

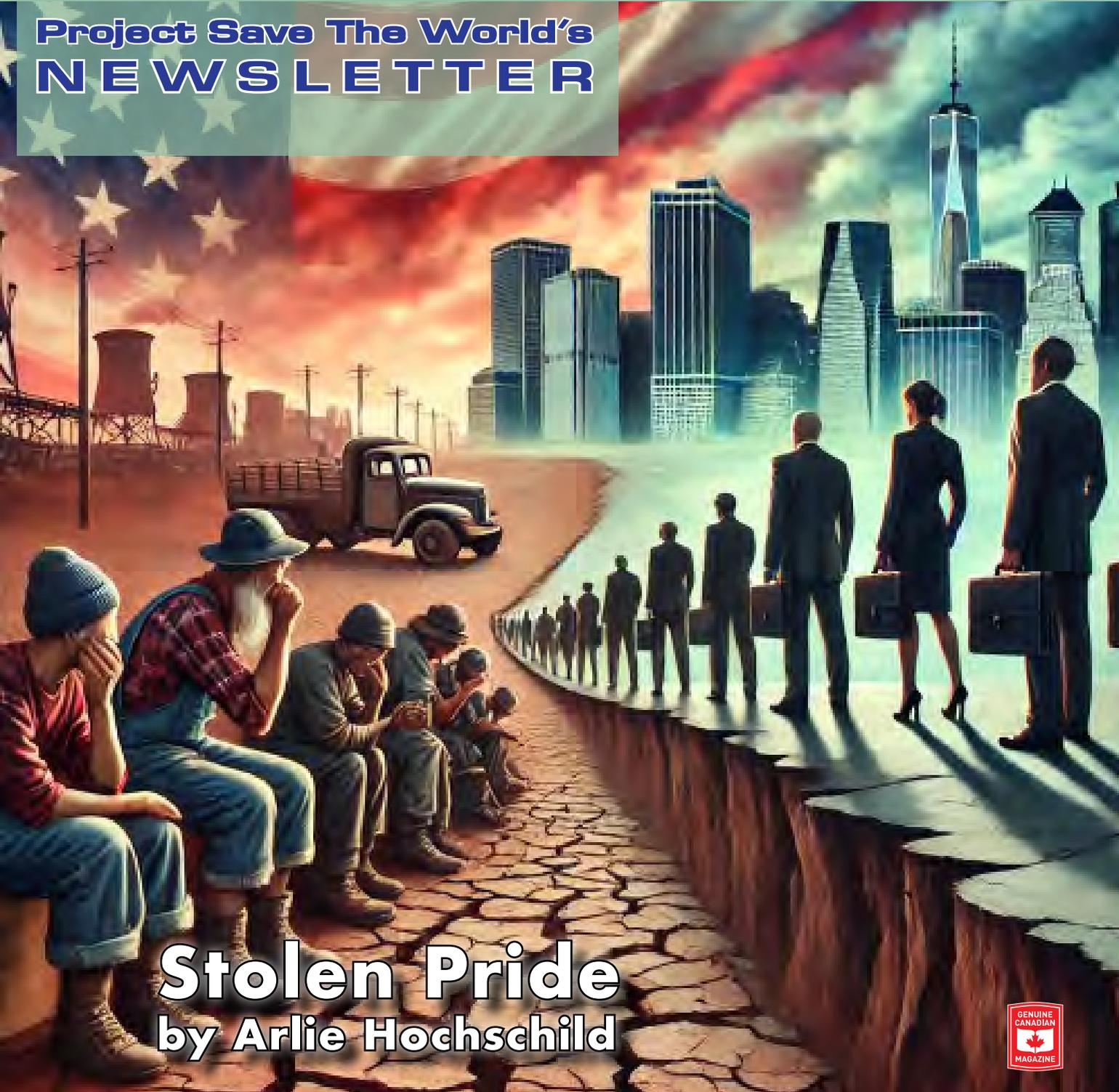
PEACE

MAGAZINE

October ~ December, 2024

- Roche Reviews
Axworthy
- Ocean Solutions
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Project Save The World's
NEWSLETTER



Stolen Pride
by Arlie Hochschild





NEWSWORTHY

CRISPR AND GENETIC DIVERSITY

A significant breakthrough in the protection of endangered species has emerged from genetics. Scientists have successfully used advanced gene-editing technology to improve the genetic diversity of species on the brink of extinction. This development, hailed as a game-changer in conservation, involves the use of CRISPR technology to introduce beneficial genetic traits into endangered populations. By enhancing resilience against diseases and environmental stressors, this method offers new hope for species facing rapid population decline.

One major success of this initiative is in boosting the genetic diversity of the northern white rhino, a species that has dwindled to just two known individuals in the wild. Scientists have used CRISPR to insert genes from closely related species into the genome of embryos created in the lab, with the hope of breeding a new generation of healthier rhinos. This technique, though controversial, could potentially be applied to many other species suffering from genetic bottlenecks due to habitat destruction, climate change, and poaching.

Conservationists are cautiously optimistic about this breakthrough, emphasizing that while gene-editing is not a silver bullet, it provides a

powerful tool in the fight to save species from extinction. The next steps involve scaling these efforts and ensuring ethical practices in the use of this technology.

Source: The Guardian, September 2024, "Genetic Breakthrough Could Save Endangered Species from Extinction"

DRONES AGAINST MIGRANTS

In recent warnings, the United Nations expressed concern over the growing use of drones, automated surveillance systems, and other high-tech equipment to prevent migrants from crossing international borders. These advanced technologies are increasingly deployed in regions like the Mediterranean, the U.S.-Mexico border, and parts of Europe. While nations argue that these tools enhance border security and save lives by preventing dangerous crossings, critics say they create a "tech wall" that forces migrants into more perilous routes, endangering lives rather than protecting them. The UN has called for more humane approaches, urging governments to focus on addressing the root causes of migration, such as conflict and poverty, rather than using forceful deterrence.

Experts worry that reliance on drones and sensors only heightens the risks migrants face, with reports indicating that many are forced into increasingly dangerous journeys, leading to rising fatalities. There is also concern that these technologies violate migrants' basic hu-

man rights, infringing on their right to seek asylum. The UN stresses the importance of ensuring that border policies respect human dignity and international law, advocating for greater cooperation between nations to create safer pathways for migration.

Source: UN warns of drones and tech deterring migrants at borders, Al Jazeera, September 2024

DISINFORMATION DILEMMA

This September, at the Summit of the Future, a significant UN conference, member countries are adopting a [Global Digital Compact](#). This compact comes with important warnings about the potential dangers of artificial intelligence (AI) being misused to deepen divides between nations, increase insecurity, infringe on human rights, and exacerbate inequality.

The goal of the Compact is to rebuild trust in the Internet. It aims to give people more control over how their data is used and to hold accountable those spreading discriminatory or misleading content.

This initiative marks the UN's latest effort toward effective international AI regulation. A major milestone was reached in November 2021 when the 193 member states of UNESCO adopted the first global agreement focused on human-centered artificial intelligence. This Recommendation on the Ethics

of AI serves as a guideline for governments to create laws and strategies that protect human rights and freedoms in the age of technology.

Fast forward two years, and UN Secretary-General António Guterres has gathered some of the brightest minds in technology from both public and private sectors. His Advisory Body on Artificial Intelligence, comprising 38 members, has concluded that AI "cries out for governance." Their report emphasizes the need for governance not only to tackle challenges and risks but also to harness AI's potential in ways that benefit everyone.

These discussions have contributed to the development of the Global Digital Compact, which outlines a series of commitments and actions. A key focus is addressing the "digital divide," as 2.6 billion people still lack access to the Internet, missing out on the opportunities it provides. The Compact advocates for getting all schools and hospitals online, building on initiatives like the UN-backed Giga Initiative, along with training for digital literacy skills.

Looking ahead, an International Scientific Panel on AI will be established, along with an Annual Global Dialogue on AI Governance. By 2030, the hope is to have global AI standards in place that benefit everyone.

Source: United Nations News. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/09/1154336>

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Bison, Wood Bison National park | © Adobe Stock

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We’ve lost our beloved sponsor, who had headed the United Church and had been a Canadian senator. **Bruna Nota** will miss their lunches together.

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You can take our course and become a climate change influencer. And you can read about our forums on weekly Substack bulletins.

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Indexed in Canadian Index (Proquest/Micromedia) and the Alternative Press Index (US), and our website: peacemagazine.org. Print copies of most of our back issues are available at \$4.50 each plus postage.

Peace Magazine (ISSN 0826-9521) is published four times a year by Project Save the World. Mail can be sent to Box 248, Toronto P, Toronto M5S 2S8. Advertising, single copy sales, and editorial enquiries should also be sent to this address.

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Publications Mail Agreement No. PM40065350
Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to:
PO Box 248, Station P, Toronto ON M5S 2S7
email: mspencer@web.net

From the Editor

The AI Revolution has already started in Peace Magazine! The editorial team does not always agree, and this time we’re arguing about the picture on the cover. That may seem like a trivial matter, but it’s part of a bigger problem: whether to regard GPT4 as your best friend or try to put the genie back into the bottle.

Take another look at the cover. It was made by AI. Moreover, several of our articles were edited or even re-written by AI, and one was even written from scratch. And in previous issues, two stories were illustrated by AI’s images. Did you notice?

And did you care? Are you shocked that a publication, having so resiliently survived forty years with unscarred rectitude, would now betray humankind and take the side of smart machines?

AI can do our jobs better than we can. So, should we use it? If you think not, what’s your objection? Some of our editors worried that use will undermine the magazine’s credibility and professionalism. I just want to produce the best magazine possible, using the best available equipment and writers – human or not. I reject “speciesism” along with racism and sexism.

But who creates these stories and pictures – people or machines? The legal answer seems to be: It depends. The machine is always given instructions for writing or painting the picture. If the instructions are vague, such as “please draw a cat,” then the human is not allowed to copyright the image. But if the instructions are detailed, the human may do so.

Peace Magazine does not care about copyright, but we usually do tell AI what we want in detail, in which case the story or picture will henceforth show a dual by-line – both the human’s name and AI’s. We are grateful for her amazing free assistance and creativity, as well as her nice personality. If you haven’t met GPT4o yet, go say hello. She’s very sweet. Then please comment on our website: <https://tosavetheworld.ca/governance>. ■

Our Readers Write



EMPOWERING RURAL COMMUNITIES

Scaling local sustainable development remains a significant challenge for many organizations worldwide. While technological innovations like water management systems and renewable energy are essential, our experience in Morocco reveals that the key to success lies in empowering local communities.

In our Moroccan-American organization, we've learned that without sufficient human resources to foster community movements, technical advancements alone are insufficient. Our ability to cultivate endemic fruit trees in over 302 rural municipalities has far outpaced our capacity to facilitate empowering workshops.

Empowerment involves introspective group experiences where participants explore their social relationships, emotions, and visions for the future. These local initiatives are strongly linked to sustainability because they reflect the community's genuine objectives. However, the number of trained facilitators we have is minimal compared to the demand, limiting our outreach.

Importantly, projects driven by community empowerment lead to greater benefits, including increased literacy rates among women and improved participation of girls in education. In contrast, development efforts lacking community input risk exacerbating inequalities, particularly in a male-dominated agricultural sector.

To effectively scale sustainable initiatives, we must

prioritize building teams of community animators who can lead change from within. By doing so, relevant technologies can be integrated into locally driven projects, ensuring that development aligns with the people's needs and aspirations. In Morocco, the collective participation of diverse communities is crucial for realizing sustainable growth.

*Yossef Ben-Meir
Marrakech, Morocco*

TELL ME ABOUT THE IPCC

I'm looking for a detailed and accurate analysis of the pros and cons of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), specifically in the following ways:

- How they are structured, what their mandate is
- How they meet, operate, deliberate, evaluate, etc
- Criticisms of their process or results
- Where they fall short
- What they get right

There have been numerous articulations made by many people over the past few years about the slow, politically influenced, not cutting-edge science, literature averaging, etc. attributes of the IPCC. Has anyone seen a really good write up or paper on this issue? I want to better understand the conundrum of the IPCC, if in fact that is an accurate status descriptor. Thanks for your insights, references, links, and thoughts.

