



Science for Peace

April 25, 2024

President's Column



Dear Members,

Last March the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) produced a report on the State of Global Climate. The report confirms that 2023 was the warmest year on record, with the global average near-surface temperature at 1.45 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial baseline. In reference to this report, the United Nations Secretary-General

Antonio Guterres stated “Sirens are blaring across all major indicators... Some records aren’t just chart-topping, they are chart-bursting. And changes are speeding-up”.

Although a strong El Nino, a natural warming current of the central Pacific, has contributed to global warming since mid-2023, it is clear that human activity is by far the major contributor to climate change: the 10-year period ending in 2023 has been the warmest in record.

In the 2015 Paris agreement, the world agreed that it was crucial to keep global warming at or below 1.5 degrees Celsius compared to the pre-industrial baseline temperature. Therefore, the average temperature recorded for 2023 indicates that it will very difficult, if not impossible, to avoid surpassing the threshold established by the Paris agreement.

The significant increase in temperature that the world is experiencing has an impact on myriad ecosystems. The WMO is particularly concerned about extreme weather events (heat waves, floods, droughts, and storms), ocean heatwaves, glacier retreat, and Antarctic Sea ice loss. For example, Antarctic sea ice extent in 2023 was by far the lowest on record, with the maximum extent at the end of winter at 1 million km² below the previous record year - equivalent to the size of France and Germany combined.

The WMO report indicates that, despite the seriousness of the climate crisis, there is 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. However, as recently reported by The Guardian, the positive impact of the increase in renewable energy generation is being counteracted by an expansion of a US-led oil and gas production. The world’s fossil-fuel producers, including Canada, are on track to nearly quadruple output from newly approved projects by decade’s end.

In the last few decades, grassroots activism against global warming has had a significant impact on many governments and political parties, which have adopted some of the policies required to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. These policies however are being threatened by the worldwide surge of right wing political forces which deny the existence of human-driven global warming. The advances of these forces in Europe are already having an impact, as revealed by a leaked draft of the European Council’s strategic agenda for 2024-2029, which clearly shows that climate is not to be considered a main priority of the European Union. The priority headline about a climate-neutral Europe has been deleted, and the word “climate” is only mentioned twice in the whole document.

In the US, polls show that Donald Trump, who thinks that global warming is “a Chinese hoax”, is ahead of Joe Biden in the polls on the way to the November presidential elections. In Canada, the leader of the Conservative party, Pierre Poilievre, who is also leading the polls, proposes as his top priority the elimination of the carbon tax, and he does not propose anything specific to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Furthermore, he is a strong supporter of the expansion of fossil fuel extraction.

It is clear, therefore, that to be successful, the movement against global warming will have to engage with the political process in each country. The defeat of the right-wing political parties should be part of the agenda to spare the world of climate catastrophe. Richard Sandbrook, in his article [“Strategic Choices for an Effective Climate Movement,”](#) addresses this issue in his analysis of the politics of climate mitigation.

On May 15, at 5 PM, Science for Peace will present a talk by Paul Jay entitled “How to Stop a Nuclear War”. Paul is a journalist and filmmaker. He was the founder, CEO and senior editor of The Real News Network. He was also the founding chair of Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival. As usual, the talk will be held at the Paul Cadario Conference Centre, University College, as well as on Zoom. To register, please go to scienceforpeace.org.

Jorge Filmus
President
Science for Peace

Upcoming Events

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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Recent Events and Publications

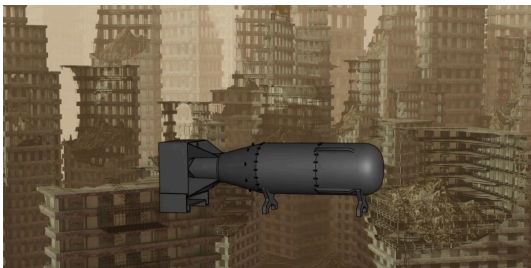
Richard Sandbrook: Strategic Choices for an Effective Climate Movement

The article reflects critically on three major approaches to resolving the climate/ecological crisis: Green Growth (reformist), Degrowth/Eco-socialist (radical), and a supplemented Green New Deal (radical-reformist). It



argues that the first is politically feasible but inadequate to the challenge; the second may be adequate, but it is impossible in the short time available; and the third is potentially both adequate and politically possible. I then proceed in more detail to summarize the radical-reformist approach, and argue for its economic viability (within capitalism) and potential political feasibility. The article ends with a reflection on what the future holds if this democratic path to sustainability fails: a resort to the uncertainties of geoengineering and the rise of twin violent poles, namely a fascist-denialist movement and an underground environmental movement dedicated to sabotage of industrial civilization.

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