result of this participation, we were able to establish contacts with several students who are interested in the goals of Science for Peace. Consequently, we believe that next year we will be able to re-activate the Science for Peace Student Club at the University.

During our work towards the establishment of the Student Club, it became evident that

the vast majority of the University students are completely unaware of the dangers that nuclear weapons present for humanity 's survival. This is not surprising. The newer generations, unlike the previous ones, have not lived through the Cold War. They grew up in a world with several Arms Control agreements, and in which the number of nuclear bombs was reduced from 30,000 to 12,000. In addition, the media through which most students learn the news from don't talk much about the new dangers of a nuclear Armageddon. This state of affairs at a moment when there is dramatic increase in the risk of nuclear war, is unacceptable. Science for Peace, as an organization that strives to reduce and eliminate the risk of a nuclear war, needs to play an important role in educating University students in this matter. This is a big responsibility, that requires us to redouble our efforts. We need a more active Science for Peace, with many more members.

*Jorge Filmus  
President  
Science for Peace*

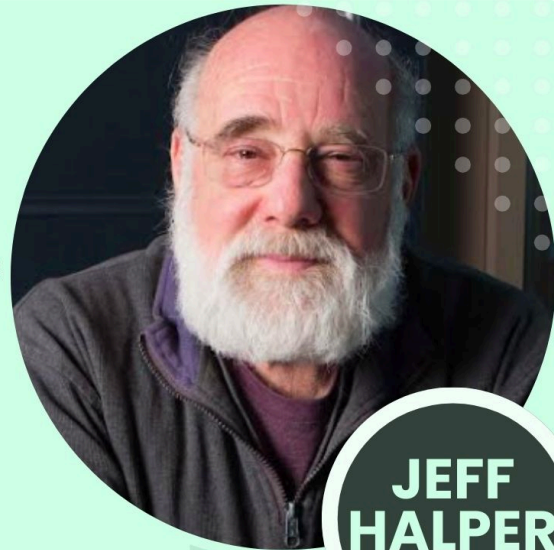
## Upcoming Events

FROM GENOCIDE IN GAZA TO  
DECOLONIZING PALESTINE:

### Towards A Democratic State For All Between the River And The Sea

**JULY 4, 7 PM  
FRIENDS' HOUSE  
60 LOWTHER AVE.**

Also on zoom!



**JEFF  
HALPER**

While our attention and hearts are focused on Gaza, civil society cannot abandon the wider fight for Palestinian rights and a better future for everyone between the River and the Sea.

Jeff Halper is a Jewish Israeli-American peace activist and author, co-founder of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, and a founding member of the Palestinian-led One Democratic State Campaign.

**SPONSORS:**

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Independent Jewish Voices, Jewish Faculty Network, United Jewish Peoples' Order, Action for Palestine, Canada Palestine Mental Health Network, Palestine Network - Shining Waters Region (United Church of Canada)



Science for Peace  
Science pour la paix



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Zoom: <https://shorturl.at/MnbnO>

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## Recent Publications



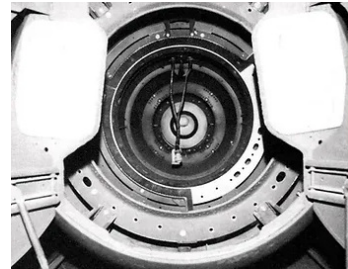
### [Richard Sandbrook: The Radical-Reformist Green New Deal](#)

The radical-reformist Green New Deal is a more viable approach to the climate emergency than the dominant Green Growth perspective, and it is more politically promising than the Degrowth/Post-capitalist framework. It is our best bet for a democratic path to decarbonization.



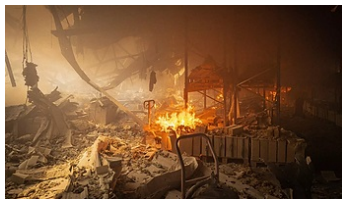
### [Richard Sandbrook: Climate Politics in the Age of Populist Denialism](#)

The political and cultural obstacles to climate mitigation via a just transition are major, but not insurmountable. Climate mitigation has, by default, become a project of the political centre and left. We still have time to avert the worst-case scenario of fascist reaction and a violent climate underground.



### [Ella Levin: A Seat at the Table: Why Canada Must Become an Observer to the TPNW](#)

The article introduces the reader to the dangers of nuclear war, the role that the TPNW can play in abolishing nuclear weapons, and the importance of pressing the Canadian government to request "observer" status at meetings of the parties to the UN treaty.



### [Arnd Jurgensen: Sleepwalking into Nuclear Armageddon](#)

Recent events involving Russia's aggressive actions in Ukraine, NATO's potential troop involvement, historical tensions, and policy decisions emphasize the imminent dangers of nuclear conflict.



### [Richard Sandbrook: Degrowth: Desirable but Improbable](#)

Degrowth is an intellectually coherent social-ecological critique of capitalism. It offers an inspiring vision of an egalitarian and sustainable society, and a complex array of policies to achieve this world. One major weakness is an underdeveloped political strategy.



### [Judith Deutsch: The Nadir of Human Behavior](#)

The experience of barely escaping death leads the author to reflect on the themes that have informed much of her writing: the depredations of human beings, the explanation of this behaviour, and the sources of rational, ethical conduct.

# [RECENT WEBINARS](#)

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