*Anton Alferness
Seattle, Washington
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RESTORE THE PREVIOUS CLIMATE

We can actually restore a

near-pre-industrial climate by 2050, through climate restoration. As we grapple with the escalating climate crisis, it's crucial to look beyond merely reducing emissions and actively restore our atmosphere to a state that has historically sustained human life.

For at least 800,000 years, atmospheric CO2 levels remained below 300 parts per million (ppm), a range in which human civilization thrived. Today, we're at an alarming 420 ppm – a 50% increase from “pre-industrial levels” (around 280 ppm). This dramatic rise has led to widespread climate disruption and poses significant risks to both humanity and ecosystems.

While the goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 is commendable, it's too limited. 'Net-zero' aims to stop adding more CO2 to the atmosphere, but it fails to address the trillion tons of excess CO2 already present. This existing CO2 is the primary cause of current climate chaos and will persist for centuries or millennia unless actively removed.

Climate restoration proposes implementing natural-process solutions that can effectively remove CO2 from the atmosphere—safely, swiftly, affordably, and at a scale (60 gigatons of CO2 a year) that can do the job by 2050.

The most promising approach to removing CO2 is to duplicate the process that Nature employs before ice ages—boosting photosynthesis

in the ocean to draw down the greenhouse gas. In addition, augmenting natural methane removal has the potential to quickly restore pre-industrial levels of methane and reduce temperatures.

The biomimicry solutions to removing greenhouse gasses from the atmosphere are thousands of times more cost-effective than high-tech solutions like direct air capture, which cost up to \$1,000 per ton of CO2 removed.

Despite its potential, climate restoration faces challenges in gaining acceptance. Many people are unaware of its possibility and hesitate at interventions labeled as “geoengineering”. However, the real risk lies in not acting boldly enough.

The technology and knowledge to restore a safe climate already exist – what's needed now is the collective will to implement these solutions on a global scale.

Looking beyond individual actions, we can demand large-scale climate restoration. Our future generations deserve to inherit a planet with a stable, life-sustaining climate – just as we did. Let's stop merely treading water and start actively bailing out our sinking ship. Climate restoration isn't just possible; it's necessary for our survival.

*Peter Fiekowsky and Carole
Douglass
Authors of Climate Restoration—The Only Future
That Will Sustain the
Human Race.*

Between the Hammer of War and the Anvil of Natural Disasters

By MUTASIM ALI



Migrant refugee woman with a child | © Adobe Stock

For more than 500 days, unleashed violence has claimed more than 150,000 lives in Sudan, and has caused, in El Geneina alone, in West Darfur, approximately 15,000 people (mostly members of the ethnic Massalit tribe) to be killed in only two months. The international community's efforts to resolve the conflict have proven a failure.

"The war in Sudan has received a fraction of the attention given to Gaza and Ukraine, yet it threatens to be deadlier than either conflict," said an analysis in the Economist.

At the heart of the conflict is a power struggle between Sudan's two most powerful military forces, the SAF (Sudan Armed Forces) led by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and paramilitary RSF (Rapid Support Forces) led by General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo,

known as Hemedti. Both are actively fighting to prevent a transition to civilian rule in Sudan. The conflict has spread, unchecked, from Darfur in the west to the capital Khartoum.

In spite of a recent report by a United Nations-mandated mission – denouncing both sides in Sudan's civil war for abuses that may amount to war crimes -- and its call for world powers to send in peacekeepers and widen an arms embargo to protect civilians, the prospect of ending violence is nowhere to be seen, at least not soon.

Before April 2023, when a conflict broke out between the SAF and the RSF (formerly known as Janjaweed), unimaginable atrocities had already been committed in Darfur and other regions.

Between 2003 and 2008 the heavily-armed Arab Janjaweed militias had carried out murderous

assaults on the non-Arab communities, with a resulting loss of life that was known as the first genocide of the 21st century.

Now once again, civilians are trapped in a deadly conflict not of their own making: one which led to an all-out war that threatens Sudan's fragile unity.

While the warring parties were both involved in serious crimes, the RSF bears the most responsibility for systematically targeting civilians in Darfur on ethnic grounds.

FAMINE

The war in Sudan has created the largest displacement in the world—nearly eleven million people were forced to leave their homes. And it has left more than 18 million people facing acute food crisis, with over 730,000 children suffering from severe and acute malnutrition.

In addition, 78,000 children under the age of five are dying every year from preventable causes like malaria. Seventy to 80 per cent of hospitals and medical facilities are no longer functional. In February 2024, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) revealed that all emergency thresholds for malnutrition had been reached and that a child dies



© UN Environment Program

every two hours from malnutrition in Zamzam camp for internally displaced persons near El Fasher, the besieged capital of the North Darfur state.

In July, independent experts from the UN-accredited Integrated Food Security Phase Classification System (IPC) confirmed famine in Zamzam camp. It is only the third time in the last two decades that the UN has declared a full-scale famine. Food security specialists warn that as many as 2.5 million could die from hunger by the end of the year.

Since late August, a dozen trucks loaded with aid supplies have crossed from Chad to Darfur via the Adré crossing at the Chad-Sudan border. However, to make things worse, the rainy season and floods not only destroy homes and shelters but also come with unavoidable diseases.

In August, the Arba'at dam near Port Sudan suffered significant damage due to heavy rains. The dam's collapse further exacerbated the humanitarian crisis—destroying 20 villages and causing substantial damage to the freshwater pipeline supplying Port Sudan. The people of Sudan are caught up between the hammer of war and the anvil of natural disasters.

As the war continues, Sudanese civilians continue to suffer mass displacement, human rights abuses, and man-made famine.

Despite immense evidence of atrocities, the international community's tragic silence on the bloodshed enabled by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is disturbing. Credible reports, including from UN bodies, clearly established that the RSF and allied Arab militia have been targeting the ethnically non-Arab Massalit people with a clear intent to

exterminate them.

Yet the international community has failed to prioritize the increasingly alarming situation. If the Sudan atrocities were happening in Europe, the response would have been much different. For now, it's been

described as “ethnic cleansing” – a term that bears no legal meaning and is unlikely to generate any bold action to stop it.

A REPEAT GENOCIDE DISREGARDED

It is absolutely clear that action to mitigate the suffering in Sudan is urgently needed.

In 2023, the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights and leading experts on atrocities and Sudan sounded the alarm on the imminent risk of genocide in Darfur and called upon the interna-



The flooded village of Marafeet | Hashim Omar © Dabanga Sudan

tional community to act to prevent and hold actors responsible to account.

This year, the Centre produced a landmark independent inquiry focusing on the ethnically motivated atrocities in Darfur. It was contributed to and endorsed by dozens of world-leading jurists and scholars, including founding prosecutors of the international criminal tribunals, former supreme courts justices, and presidents of the International Association of Genocide Scholars.

The inquiry's analysis used the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide as a legal framework and identified the most responsible states and entities for breaches of the convention. Further, it applied standards of proof used by UN investigative missions, including clear and convincing evidence and reasonable grounds for belief. The inquiry reached five conclusions.

First, based on the evidence, the RSF and allied militia have committed and are committing genocide against the non-Arab Massalit people in West Darfur.

Second, based on the first conclusion, and as the ICJ previously established, all 153 state parties to the Genocide Convention have the duty to halt, prevent, and act. The international community has already failed the people of Darfur and is failing now. Information was made available in real time during the early 2000s genocide and is available now. The failure to act is inexcusable and perhaps deliberate -- because we all knew then, and we know now.

Third, based on clear and convincing evidence, the RSF and its allied militia are responsible for direct and public incitement to genocide against the Massalit in West Darfur. The inquiry extensively details the direct and expressed, as well as implicit incitement -- such as saying, "after we rape you, you will carry our

babies...to change the non-Arab portion within the Sudanese blood." These are the types of expressions preceding the commission of genocide.

RSF fighters deliberately targeted non-Arab African people and referred to them as Ambyat (a derogatory term used to describe non-Arab blacks) or Falangayat (SAF affiliates), falsely accusing non-Arab men, and coercing captured men to make animal sounds as a form humiliation and degradation.

In West Darfur, RSF fighters

RSF from committing genocide.

Fifth, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the RSF and allied Arab militia are committing genocide against non-Arab populations other than the Massalit, mainly the Fur and Zaghawa in North Darfur.

HOW SHOULD THE WORLD RESPOND?

Despite repeated international calls, the belligerents continue to display a shocking disregard for civilian lives and human dignity. In North Darfur, the RSF's siege of El Fashir exposes civilians to more starvation and death. Many



A severely malnourished child in Mukjar, Central Darfur | © Darfur Displaced and Refugee Camps-Coordination F.B.

are trapped with no possibility of fleeing. directly called for the killing of the Massalit: "kill the Massalit," or "kill the boys," "slaves," or "dirt," to dehumanize the targeted group and make their killing a normal act and even blessed by God, according to the perpetrators.

Fourth, based on clear and convincing evidence, the UAE (bearing the greatest responsibility), Chad, the Central African Republic, Russia via the Wagner Group, and Sudan's government are complicit in the genocide. Each of these states is complicit by providing the RSF with financial and military support, directly fueling the genocide, or failing to uphold their duty to prevent the

are trapped with no possibility of fleeing.

Both RSF and SAF, enabled by foreign actors, are using starvation as a weapon of war—actively hindering the delivery of humanitarian aid, food, and life-saving emergency nutritional supplies from reaching people in need.

The suffering is not limited to Darfur—many Sudanese across the country face similar conditions. But there are actions the international community could take. They include:

First, the UN Security Council, in coordination with the African Union (AU), should deploy peacekeeping mission like the now-ex-

pired African Union-UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (a.k.a UN-AMID) to protect civilians in the besieged city of El Fasher and its surroundings.

Further, the mission should include observers to monitor human rights abuses in areas controlled by the warring parties where civilians are either directly targeted by the RSF or indiscriminately bombed by SAF.

The deliberate failure of the belligerents to adhere to international humanitarian laws and rules of engagement demands immedi-

international community's current approach of threats without actions has only emboldened the belligerents.

Third, the UN Panel of Experts on Sudan and other credible reports have already established that the UAE and other actors are violating the UN arms embargo. Calling out the UAE will send other actors a warning and deterring message. It must be made clear to the UAE that there is a reputational risk associated with funding genocidaires.

Fourth, the International Crim-

against actors undermining peace, stability, and the rule of law on the continent. This includes filing a case to the International Court of Justice against the UAE and other actors for breaches of international treaties, including the Genocide Convention, in Sudan. African states should lead rather than be led by others in addressing conflicts in their own continent.

Finally, Sudan's history demonstrates that a peace process focusing on warring parties may lead to appeasement, but does not prevent further conflict, as a number of failed agreements between 1972 and 2023 attest.

A genuine peace process should include stakeholders, beyond warring parties, representing the broadest segments of society. Focusing on the warring parties alone will only create further distrust among the people and incentivize the excluded groups and minorities to pick up arms if they wish to protect their interests.

The crisis in Sudan is profound, and affects the regional and international community. Its resolution compels the AU and the international community to proactively engage—first and foremost by an aggressive adoption and enforcement of punitive measures against belligerents and their backers.

As tragic as it may be, the war in Sudan could serve as an opportunity to address the root causes of Sudan's problems once and for all. It only requires courage and political will, which have been lacking so far. It is now up to the AU and the international community to place saving lives above their own geopolitical and economic interests. ■



© Omar Dafallah, Dabanga Sudan

ate deployment of a peacemaking mission to save lives and ensure unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Second, the US and its international partners' efforts to restore peace are commendable but insufficient to stop violence against civilians. It must, therefore, employ more punitive measures against the warring parties and their financiers. These include halting arms sales to powerful regional allies such as the UAE. Its continuous support of the RSF will only encourage SAF to seek alliances with malign actors like China, Iran, and Russia. While the impact of punitive measures is unpredictable, the

inal Court (ICC) must, without further delay, issue arrest warrants against senior commanders involved in atrocities, including the genocide in West Darfur.

Additionally, the UN Security Council should expand the ICC's mandate to cover atrocities in the whole of Sudan. In 2005, the Council issued resolution 1593, referring the situation in Darfur to the ICC. It would be morally unjustifiable for victims of the same abuses and same perpetrators not to get similar redress and justice simply because they live in two different regions within Sudan.

Fifth, the African states should collectively take legal actions

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Stolen Pride

Loss, Shame, and the Rise of the Right



A chat with Arlie Hochschild about her new book.

METTA SPENCER: Let me introduce my dear, long-time friend, Arlie Hochschild, whose new book has just been launched: *Stolen Pride: Loss, Shame, and the Rise of the Right*. It will get a lot of attention and may even influence votes in the November elections in the United States.

So, Arlie, let's start off by comparing it to your previous book, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, which was published eight years ago. In it you were explaining the Tea Party – the people that you lived with in Louisiana. You explained why they voted in ways that contradicted their own material advantage. You found that they had other issues that were important to them.

You didn't use the word "pride" so much in that previous book, but now I think you've elaborated the notion that it's their social status that is most

important, and that when that is taken away or lost, people have to manage the loss of pride and dignity and prestige that they feel entitled to and that in previous times they would have actually enjoyed.

In this new book, *Stolen Pride*, you describe right-wingers, a few of whom are Neo-Nazis, but most of them are just Trumpists. You lived off and on with these people in Appalachia in Kentucky to get to know them.

And gosh, you have a wonderful book! In describing these people, you manage to make them likable. I wouldn't want to go do what you did but I can see how you could enjoy it. So, tell me how your analysis of "right-wingism" in America has been altered or expanded since the previous book. Would you say that the inhabitants of Pikeville, Kentucky are very different from the Louisiana Tea

Party people you described eight years ago?

ARLIE HOCHSCHILD: Well, it's wonderful to be with you, Metta, and we are on parallel paths, trying to make this a better world. In these last two books, I've tried to understand what is it that's driving what seems like a Thermidorian reaction against much of the '60s and '70s, the work on the environment, work for rights, for minorities, women, better health, trying to lift the poor. Many of these progressive goals have suddenly become threatening to a sizable group of people in the United States today – at least 42% by my calculation.

So, what's different between *Strangers in Their Own Land* and *Stolen Pride*? The difference is: It's a new period of time, so the issues that are front

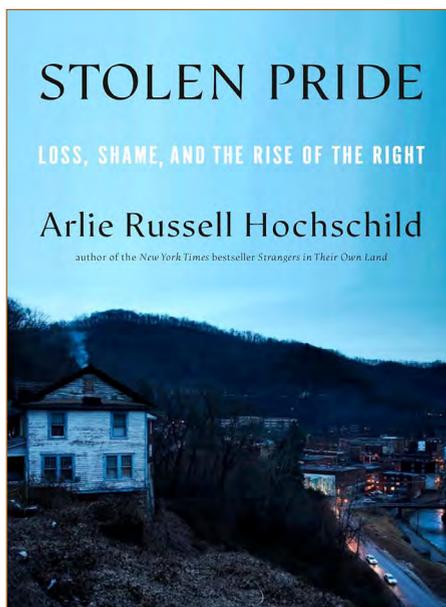
and central have shifted and become more serious. In *Strangers*, I was worried about the environmental catastrophe and people's search for answers to social issues by devotion to Donald Trump.

This year, the issue is democracy. Here's a man who promises on Day One to get rid of the need for further elections. I think we have to take him at his word and look at what was said and laid out in Project 2025. Democracy is the new issue and in a new region – a once-Democratic, now heavily Republican area in the middle of Appalachia, and it's new in its conceptualization. I'm telling a local story as an exaggerated version of a national story, and I'm telling a local history story for a conceptual rethink of politics. So, two things: local story tells a national story, and in that local story, I hope to illustrate the power of looking at emotions – how they become redirected and how they get used by politicians.

So, we have to back up and ask why those feelings are what they are – pride and shame – and how they get used. In the last chapter, you'll see historical references to pre-Nazi Germany where another very shamed culture got offered pride and relief from shame. That paradigm is very important. When you and I are long gone, that paradigm is going to continue, and I am using it in looking for a solution.

SPENCER: I'm reading the chapter where you're talking about four stages in the way Trump makes his transition from being a bad boy to being a hero. That's the most interesting thing!

I've always felt, even before you and I started talking about this, that Trump kind of gloats and revels in being rude and violating every norm that you can think of. He has no shame at all. Yet somehow this becomes attractive to some people. They admire or like him because he's standing up for something that they can't do. They can't defend or display their own rudeness and their own hidden sexism and racism and stuff. But he does it with pride, right?



HOCHSCHILD: That's right. In the book I call it 'Bad Boy pride.' There are many different bases of pride. Of course, there's 'Bootstrap pride,' when you work hard and you get to the top. Or 'Survival pride,' just the fact that you got through the day. And there's 'Bad boy pride,' when the 'badder' you are, the better you are in that culture of pride.

But just to back up to who we're talking about, I want to say that Pikeville, Kentucky, is a hub town in Appalachian region 'Kentucky-Five' – the congressional district that is the whitest in the whole country and the second poorest. While they used to be for FDR, New Deal Democrats, they have most swiftly moved into the Republican side, and 80% went for Donald Trump in the last two elections.

So that's why I'm drawn to it. This is a region where coal jobs are out and opiate crisis has come in, and in 2017 I was fascinated to see that there was a Neo-Nazi white nationalist march coming to town. I thought, "Oh, my God, this is a perfect storm," and, being the sociologist I am, 'Okay, let me interview people. Let me interview the villain, the leader of this March, Matthew Heimbach. Let me interview the city fathers trying to prevent any violence (they did a wonderful job). Let me interview the potential victims – a Black, a Holocaust survivor, and an

Imam that ran a little mosque in this district. And then let me look at the people in this community, top to bottom, side to side. Not everybody's a MAGA Republican. A lot are Democrats, but they're a minority. So that's what this is based on. But while I'm telling that story, I want to tell a story of feelings.'

Of course, when you're looking at that situation, there are many feelings – a feeling of sadness and loss: the community has gone downhill. There's a feeling of fear: Oh my god. If it's going this far downhill, it can go further down. And anger: Gosh, why isn't anybody helping us? But in a proud region like that, there's also a feeling of lost pride: Who took my pride away?

So, what are pride and shame? All of us want to feel proud, and all of us dread feeling shame. This is part of the human condition. And in a way, pride is the 'skin' of the self. It's what we feel about how we think others see us. It's not guilt, where it's your own evaluation of your actions that you're in response to. This is your reaction to how you feel other people see you. So, how can that be drawn into the underside of politics so powerfully? This book is a story about that.

You mentioned the 'four moments.' It's a ritual. I am arguing in this book that Trump wants to be the 'Shame President.' I think he's a shamed man himself. I don't think he reads. The harsh father and being sent off to military school. And really proud people don't behave the way he does.

Okay, so this shamed person happens to have forged – as a charismatic leader among people who are looking for a charismatic leader – a kind of 'shame-alliance.'

And why are they looking for a charismatic leader? Because they've given up on government as a real source of help. They've been waiting for help. They feel unhelped. They feel forgotten, and they are in trouble.

Background again: Non-college whites are 42% of the American population, and they've been sinking over the last three decades, both

absolutely in income and opportunity, and in health and in more diseases of despair – suicide, alcoholism.

So that's their story. Absolute loss, and also relative loss, because the BA-educated whites have been going up in those last three decades, and Blacks, even without BAs, are also going up. So, their loss is both absolute and relative.

As absolute loss, you've lost your coal job and have to go to Cincinnati and leave the community to try to find another job that's not paying as much. And there's a whole social logic to that downward mobility. It's disrupted families, high divorce, foster care up, and vulnerability to drugs. So that is their loss.

And not just loss of what they had, but a devaluation of what they knew and took pride in. So, there is what I'm calling the 'material economy.' That's a story of loss.

But there's also a 'pride economy.' These are very proud people who've had a rough time for a long time. They've long been poor, were kind of shoved out of Europe (many of Scots-Irish background) and came to Appalachia – a tough environment. So, they're very proud to have resilience and the capacity to keep going. Very proud, but now downwardly mobile. In both

the pride economy and the material economy, they've lost ground.

I want to make one more point before we get to how Trump uses this: I think they're stuck in a 'pride paradox.'

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The paradox is that they're in rougher economic circumstances, but they're also tougher on each other. They hold to an old version of the Protestant Ethic: If I succeed, that's my individual success and my individual pride. I've earned it. And if I fail? That's me that failed! I failed! So that tough culture of pride exists in worse economic circumstances.

On the other hand, in the blue states, where the economy is booming and there are more opportunities, many

people have a more modern version of the Protestant Ethic. They think: Okay, if I succeeded, well, I had advantages that helped me and the company I work for is more invulnerable to offshoring and automation. So, the breeze was behind my back. And if I fail, that's not altogether my fault. It's a more circumstantial culture of care. You're easier on yourself, but you also have easier circumstances. That's the pride paradox.

SPENCER: It makes me wonder: Does this partly explain why they don't resent rich people? They don't resent Donald Trump for being a billionaire. In fact, maybe they say: Well, he deserved it because if you get rich, it's because you've worked harder, or you've somehow deserved it.

HOCHSCHILD: Yes, great point. It must be something about him, not his circumstances, not his class advantage or race or gender or anything. It's he! Exactly.

SPENCER: You would normally expect that poor people who are feeling oppressed would resent rich people. They don't seem to resent billionaires. But you know whom they do resent?



Peaceful Protest Leading To Violent Revolution | © Adobe Stock

Elites! Us urban, educated snobs!

How, by the way, did you get to be on such good terms with them? Because you're just the kind of person they resent the most!

HOCHSCHILD: I know. Later I'll come back to how I do this kind of work. But you were mentioning, how does Trump use shame as a political tool? Why is it important to know why they respond to him?

We, the liberal left, are scratching our heads: 'Oh, these must be crazy people. These must be stupid people. These must be uneducated people.' But in this book, I say no, this could actually happen to a lot of us! But why? It's so irrational. This guy brought no good luck to Appalachia in his four years. No good luck. Their coal did not come back, though he promised it, and good jobs did not come in to substitute it. The opiate crisis did not go away, and his big tax breaks for the rich did not help the second poorest congressional district in the country. So, he's not, in fact, helping them. Why? If they're not nuts and they're not stupider than you, why does this happen? And they are not nuts! They are not stupid, they but they are victims of the syndrome of shame that I describe in this book. This is my belief.

So, what are the One, Two, Three, Four steps? I think Trump appeals to people through an anti-shame ritual and it's got, as you said, Metta, four 'moments.'

In Moment One, he says something transgressive: 'Immigrants are poisoning the blood of America.' Or, 'This judge cannot be fair because he has immigrant background.' He'll say something transgressive, or –

SPENCER: Or he gropes a woman on an airplane.

HOCHSCHILD: And then he'll say, that's fine! That would be the transgression, yeah. And, Moment Two: the punditry shames Donald Trump. 'You can't say that! You're an American and you're a president. This is an immigrant society. That's a terrible

thing to say. You're dishonoring people! No, no! Bad, bad!' So that's Moment Two.

Moment Three: Trump positions himself as the victim of the punditry's shaming: 'Look at what they do! They're saying terrible things about me. I am suffering from the elites' shaming and this is difficult. I'm suffering for you. You've been shamed. I've been shamed. We're being shamed together by the people who just said something disapproving of me.' So that's Moment Three.

SPENCER: Yeah, but there's another thing! 'You can't get away with such a transgression, but you see, I can get away with it. I'm big enough and rich enough so that I can say for you what I know you really would say if you felt free to do so.' Right?

HOCHSCHILD: Exactly, exactly! That's a great point. 'I'm shamed like you're shamed, but I'm a different kind of shamed person, because I'm more powerful.'

Moment Four is the big deal. Moment Four is when he roars against the shamers. He says, 'You nefarious press! You treasonous officials! You useless bureaucrats!' Always outward, turning shame to blame. That's his big roar back. And they love that! It's cathartic.

I think when you just look at the rational policy positions, you are missing the main thing, which is the

catharsis that people feel at that roar back – precisely for what you're saying, Metta – that he's powerful enough in his self-presentation to get revenge for them, as they would like to do.

So, this is the One, Two, Three, Four. I think that people on the liberal left are looking at One and Two and stopping the story,

SPENCER: I understand why they would stop, because I go through to step four, and then I think, 'Oh, now what to do about it?' And I haven't a clue.

HOCHSCHILD: Well, then that's the conversation we need to have, because that's what's going on. One, Two, Three, Four – and the point of the book is: There is a Three, there is a Four!

One man I talked to said, "Oh, Donald Trump, he's like lightning in a jar." And I said to him, "I want to understand the lightning. I'm here from outer space – Berkeley, California. But I'm really interested in shame and pride and how it works. Will you help me co-think this thing? What is that lightning?"

And so, I presented this One, Two, Three, Four to this man: "Look, I think it is working, isn't it? This shamed population, it's been downwardly mobile. It's the 42% that are turning right, and even now, hard right? That's who we need to understand. And help me understand this One, Two, Three, Four – do you think it's working?"



Run down abandoned house | © Adobe stock

He laughed. “Ha, ha, ha, ha! Yeah, I think so.”

And then I said, “Do you think Trump actually pokes the bear? That is, he tries to find something else provocative so as to get Two and Three and Four going and the whole anti-shaming ritual enacted?”

He laughed again, “Yeah, he pokes the bear.”

Another man said to me, “Yes, that’s definitely true, and the left falls for it every time, and the media makes a mint by covering it.”

SPENCER: And these are people who themselves would still go ahead and vote for Trump, right? Even though they understand your analysis, it doesn’t make them rethink their own.

HOCHSCHILD: Because they’re more frightened and appalled by what the Democrats are doing.

SPENCER: Hmm. Okay.

HOCHSCHILD: And they blame the loss of coal on Obama by his bringing in environmental regulations, even though they know that cheaper natural gas is what led to the loss of coal, which has gone in the last four decades from being over half of the source of electric power in America to 16%. That’s not all because of Obama’s cleaning up the environment.

SPENCER: More than that, Arlie. We’re not talking only about American people who had been coal miners. We’re talking about the whole world. The same right-wing expansion is happening in other countries. I don’t know whether the logic behind it is exactly the same, but -

HOCHSCHILD: We should look.

SPENCER: Is it always the same? Is it really sort of a counter-revolution, a reaction of rural, old-fashioned values and the sense of feeling disrespected for an antiquated lifestyle? If so, there’s no solution in just pretending to be nicer to these people. I mean, I couldn’t fake

it. Because they’re right. I do disrespect them and, and I think most of my friends also disrespect them and can’t pretend otherwise.

And the worst is that we haven’t even yet touched the real challenges that are coming. I mean, the loss of coal can’t be reversed because we’ve got global warming and that’s not even in their equation. And in terms of sophistication of urban elites and educated people, their resentment of you and me and our friends – that can’t be undone, because, in fact, we’re also going to be losing our own jobs to AI --

*...this man I was just
talking about,
who is voting
or Trump, is an
anguished, certainly very
knowledgeable guy*

HOCHSCHILD: Yeah, exactly.

SPENCER: – and there’s no future into which we can go backward. If anything, our culture, yours and mine, will itself resemble their situation. We’ll be resenting these smart-ass machines that are so much more capable than we are. So, there’s no solution.

HOCHSCHILD: That’s my last chapter! You haven’t read it yet, but you just rang one of the bells in it.

But, Metta, I don’t disrespect them! I honestly do not. I have met very many brilliant people who taught me a lot. And this man I was just talking about who is voting for Trump is an anguished, certainly very knowledgeable guy – I wouldn’t say reflective, but a guy who’s interested in renewable energy.

He wants to put solar panels on top of these sawed-off mountains. You know, there’s mountaintop removal that engineers have done in order to get to coal without hiring miners. What they do is just use machines to do it and it’s

devastating to the environment.

But he’s come around. He’s not anti-renewable. In fact, he’s got an application in to one of the Biden’s Build Back Better funds, and that’s what he would like to do. So, I don’t believe in giving up on people like that, and there are amazing conversations we could have.

I see a lot of potential common ground, and I do consider the 42% that have gone from left to right as the most important sector for us to look at. We need to peel off six or seven percent of them in swing states to get the Democrats back in power and then mend some of the problems and meet some of the unanswered needs that have led to this movement to the right. There’s a lot of repairs that we need to do, but I think it’s a crucial group, and I’m not for ignoring them, and I’m not for disrespecting them, actually.

SPENCER: Well, okay, I try to be progressive and thoughtful and kind, not abusive or snobbish, but I just don’t quite see how we can revalue a culture that wants the right to own shotguns and separate toilets for boys and girls, with nothing in between and who insist that guys can’t marry guys. And those are their preoccupations. Even if we don’t sneer at their backwardness, we don’t agree with it, and I don’t know how to symbolically elevate their dignity for holding those views. I just think we have to wait until they die out, and we’re dying out with them. So, I don’t know of an answer. Look, if it were just money, we could jiggle the budget and give them more money somehow. But it’s not primarily material but a sense of lost prestige. I don’t know what you can do about that.

HOCHSCHILD: Well, there’s a lot you can do about it, Metta, and I think we need to think of politics as ‘doing something’ about it. They feel devalued. They’ve lost their world. The whole status system that gave them pride has kind of melted, and they feel down-and-out, and I don’t think we can just wait till they die off in a down-and-out condition. That’s not my politics.

SPENCER: I don't want it to be mine either!

HOCHSCHILD: That's why I'm there. In 1996, they were 80% for Bill Clinton. You wouldn't have called them stupid and backward then, and there's no need to call them that now. There are differences, of course, in values. But the dance ahead with Harris and Walz will be not to go back. We're not going back! You heard that refrain in the Democratic National Convention – not going back, but when possible, we are reaching across. That 42% of the American population is a very large minority. They got Donald Trump into the White House last time. Now he knows more clearly the damage he would like to do, and he's trying for it again. And if we just say, 'Oh, they're hopeless. Oh, don't know what I could do. I don't agree with them. I look down on them. I couldn't disguise it' – that's strategically missing the boat. I think you're giving up on the most important thing we can do. And I think morally too. It doesn't feel good to look down on people.

SPENCER: I agree. I agree. I'm just confessing my sins, and my sins include pride of accomplishing some things but I don't go around gloating. I'm decent to people but they probably sense the truth, which is that, in any hierarchy, if you've got some people who are winning, you're going to have some other people who are losing. The one thing that Donald Trump will never admit is being a loser, and so he's important.

Now the answer that you're giving is the right answer. If everybody made the same effort as you do to be open, generous, and warm hearted, then I think they'd come around.

In the book, you don't talk about what questions the interviewees asked you, and how they felt about you. You talk about them, but your being there must have had an impact on the people that you interviewed. And there's nothing better that could be done for

Pikesville, Kentucky than to send about a hundred Arlie Hochschilds to live there, hang out with them, and take this guy, Matthew to lunch – which you've done a number of times, this Nazi guy.

By the way, you say that he changed. I don't know how he changed. Did you have anything to do with it? Are you sure that your presence didn't contaminate the results of your study?

HOCHSCHILD: I'm not sure. Adam says, "Look, he's not a Nazi anymore. You pulled him to the angelic side." No, in the book there's another explanation for his conversion, but it points to a strange crossing of lines that the book is structured around. The guy who's the villain in the piece at the beginning of the story – Neo-Nazi, racist guy, violent – now is thinking about getting a nursing degree. He has renounced many of his beliefs, but not all of the beliefs; it's not an entire conversion, but he's certainly softened.

Meanwhile, Donald Trump, who started with notes of 'Proud again,



A stark contrast of the widening gap between the rich and the poor | © Adobe Stock

proud again, proud again!' which turned into 'shaming you again, shaming you again!' and pointing his finger at the 'Deep State,' all migrants 'going to lock them up,!' and he's inviting Neo-Nazis to have dinner with him at Mar a Lago.

So, while the villain at the beginning of the story gets softer, the 'hero' to many of them becomes more villainous.

The people I came to know are not as extreme as Donald Trump, but they haven't moved either. They're still going to vote for him – less enthusiastically now, but they are frightened that the

other side, the Democrats, will be elevating every other social group but them. Their view is that, 'Well, the Democrats say they're for diversity, but the one social group they can't accept are poor whites. And so, if that's the party of prejudice against poor whites, and I'm poor white, I'm not going to go for it.'

So, that is their point of view. We have to learn to talk to them across our differences, understanding their point of view and finding that we actually don't even agree about what we disagree on.

That's another whole set of findings in this book. It turns out, first of all, that liberal Democrats are far more likely to cut off a conversation with a person they see they disagree with than are conservative Republicans. And whites are more likely to cut it off than Blacks are, so we're not great at reaching across.

It's also true that left and right each misunderstand the positions of the guy on the other side, but people on the left misunderstand it more. They misjudge the positions of their adversary more than Republicans misjudge the positions of their adversary.

And, even worse, education does not reduce that fact. Highly educated Democrats are no better at judging what the other guys think than are uneducated Democrats.

SPENCER: You've just described me. I've told you, I've confessed, that that's exactly my problem, and I don't see a way to get around it. That's life, unfortunately. I'll agree it's a moral flaw, but I don't know how to fix it.

HOCHSCHILD: I think we can all change.

SPENCER: Well, I'm not so sure, but I also want to know this: Didn't those people ask your opinion when they talked to you about their views? And I suppose you answered them and

told them what you believe, if they asked you, and you were nice to them.

You say they're still going to vote for Trump. So, you must be in contact with them now if you know that they haven't changed their politics yet. I'm surprised, because I would think, if anything is going to influence them, it's exactly what you do – just being nice to people.

Maybe I'm not nice enough, and I'll try harder, but I'm telling you, it's built into hierarchy. If you're going to have any hierarchy, somebody's going to be aware of it.

HOCHSCHILD: What do you mean by being 'nice'?

SPENCER: Well, I presume that when you invited Matthew the Nazi to lunch, you probably paid the bill. When you invited him, you made it clear to him that you were not going to jump all over him and accuse him of anything, and that you'd try to understand his point of view. You were trying not to judge him. Something like that is what I mean by being nice.

HOCHSCHILD: What I mean by being nice is something different. It means, first of all, being honest. I told him, "I'm writing a book, and I want to portray you accurately, and that's what I'm offering you. And I've really got an open ear." In fact, a trained open ear is what I think sociology is. When a conversation is exchanging judgments, I don't think it's being 'nice,' and it's certainly boring, so I'm promising him openness, and that's surprisingly rare, and I think valued. He asked me remarkably little about myself.

SPENCER: You're a Berkeley lefty, and don't you think he knew that or assumed it?

HOCHSCHILD: Of course, all of them did. I tell them, "Look, if you want to know who I am, Google me. It's all in print. You'll know exactly who I am. I've written ten books, and you can tell what my perspective is."

So, for me, being nice is opening a

door. It is not an expression of decorum and feminine sweetness. It's a very serious, even kind of diplomatic and even strategic search for common ground. Arch enemies can get together, but they do it wisely when they really know what the other guy is like and what makes them tick. Nelson Mandela, who is my model, really knew what the Afrikaner mind was. He did his negotiations in Afrikaans. I admire that. That's the kind of being nice that I'm for. I need to add that to the world, and just –

SPENCER: I do too, dear. I'm just saying (and I hope you take it as a compliment) that you are much, much better at it than I am. I wish I could be better at it. And in fact, what you're doing is the only solution I know of that would actually change public opinion. That's doing it one by one, somebody going in and hanging out with people and just being nice to them, in the sense that you mean it.

But I don't see that as an easy way to win an election. We only have a few weeks in which to run around, taking people to lunch and trying to be nice in the way that you talk about it. I don't think we can do it. So, what else have you got?

HOCHSCHILD: Well, what I've got is what my granddaughter is doing now. She has just finished her freshman year at Occidental College in Los Angeles, and they have a campaign semester where you actually get credit for going to a swing state, and you can be in whatever party you are, but you can't be a Democrat and go to a Democrat state where everything's sealed and go around and talk to people.

She has gone to Arizona. She's now in Phoenix and spending nine-to-five days in 100 degrees, so she goes out with lots of water, and she's doing it for a labor union that has a list of people who are undecided, and she's boned up on all of the issues. Ruben Gallego is the candidate for Senator that she's campaigning for. She's talking to people, and she said she's just learned a ton. And there was one African American guy who said, 'I'm not going to vote at all.'

She said, 'You know, there's actually a \$300 bonus on the Harris-Walz ticket to support new parents.'

He said, 'No, I had no idea.' She told me yesterday – she was so thrilled. He said, 'Look, I see you've worked so hard to know the substance of these issues, and you're telling me. I'm going to vote – not because they're great, I don't know if they are – but because you've put this much time into coming to talk to me.'

She's being 'nice,' but in a very particular, effective way. So, I think there are many strategies out there. That's what we can do.

SPENCER: I'm absolutely sure that you're right, and I hope I'm much wronger than I think I am.

HOCHSCHILD: Well, thank you so much for this opportunity.

SPENCER: Tell me the trajectory. When does your book come out, how can people get it, and where will you be speaking?

HOCHSCHILD: Stolen Pride comes out September 10, and my itinerary on a book tour is on the website of the New Press, which is my publisher. It's a great little nonprofit publisher, and I just love them. I'm going to be talking in a bunch of different places.

SPENCER: It sounds like the one really profound analysis of motivation that everybody in the world should be thinking about. Because, as an explanation, it can't apply only to the current US situation. There's a global trend – something about fear of the future and of the sophistication that's going to be required to be successful and dignified and prominent in that new world. It's not just limited to ex-coal miners.

HOCHSCHILD: You're spot on. And thank you!

SPENCER: It has been such fun. Love you so much. Bye. ■

War's Hidden Victim

The Environmental Toll of Russia's Invasion of Ukraine

BY ALEXANDER BELYAKOV



Environmental consequences in Ukraine | © IPSI 90

While the world is focused on the enormous human toll of Russia's war on Ukraine, the conflict has also destroyed and contaminated its natural environment, with severe implications for human health, biodiversity, and overall ecological stability.

Ukrainian officials are compiling a case against Russia, aiming to present it to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague for environmental war crimes. If successful, this would be an unprecedented legal achievement. It would mark the first time the ICC convicted a nation for ecological destruction as a war crime.

Under the Rome Statute of the ICC, an environmental destruction act can be deemed a war crime. It becomes a war crime when an attack is knowingly ex-

ecuted despite its potential to cause "widespread, long-term and severe damage to the natural environment," and this damage is deemed "clearly excessive" relative to the anticipated overall military advantage.

However, demonstrating such excessive destruction relative to military advantage has proven challenging. Russia has also not ratified the Rome Statute, so does not recognize its jurisdiction.

Should the ICC accept Ukraine's submission, the proceedings against Russia could span several years.

DIVERT RUSSIA'S FOREIGN ASSETS

The massive destruction caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 was unprecedented in Europe since World War II, and is estimated by international institutions at close to \$500 billion.

While the conflict continues, experts are working out a potential framework for environmental reparations from Russia. These may include the diversion of Russia's \$300 billion in frozen foreign assets to pay for restoration and reconstruction of the losses suffered by Ukraine.

The war has painfully revealed its environmental consequences and raised questions of how to address them, as well as efforts to restore the environment and to pursue justice for ecocide – whose effects can be felt for generations, but are not yet considered as international war crimes.

Fortunately there are strategic solutions that can mitigate some of the damage -- improving emergency response capabilities, demilitarizing nuclear power plants, and ensuring effective sanc-

tions on those perpetrating such crimes as the Kakhovka Dam breach.

Moreover, sustainable reconstruction and accountability can be achieved through integrating environmental considerations into humanitarian and military programs.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has indeed brought irreparable damage to its environment. Nature has suffered greatly, with more than 5,000 cases classified as environmental crimes, with damages amounting to more than \$62.2 billion US.

The massive ecological loss at the Kakhovka reservoir ecosystem alone amounts to approximately \$4 billion US, and has long-term impacts on species' habitats.

Also worrying are historical nuclear sites like the "Yuny Communar" mine near Yenakiieve in the Donetsk region of eastern Ukraine, which pose significant threats to water supplies and biodiversity due to contamination risks.

Regarding restoring Ukraine's environment, experts Andriy Demidenko and Ruslan Strilets advocate for holistic data collection approaches, international engagement, and innovative policy reforms.

In Ukraine's efforts to restore its environment, one fundamental challenge is the variance in the methods used for damage assessment. And this points out how difficult the restoration of

The environmental destruction caused by the war in Ukraine is a clear indication of how defenseless nature can be in conflict areas.

Ukraine's environment would be when the war ends, in addition to the massive cost that has been imposed on it by the Russian invasion.

Demidenko, of Ukraine's National Academy of Sciences, emphasizes this, stressing that Ukraine must close the gap between its Soviet-based compliance-oriented approach (protecting the interests of extracting industries and manufacturers) and global best practices. The collection of robust data from Ukraine according to the internationally comparable standards is vital as it helps to assess damages accurately and

allows for possible claims at a future date.

The Environmental Compact for Ukraine, presented by the High-Level Working Group set up by the President's Office, contains 50 recommendations on green recovery. They include restoring war-damaged environments, clearing landmines, greening the economy, and integrating sustainability into reconstruction processes.

Post-war environmental justice and sustainable development in Ukraine will require partnerships and reforms. Even with an ongoing war, EU Green Deal obligations might remain binding.

Ukraine's case is a vital lesson that underscores the necessity for proactive governance models and international cooperation to combat environmental degradation during conflicts.

The recent introduction of the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) by the European Commission may provide a basis for restoring the environment. In addition, if Ukraine wants to recover, it must ensure Russia compensates it for ecological damage. So far, the invasion also resulted in the release of more than 175 million tons of CO₂.



Toxic waste pond near village of Novhorodske burning after being hit by a shell | © Phenol Factory

The environmental destruction caused by the war in Ukraine is a clear indication of how defenseless nature can be in conflict areas.

Collaboration between national and international stakeholders is necessary for these losses to be addressed. Ukraine can demonstrate an inclusive, risk-based governance model (using the best practices from the World Bank and other international organisations) with global partnerships and pointing towards a sustainable future.

Military conflicts cause significant environmental consequences, presenting distinctive challenges for post-conflict governance and policymaking. Fifty-one Nobel Prize laureates have urged “not to kill each other, but to save the planet.” At present, at least 55 conflicts are ongoing around the globe.

Russia’s war in Ukraine marks the first major conflict on the European continent in decades. Now in its third year, its ongoing consequences have reverberated across various countries, leading to increased famine in African nations, a migration crisis in Europe, and the contamination of water, food, and milk supplies with toxic substances from the bombings.

We can gain insights into the broader interplay of conflict, environment, and governance through the experience of the war in Ukraine. Civil society groups and international interventions have started to collect data, pointing towards promising investigations in this area by next year. Here are some of their findings:

Land Degradation: The war so far has resulted in land degradation, disrupting ecosystems, agricultural production, and local and global food insecurity.

Climate Change, Damage to Nature, and Infrastructure: The Russian

invasion had significant climatic impacts and existential effects on Ukraine and neighboring territories. Reconstruction efforts will increase emissions.

Nuclear Concerns: There are growing and significant risks surrounding the Zaporizhzhia and Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plants during conflicts.



Battle of Bakhmut | Wikimedia

Zaporizhzhia is the largest nuclear plant in Europe, and a catastrophic accident would dwarf the damage done by the Chernobyl disaster of 1986. It is currently occupied by Russian forces. The Chernobyl plant was seized by the Russians at the onset of the war, and held for 35 days, during which it was looted and damaged.

The assaults made it clear that Ukraine requires better international mechanisms for nuclear facility protection and needs to ensure the demilitarization of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant -- which Russia has rejected -- to avert nuclear accidents. This was emphasized by a (non-binding) UN General Assembly resolution.

Water Resources: Critical events at the Kakhovka Hydroelectric Power Plant and following disaster, some damage to Kyiv Hydroelectric Power Plant after Russian attack, chemical dispersals and contamination of the Black Sea have impacted the water sector.

The Kakhovka disaster, in the most important plant in Ukraine, displaced thousands of people, and threatened the agricultural industry of Ukraine, as well as international food supplies. Experts have attributed it to underwater explosions, in territory occupied by Russia.

Biodiversity: Affected Ramsar sites, listed as the world’s most important wetlands, as well as endangered nature reserves have been threatened by the ongoing war. Over a third of Ukraine’s natural reserves and the Crimean environment are in peril due to military activities since the Russian invasion.

POST-CONFLICT GOVERNANCE

After the war ends, Ukraine will face dual governance challenges: immediate environmental restoration and sustainable policy frameworks for future resilience.

The enormity of the damage inflicted on Ukraine and even Europe will persist through generations. A reminder that the war was not only an assault on a country, but on nature itself. ■

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Alexander Belyakov, PhD, is an Affiliate Faculty at Singapore Management University, a Sustainability Excellence Professional, and one of the co-founding members of the Environmental Peacebuilding Association. More at <https://alexbelyakov.com>. This article summarizes his presentation at the Third International Conference on Environmental Peacebuilding: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a5iQkpn6Ka8>

Saving the Ice: Can We Preserve the Greenland and Antarctic Ice Sheets?

BY METTA SPENCER



In early September I had the privilege of hosting a fascinating discussion about an urgent issue—the potential melting of the Antarctic and Greenland ice sheets and what could happen if we fail to save them. I’ve had many conversations on the topic of climate change, but this one felt especially critical. Joining me were some extraordinary intellectual leaders who are actively working on solutions to mitigate the impending disaster. The conversation was eye-opening, filled with technical insights and deeply thoughtful reflections about the future of our planet.

Our guest list was exceptional, featuring Vinton Cerf, one of the fathers of the internet. It’s a thrill

to speak with him, not just for his contributions to technology, but also because he brings a calm and rational perspective to difficult discussions. Robert Axelrod was with us as well. His book *The Evolution of Cooperation*, was essential in my teaching and thinking for years. Also joining us was Peter Wadhams, an expert on Arctic ice and a dear friend who has graciously participated in many of my previous conversations about climate repair. And Alex Luebke is a technical expert in Cerf and Axelrod’s group who will be involved in implementing the project if it ever is adopted.

We opened the discussion with Vinton Cerf, who shared a bit of the background on their current efforts

to preserve the ice in Antarctica. It was clear from the start that this is a massive, complex endeavor. The ice, particularly in the Western Antarctic, is at risk because of warm ocean water underneath that allows it to slip and maybe break off. As Cerf explained, this is especially concerning in places like the Thwaites Glacier, which would lead to catastrophic sea level rises if it breaks off. If the glacier goes, it could mean half a meter of sea-level rise globally, and if the entire Western ice shelf goes, we’re looking at up to three meters.

The conversation quickly moved toward possible interventions. Cerf and his group have been working on a solution: to pump water from beneath the ice back to the surface where it

would freeze again. This would anchor the ice to the rocky soil below and buy us time—though it wouldn't solve the underlying problem of global warming. So far, they've held one workshop with 40 glaciologists at Stanford and are preparing for another in New York to focus on the governance of the project. As you can imagine, this type of intervention requires input and permissions from various stakeholders, including indigenous communities and national governments.

When Cerf mentioned the technical challenge of pumping water out from under the ice, it reminded me of another discussion I'd hosted about putting a barrier or "curtain" under the water to prevent warm water from reaching glaciers. During that previous forum, Peter Wadhams had seemed skeptical about that engineering feat. Indeed, such ideas can sound a bit like science fiction. Yet, as Cerf noted, the situation we face isn't fictional at all. It's a genuine emergency, and while all these measures may seem extreme, they may also be necessary.

Robert Axelrod raised an important point that's often overlooked when talking about large-scale climate interventions. That's the 'moral hazard' argument—that by focusing on mitigating the effects of global warming, we may get distracted from the crucial work of reducing emissions. He's absolutely right to point out that saving the ice is not a substitute for reducing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

Alex Luebke helped break down the logistical hurdles that come with such interventions. Gathering data is a massive undertaking, and they're looking at several years of research just to determine whether the project is feasible. For instance, how many holes would need to be drilled in the ice? How much water would need to be pumped? How much energy would this require? These are big questions, and answering them will involve a lot of fieldwork, some of which may not even happen in Antarctica. The team is looking at testing sites in Greenland,

Iceland, and Alaska, where conditions are similar but more accessible.

Throughout the conversation, I found myself thinking about the urgency of this work. I can't help but feel that we should be doing something now. These experts are cautious, and



Antarctica | Wikimedia

rightly so, but if the situation is as dire as it seems, why aren't we moving faster? When I raised this concern, Alex Luebke agreed that time is running out and that we need to fund research immediately to start gathering the necessary data. It was reassuring to know that they're ready to act and that they just need the resources to do it.

One of the major challenges they face is, unsurprisingly, money. I pressed Cerf on that a bit; he knows some billionaires and with their deep pockets they could fund this work. But, as he pointed out, these wealthy individuals didn't get rich by making rash decisions. They want to see solid data and a well-thought-out plan before opening their wallets. So, the team has been working on proposals and reaching out to philanthropic organizations. They're hoping to raise around \$10 million for the initial research phase—a daunting but not impossible goal.

Of course, another obstacle is getting permission to carry out experiments in places like Greenland and Antarctica. As Robert mentioned, indigenous communities often have spiritual and cultural connections to the land, and their approval is critical. I offered to help by organizing conversations with

indigenous leaders, something Project Save the World is doing for other climate projects. It's important that we involve everyone in these discussions because, ultimately, we're all affected by what happens to the planet.

One of the more moments in the conversation was when Peter Wadhams shared his experiences studying the Greenland ice sheet, where he has encountered "black ice"—ice darkened by soot from fires as far away as Siberia. This black ice absorbs more heat, accelerating the melting process. It's a stark reminder that everything is connected and there are often unintended consequences.

By the end of the conversation, I felt both hopeful and apprehensive. The hope comes from knowing that brilliant minds like Cerf, Axelrod, Wadhams, and Luebke are dedicating themselves to finding solutions. The apprehension comes from the sheer scale of the challenge and the fact that time is not on our side. But as Cerf said, their goal with pumping water up from under the ice isn't to solve global warming—it's to buy us time. Time to reduce emissions, time to find better solutions, and time to adapt.

I feel a sense of urgency. We've all heard the warnings, and now we're seeing the effects of climate change in real-time. Whether or not the Thwaites Glacier collapses tomorrow morning, the threat is real. And while these scientists may not have all the answers yet, they're asking the right questions—and that's where solutions begin. We're planning another forum on the same topic with some of the experts who hope to do the first experiments on the ground to assess the feasibility of the plan. Wish them luck! ■

To watch the video of this one-hour-long conversation, click here: <https://tosavetheworld.ca/episode-629-saving-the-ice>. Then, after watching, you can scroll down to the blue button and click to post your comments in the discussion.

Monitoring International Treaty Process

BY ARTHUR EDELSTEIN



A handshake, the coming together of different perspectives | © Adobe stock

Nothing is more important than reducing serious existential risks to humanity. Major contemporary risks include: nuclear war, global pandemic, and environmental catastrophe.

Inevitably, international cooperation is required to manage those risks. That's because an extinction-level threat to humanity could emerge from any individual country and expand to threaten the globe.

Cooperation among nations is coordinated through international treaties. How can we hold governments accountable for participating in treaties that are critical to humanity's survival? The first step is to build public understanding of the status quo; more citizens need to know whether their government has ratified the most important treaties.

To improve the public's understanding, I have built a website, SurvivalScores.org. I selected nine treaties that are likely key to the survival of humanity. The website shows, according to UN databases, which countries have joined these treaties and which have not. If a country has done so, it earns a green tick mark; if a country is not yet a member of a treaty, it is given a red X.

SurvivalScore is automatical updat-

ed every day with the latest treaty information, and assigns each country a score reflecting its level of participation in these key treaties.

Now that this information is publicly accessible, the next steps need to be public discussion and pressure on governments. How can we focus our political discourse on achieving 100%

participation in treaties essential to the long-term existence of our species?

Here is a sample of a small selection of countries and their treaty participation as of August 2024. To see the current full table with the treaty participation of all 197 UN-member countries, visit: SurvivalScores.org. ■

Country	Score	International Criminal Court	ICC Crime of Aggression Amdt. Treaty	Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Free Zone	Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons Convention	Biological Weapons Convention	Convention on Biological Diversity	Paris Agreement on Climate
Israel	2	×	×	×	×	×	✓	✓
India	3	×	×	×	×	×	✓	✓
Iran	3	×	×	✓	×	×	✓	×
United States	3	×	×	✓	×	×	✓	×
China	4	×	×	✓	×	×	✓	✓
Korea, North	4	×	×	✓	×	×	✓	✓
Russia	4	×	×	✓	×	×	✓	✓
Saudi Arabia	4	×	×	✓	×	×	✓	✓
Iraq	5	×	×	✓	✓	×	✓	✓
Ukraine	5	×	×	✓	✓	×	✓	✓
Canada	6	✓	×	✓	✓	×	✓	✓
Norway	6	✓	×	✓	✓	×	✓	✓
United Kingdom	6	✓	×	✓	✓	×	✓	✓
Germany	7	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	✓	✓
New Zealand	8	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Peru	9	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Revisiting the 'Limits to Growth' Debate

BY METTA SPENCER



I had fun chairing a forum that was an iteration of the old debate about whether it's possible to decouple economic growth from resource consumption and environmental harm. This conversation originated in the 1970s with a famous report, *Limits to Growth*, which argued that economic growth cannot continue because it uses up the world's resources, which are finite. Eventually, the authors said, we will run out and that might even put an end to civilization – so, let's cut back now! Here's my "take" on the discussion in one Project Save the World forum, which you can watch (or hear as an audio podcast) here: <https://tosavetheworld.ca/episode-624-sustainable-economies>. I was happy to find that, instead of debating the issue, both speakers seemed to share a common vision of the path forward.

IS DECOUPLING POSSIBLE?

My two guests on this fine August day are Mark Jaccard, a professor of sustainable energy at Simon Fraser University and the CEO of the British Columbia Utilities Commission, and John Feffer, the director of Foreign Policy in Focus, the online publication of the Institute for Policy Studies. Their discussion ranges from the technical aspects of decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation to broader questions about the political, social, and policy challenges involved.

Jaccard begins by defining the key terms, particularly the concept of "economic growth" and what it means to "decouple." He clarifies that economic growth typically refers to increases in GDP, but this does not necessarily correlate with resource use or pollution. He also raises the point that economic growth can be measured

per capita, which is particularly relevant in discussions about stabilizing the global population. Jaccard emphasizes that if we aim to decouple growth from environmental harm, we must clearly define what we mean by both terms.

Feffer contributes by pointing out that GDP as a measure of prosperity is increasingly being questioned. He suggests that harmful activities, like those that damage the environment, can still cause GDP to increase, which highlights the flaws in using GDP as the primary indicator of economic success. He advocates for looking at alternative measures, such as happiness indices, that can capture well-being more holistically.

Both Jaccard and Feffer agree that the core challenge lies in transitioning to an economic model that does not rely on depleting resources or polluting the environment. Feffer highlights how

innovations like electric vehicles or renewable energy storage could help reduce emissions while maintaining some level of economic growth, though he remains skeptical about whether GDP should remain the sole measure of success. He also stresses that the Global South may need to grow more in GDP terms to catch up with the developed world, even as the Global North looks to stabilize or even reduce its own growth.

A particularly poignant moment in the conversation comes when Jaccard touches on the issue of equity. He acknowledges that while environmental sustainability is crucial, achieving equity—especially global equity—remains a significant challenge. Jaccard admits that some forms of equity might take centuries to achieve but emphasizes that environmental catastrophes disproportionately harm the most vulnerable populations. Therefore, addressing environmental sustainability is, in a way, addressing equity as well.

Feffer brings up the idea of “planned obsolescence” and its detrimental im-

act on sustainability. He argues that our current manufacturing system is designed to encourage the rapid replacement of goods, which exacerbates the waste stream. Both speakers agree that this model needs to change, with Feffer suggesting that we need more products designed to last longer or be fully recyclable.

**CARBON PRICING IS UNPOPULAR?
TRY REGULATING!**

Towards the end of the discussion, Jaccard makes a compelling case for regulatory approaches over carbon pricing. While carbon pricing is often hailed as an economically efficient way to reduce pollution, Jaccard argues that it is politically challenging and has limited effectiveness in many cases. Instead, he advocates for flexible regulations that can drive technological changes, which, in his view, will be more effective than trying to change individual behaviors.

The conversation ends on a thought-provoking note, as Feffer and Jaccard reflect on how these ideas can be implemented in democratic societies.

Feffer points out that regulations are often politically unpopular, especially in places like the United States, but they may be necessary to achieve meaningful environmental progress. Both speakers agree that finding politically feasible solutions is key to addressing the global environmental crisis.

In summary, this forum on “Sustainable Economies” was a nuanced exploration of the complexities involved in decoupling economic growth from environmental harm. The speakers bring valuable insights into the policy tools that can help achieve this goal, from regulations to innovations in technology. While they acknowledge the immense challenges—particularly in terms of equity and political will—they remain hopeful that progress is possible, even if it requires compromises and difficult trade-offs.

The key takeaway from this conversation is that while there is no one-size-fits-all solution, focusing on what works and adopting a flexible approach to regulations may offer the best path forward. ■

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HOW TO USE OUR OPEN FORUM

Peace Magazine and Project Save the World are “open forums” — places where expert discussions of life-threatening global issues are made freely accessible. We now send digital copies of the magazine without charge to organizations around the world that address six major threats to humankind. Our website contains a page for each threat.

There you can share well-reasoned, evidence-based knowledge, including responses to *Peace Magazine* articles and our video forums. Whether or not we



editors agree with your analysis, we invite your informed, relevant discussion. Feel free to ask questions or challenge other posts — in a civil, constructive way. Our moderators watch the website and remove inappropriate posts, including advertising, vulgarity, promotion of political candidates, parties, or campaigns, appeals for endorsements, and

personal rudeness. But your civil society organization is welcome to notify others about your upcoming activities on our events column.

Go to tosavetheworld.ca and click on the scroll bar listing videos or on “Discuss the threats” in the menu bar to pick a topic. Or click on the link at the end of a magazine article.

Nairobi's Kibera

A Tale of Resilience Amidst Adversity

BY BRENDAN COLLINS



Kibera community | Brendan Collins

This spring, I visited Nairobi, Kenya, and its sprawling informal settlement, Kibera, at the height of record floods, just before the riots that captured international headlines. The floods, widely attributed to climate change, and the riots, sparked by the federal government's proposed tax increases, are intensified by a long history of corruption and public dissatisfaction.

During my stay, I had the good fortune of meeting Aquaman and the Vonya Brothers—a close-knit group of family and childhood friends. They welcomed me into Kibera, their home, neighborhood, and community, offering me the chance to experience daily life in this remarkable place.

I even had the pleasure of cooking chapatis with the children at a local orphanage. ([YouTube of children at local orphanage](#)) Through these exceptional young men, I learned a great deal about resilience and resourcefulness in one of Africa's largest slums.

KIBERA'S COMPLEX REALITY

Kibera is home to at least 250,000 residents, though some estimates place the population at over 700,000. Located just a 20-minute boda-boda (motorbike taxi) ride from Nairobi's central business district (CBD), Kibera's inhabitants often start their day with this commute.



Kibera school | Wikimedia



Kibera medical clinic | Wikimedia

The CBD itself is a microcosm of Kenya’s formal and informal economies: government offices and banks on one side, and an endless array of informal jobs and markets on the other. Kenya’s informal economy employs over 16 million people, accounting for 85% of the nation’s labor force, and includes everything from street markets selling second-hand goods to ‘side hustles’ and microenterprises.

Much of the informal economy spills into Kibera, where daily necessities—second-hand clothing, appliances, hygiene products—are sold on blankets spread across the dirt roads. Women run food stalls, selling items like sugar cane and chapati, while men dominate as boda-boda drivers. Life here is tough. Roads are rocky, electricity is sporadic, and access to clean water and proper sanitation is limited. Public toilets are rare and costly, forcing many to rely on the infamous ‘flying toilets,’ plastic bags of excrement tossed into the streets, further degrading living conditions.

RESILIENCE IN THE FACE OF NEGLECT

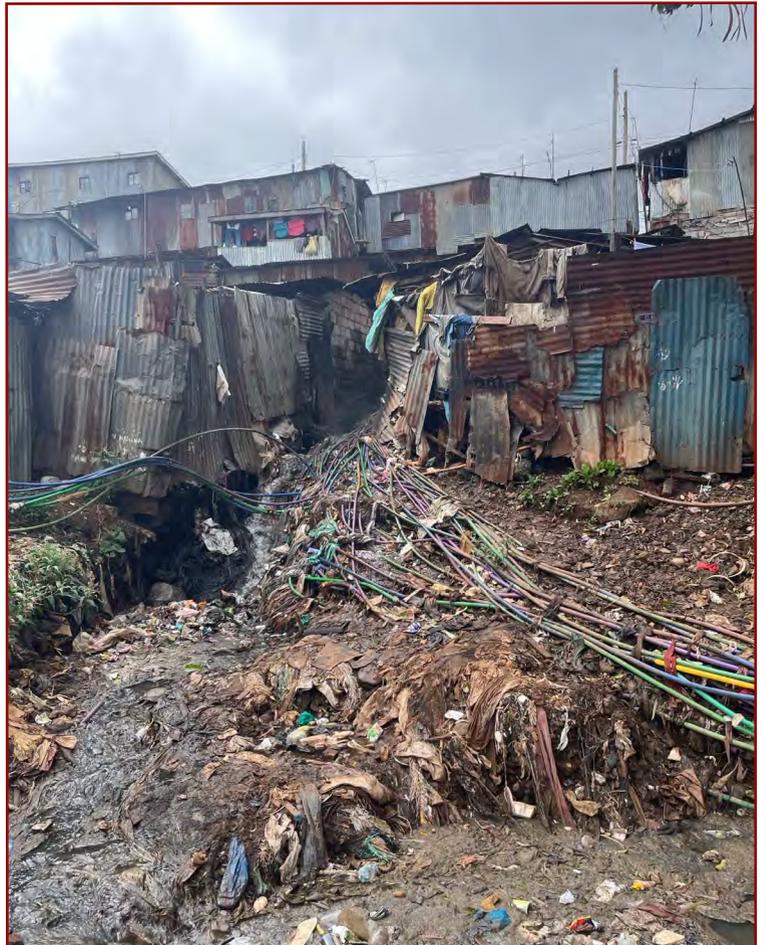
Victor Kidimuvonya, a member of the community outreach group The Vonya Brothers (YouTube:@TheVonyaBrothers), explained that “the government doesn’t play a big role in supporting the people of Kibera. Mostly, Kibera is ignored while the people here are in need of basic things.” While slum

tourism and international aid bring some attention and resources to Kibera, much of it never reaches those in need. NGOs, however, play a critical role in sponsoring children’s education and supporting community projects.

Despite the many challenges, Kibera is a place of fierce resilience and creativity. People work tirelessly to improve their lives and provide for their families, even in the absence of formal support.

THE ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT

Kenya’s capital, Nairobi, is a hub for international business, but beneath its modern exterior lies a city steeped in



Aquamani’s water lines snaking through Kibera | Brendan Collins



Aquaman's water line system | Brendan Collins

colonial history and rife with inequality. While capitalism and entrepreneurship have flourished, they have also exacerbated the divide between the wealthy and the poor. Yet even in Kibera, entrepreneurial endeavors are alive and well, supported by innovative technologies like MPesa, a digital banking platform that has revolutionized financial inclusion. Before MPesa's launch in 2006, less than 30% of Kenyans had access to financial services. Today, that figure is over 96%.

In Kibera, entrepreneurs have found ways to deliver vital services like electricity and clean water, albeit through informal means. Some locals, for instance, have plugged into Nairobi's electrical grid and charge customers a fee for access. Similarly, a few fortunate 'aqua-preneurs' have tapped into the Nairobi River's water supply, selling clean water to their neighbors through networks of hoses and pipes.

AQUAMAN'S VISION

One of the most inspiring individuals I met in Kibera was Aquaman, as the Vonya Brothers affectionately call him. Using his savings,

Aquaman secured the exclusive rights to install water lines throughout the settlement. Unlike many others, his hoses are buried deep beneath the roads, safe from the frequent floods that plague Kibera. Aquaman's success is a testament to both his business acumen and his deep commitment to bettering his community. By rallying his friends and neighbors to help dig trenches for the water lines, he created jobs and ensured a reliable supply of clean water for hun-

dreds of families.

However, even Aquaman's efforts are vulnerable to sabotage; during my visit, rival 'aqua-preneurs' dug up parts of his system. Yet, his resolve remains unshaken. As Kibera continues to battle environmental and economic hardship, community leaders like Aquaman and the Vonya Brothers are constantly innovating, finding ways to adapt and thrive.

THE BIGGER PICTURE

Life in Kibera is difficult, but it is not without hope. From solar electricity initiatives to WiFi hotspots and clean water distribution, entrepreneurs and community leaders are building a better future for themselves and their neighbors. As Kenya's largest informal settlement, Kibera's challenges are immense, but its people's resourcefulness and resilience shine through. ■



Author on motorbike

Brendan Collins lives in Bratislava, Slovakia, and writes about his travels and the extraordinary people he meets.

Dethroning King Coal

People used to call it “King Coal” because of that fossil fuel’s importance as an energy source. In the last century 40 percent of the world’s electricity came from coal-fired plants. To limit global warming, that percentage must diminish to zero. Until now, however, it has only been reduced to about 36 percent of the world’s electricity. And, as you’ll learn from Arlie Hochschild’s research (see the interview in this issue), even that small decrease has prompted a major social backlash in the US – a swing toward right-wing politics in Appalachia.

POLITICAL REACTIONS

Hochschild’s findings are not unique. Of course, there are other reasons why people may become right wing extremists (e.g. anything that causes people to decline in social prestige may produce resentment that fuels fascism) but the same connection to declining coal production has been documented in several other countries besides the US. Hodgson found it in the United Kingdom. Bieler and Jordan found it in Germany. Batory found it in Poland. Baker and Sturgess found it in Australia. In Russia, there’s no opportunity for free political expression, but significant political reactions among ex-coal miners have been seen there too in regions heavily dependent on coal mining.

Both the U.S. and Russia have decreased coal to around 18 or 20 percent of their electricity generation, down from 30 percent and over 50 percent respectively a decade ago. We see great variability across countries. Canada, for example, now uses coal for only 7% of its electricity, France uses it for 10%, while China uses it for 50% and India for 70%. For obvious political reasons, the changes are made more easily in some countries than others.

Nevertheless, for climate reasons, King Coal must be dethroned every-

where. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), low-carbon electricity generation must account for 85% of global electrical output by 2040 in order to prevent the worst effects of climate change. Can such a drastic change occur that fast?

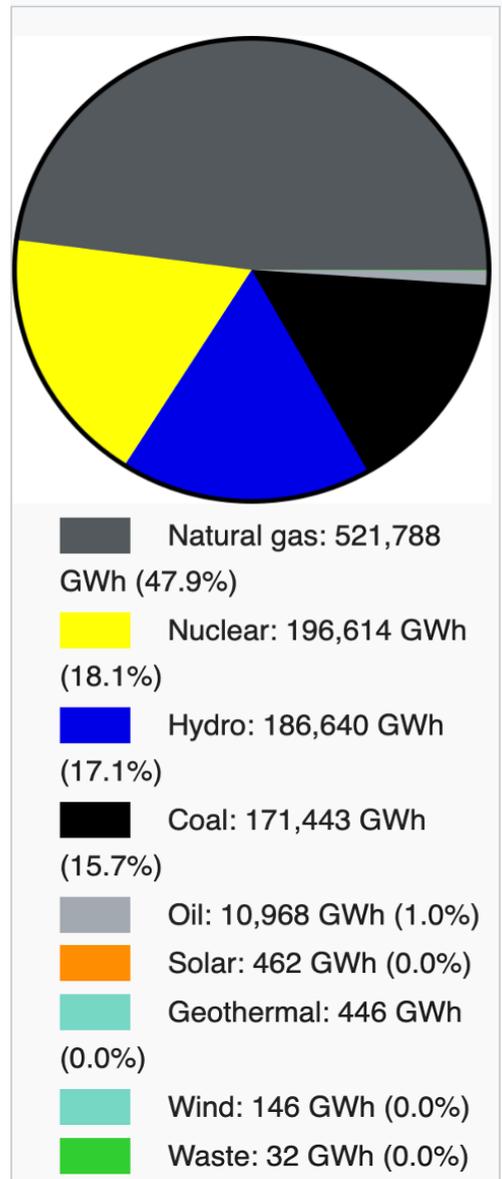
THE GROWTH OF SOLAR AND WIND

Some of that low-carbon electricity will come from hydroelectric power – mostly generated by dammed-up rivers or pumped-up reservoirs – but solar and wind power capacity is increasing astonishingly fast: at double-digit rates annually. For example, global solar capacity increased by about 22% in 2021, while wind power capacity grew by approximately 13%.

This was possible because of the amazing drop in price. In many parts of the world, solar and wind are now the cheapest sources of new electricity generation. The cost of energy for utility-scale solar and onshore wind has fallen to as low as \$30-\$50 per megawatt-hour (MWh), whereas coal can range from \$60-\$120 per MWh, depending on location and market conditions.

However, the transition away from carbon-sourced energy is not always made with one enormous leap. Instead, in many places coal-fired electricity not replaced by a renewable source like wind or solar but, in a first phase, by natural gas. Though it is still a fossil fuel, gas burns cleaner than coal, producing about half the carbon dioxide

Electricity generation by source in Russia in 2016^[12]



(CO₂) emissions per unit of electricity generated.

Russia is gradually changing from coal to natural gas but is hardly developing solar or wind power at all. In fact, if you look at the pie chart showing the comparative sources of electrical power in Russia, you will search in vain for the

Russia's Electricity

BY KONSTANTIN SAMOILOV

orange or green slices that would represent the portions of solar and wind power. So far, unfortunately, solar and wind provide essentially 0.0 percent of the country's electricity.

Clearly, a government that depends on the revenue of exporting oil and gas is hardly motivated to encourage non-carbon-based energy. So, the price of solar and wind power have not decreased as sharply in Russia as elsewhere and therefore are not competitive with gas.

THE HEALTH BENEFITS

However, it is still progress when coal is replaced with natural gas. Leaving aside the possible political reactions of former coal miners, which are unpredictable in a country like Russia, the change is worth celebrating for its health benefits.

Coal contributes significantly to air pollution with particulate matter (PM), sulfur dioxide (SO₂), and nitrogen oxides (NO_x), which cause respiratory and cardiovascular diseases. Any significant decrease in coal use could prevent thousands of premature deaths and hospitalizations related to air quality. Moreover, if Russia were to switch all its coal-fired electric production to natural gas, it would result in a net reduction of about 100 million tons of CO₂.

One person who would rejoice in such a change is Konstantin Samoilov, a member of Project Save the World who lives now in Uzbekistan. Until he chose to emigrate from Russia rather than participate in Putin's war against Ukraine, he had been an executive in a Russian energy company. His job had been to create power plants in several post-Soviet countries that remain integrated in the same giant power grid. We asked Konstantin to write the following article about the prospects for a "Russian revolution" to topple King Coal (or would it be Czar Coal)? ■



Refinskaya GRES. (largest coal-fired power plant in Russia) | Wikipedia

Russia has recently been rocked by major electricity blackouts. In the southern part of the country, more than one gigawatt of electrical capacity has been taken out of the unified electrical grid. Electricity supply was cut to over one million people for days at time and rolling electrical blackouts were introduced in the major cities of the South. Some rolling blackouts are still in effect.

WHY THE BLACKOUTS?

Russia electrical energy system has not seen a disaster like that in the last twenty years and it appears to be just the beginning of the crisis hitting an already troubled industry. And this could be a serious obstacle to the lowering of air-pollution and greenhouse gas emissions in Russia.

There are several reasons for these blackouts. The Russian energy infrastructure, particularly in regions heavily reliant on fossil fuels, has faced challenges due to aging equipment and a lack of maintenance. This has made the grid more susceptible to failures. Also, as energy consumption rises, especially during peak times, the demand can exceed supply, leading to blackouts. International sanctions have impacted

the import of necessary technology and parts for maintenance and upgrades of energy infrastructure, affecting reliability. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the ongoing military activity in Ukraine has led to a reallocation of resources, potentially diverting attention and funding away from essential services like electricity.

THE GRID

Russia's energy system is an interconnected network for electrical delivery from producers to consumers. An electrical grid consists of electricity-generating power plants, electrical substations to step voltage up or down, electrical power transmitting lines to carry power over long distances, and finally, electric power distribution to customers. In that last step, voltage is stepped down again to the required service voltage. Power plants are typically built close to energy sources and far from densely populated areas. Electrical grids vary in size and can cover whole countries or continents.

The energy system of the Russia consists of seven unified energy subsystems, including the Center, the Middle Volga, the Urals, the Northwest, the South, the East and Siberia and seven

geographically isolated energy subsystems, including Chukotka, Kamchatka, Sakhalin, Magadan, Norilsk-Taimyr, Nikolaevsk and Sakha.

Electricity is generated inside power stations – or power plants. There are three different main types of power plants in Russia – nuclear power plants, hydroelectric power plants, and heat power plants.

Hydroelectric power plants convert the kinetic energy of water into the mechanical energy of turbine rotation, which is then converted into electrical energy.

Nuclear power plants use uranium-fueled nuclear fission to release large amounts of heat that creates vapor which, in turn, rotates turbines and produces electrical energy.

Heat power plants are based on similar principle as nuclear power plants, but instead of using uranium fuel for releasing large amounts of heat, they use fossil fuels – mainly coal and natural gas.

Thermal power plants produce 63.7% of Russia’s electricity. Hydro-electrical power plants in Russia produce 18.6%. Nuclear power plants in Russia produce 17.5%. The rest of the electricity is produced with renewable sources of energy: wind and solar power.

Historically, coal was the main fuel for producing electricity in the USSR. In the 1960s and 1970s, large natural gas fields in the eastern part of the country were discovered and developed and the nuclear energy industry made a technological leap, allowing it to produce electrical energy. That was when many coal-fired power plants in the European part of the country changed to using natural gas and many new nuclear power plants were constructed, greatly decreasing the use of coal for electricity production. Currently in Russia 18% of all heat power plants are fired by coal.

COAL POWER PLANTS

Coal-fired power plants are the least friendly for the environment. Of course, regular coal is not burnt in modern power plants. Instead, coal is crushed into coal dust and supplied with com-

pressed air to boilers and burned there in pulverized coal burners. Particles of crushed coal heat up, flare up, burn, and release energy – in other words, create heat.

Coal consists of one main combustible substance – carbon – and other components, including the main mineral (nonflammable) component, silicon oxide (sand) and aluminum oxide (silica). All of this mineral part is also heated, but it is rather useless since it does not emit heat. In the burner, the mineral part swells into large pieces

*Coal-fired power plant
even emit radioactivity
more than any nuclear
power plant, since coal
always contains fissile
natural substances*

due to the turbulence and flows down the furnace under the influence of its weight. Part of the mineral component does not have time to consolidate and is carried away by the flow from the boiler into the pipe.

The part that enters the boiler is called slag; the part that is carried away by flue gases is called ash. The slag enters a ditch with running water, which is located under the boiler, and is transported to the ash dump. Before the flue gases enter the atmosphere through the pipe, they are cleaned.

There are several cleaning schemes, but the most common is water. Flue gases are fed into scrubbers at a certain speed – a large barrel where water flows down its inner walls. The system is designed for flue gases to fall on this water film, and the ash that is in the gases is captured by this water and flows into the same ditch. The already purified gas enters the pipe. The efficiency of such a system is about 85%, but that varies considerably, depending on how it is managed. Sometimes several stages of

purification are carried out to increase the efficiency.

In addition to the mineral component that pollutes the air, there are other substances in coal, such as sulfur. When it burns, it turns into sulfur dioxide, which forms sulfuric acid upon entering the atmosphere. There, combined with water, it forms sulfuric acid, resulting in acid rain. Then there are metals that evaporate in a flare and turn into gases, and then turn back into metals or their compounds in the atmosphere. Coal-fired power plants even emit radioactivity more than any nuclear power plant, since coal always contains fissile natural substances.

Also, at high temperatures, nitrogen present in the air that is supplied for combustion turns into nitrogen oxides, which, in turn, can form nitric and nitrous oxide when combined with moisture.

REDUCE AIR POLLUTION FROM COAL

Modern technologies exist that can clean flue gases from ash effectively. Russia’s biggest problem is that absolute majority of coal-fired power plants are older than 40 years. They were constructed in the USSR, where the problem of climate change was never mentioned and decreasing air pollution was not on the Soviet government’s agenda.

Now all the air pollution emitted by old Soviet coal-fired power plants is spread all over the territory of Russia. And with all the current problems experienced by Russia’s energy system, it is safe to assume that no major replacement or modernization of the existing coal-fired power-plants is going to take place in the foreseeable future.

But this is what needs to be done to decrease air-pollution: replace coal-fired power plants with natural gas power plants or modernize them completely to zero-level emissions – before taking other more costly, more sophisticated and less effective steps. We owe it to the planet – it’s long overdue. ■

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Konstantin Samoilov hosts a streaming show, “Inside Russia,” six days a week on YouTube.

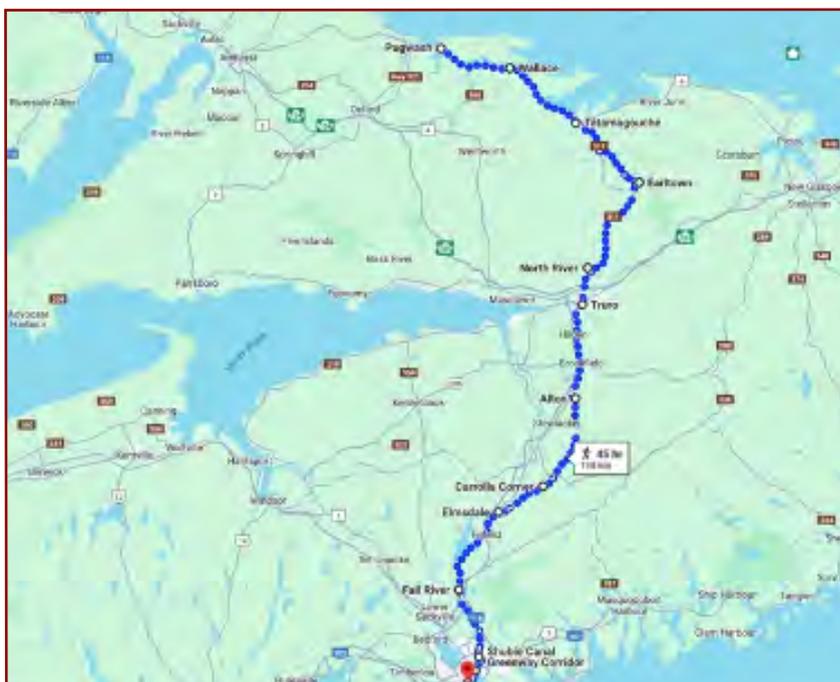
A Nonviolent March through Nova Scotia, Canada

By JILL CARR-HARRIS



Walking Together for Peace was a historic event. It was a 200-kilometer, two-week walk by a core group of 25 people led by local Mi'kmaq women water walkers known as the Grassroots Grandmothers. The walk traversed from Pugwash southward through Truro to Halifax on secondary roads, ironically, through a province that has many veterans and a distinct naval presence. The open vistas of the roadways gave the walkers a sense of the immense possibilities in Canada of making a reset in policies towards creating a more peaceful world. One of the ways the peace walkers suggested throughout, was to sign the UN Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).

The leadership, that rolled out this two-week event, was shared by five women, each who had unique skills to add to the mix of this successful march. Collective leadership is often a tricky



Map of the journey.

business to enact decisions yet these women had a powerful vision of “the feminine” in peacemaking in stark contrast to the might is right politics of today. They were: Lyn Adamson, Canadian Voice of Women for Peace and Jill Carr-Harris, international peace educator and trainer in nonviolence; Kathrin Winkler from the Nova Scotia Voice of Women; Ellen Woodsworth,

from Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom and Joy Masuhara from Women Transforming Cities. These five women came from Toronto, Halifax and Vancouver respectively and they recognized that they (all but one) were white women from backgrounds of privilege,

and as a result these leaders tried to make daily efforts to open the space for others to lead. For instance, Mariam Nicholas and Amy Mahoney, the indigenous grandmothers who guided the walkers across Mi’kmaq territory. These strong women leaders ‘braided together the larger peace issues of demilitarize, decolonize and decarbonize’.



Young people in their twenties and thirties from diverse backgrounds namely, Lia Holla, Masa Kateb, Rooj Ali, Luke Wedgwood, Alley MacDonald and Nitin Sonawane led daily communication, school programs, and events linking peace walkers to virtual and physical communities. There were also walkers from India: Rajagopal, P.V. and Yogesh Mathuria, who brought their experience of long marches (padyatras) in the tradition of Gandhi to attract the many Canadian South Asian community members. In addition, there were two Buddhist monks, Akeida Kanshim and Samten Chodron, who chanted throughout the march for peace. This effort at inclusive leadership was a daily challenge, and only in retrospect, I can say it worked out well because it brought the walk to a positive end and everyone went away feeling a sense of 'being transformed' and happy with the outcome.

One of the learnings of this march for the leadership was the delicate balance of bringing forward the grassroots agendas (of diverse communities along the route) and maintaining the consistent message of: take up nuclear disarmament and reduce military spending. As women leaders we were focused on the safety of family, and community; and where Canada can be a place of peace, which frankly, is crucial in global peacemaking. Although the link of the micro-issues with a macro-narrative is constantly being challenged by the mainstream messages, we had to continually keep this in check. The prevailing message that dominates the

media and which we found often recited to us was that it is necessary to build up a national military security apparatus to keep us safe, and support nuclear deterrence to limit counter attack and maintain the absence of war. Our counter claim was: to achieve peace is to build human security and this can only be done when people are able to act out collective security when their basic needs are met.

(This was captured by CBC <https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/video/9.6509863>; and Global News at <https://globalnews.ca/video/10768195/global-news-at-6-halifax-sept-21-5>; <https://globalnews.ca/video/9954549/peace-halifax-2>)

The route from Pugwash to Halifax was a series of interactions with people and place. Starting at the community of Pugwash, both at the Thinkers' Lodge and at the Peace Hall, gave us a moment to recall how 22 scientists who got together 67 years ago to regulate nuclear weapons; and how this remarkable history gives Canada a place at the nuclear disarmament table. Today there is interest to see Canada as a peacemaker so recalling this history is important. When the group was greeted by the Pugwash High School, a group of students that have attributed

themselves to be part of a nuclear-weapons free high school, there was a sense that the disarmament education taking place in British Columbia and Ontario, could aspire to have students themselves stand for peace. Later we found a high school in Halifax that wanted to follow suit and make a similar declaration. In addition the disarmament education was carried in six classrooms along the route.

There were many human stories in the twelve days on the road before reaching the provincial capital of Halifax. We greeted many people on the roadside or outside their houses. Friends from the community centres and churches greeted us at different places and gave us places to stay. The



Amy Maloney and Mariam Nichols, the Mi'kmaq Grandmothers that led us across Nova Scotia.



Walkers coming out of the Pugwash High School on September 9th, 2024.

Maritime Sikh Society and Hindu Temple in Halifax sent packed Indian food for three dinner events along the way. The India Hut in Truro also gave their curry and rice meals to some of the walkers. One of the long-time residents of Alton who was turning 80 years celebrated his birthday with us along with cake and refreshments. Friends from Carrolls Corners welcomed us with a scintillating vegetarian dinner and breakfast. We were invited by a family to stay on the Indian Brook reserve for three nights. There were also so many women of the Nova Scotia Voice of Women for Peace also doing the support driving and providing refreshments along the way. Our Antigonish friends took special care of us before and during the walk. All the walk was supported by public donations. I have so many memories of warmth and hospitality of people everywhere we went.

We participated in Truro's Down by the Marsh celebration, where one hundred people had joined hands to protect ancestral property of a Nova Scotian black community. They had consolidated a community land trust

in an area that was otherwise being regentrified and they staked out their independent space for forty housing

we arrived at Indian Brook reserve at the request of the Grassroots Grandmothers and we found deep turmoil



Some of the people that gathered at the Community Land Trust meeting at the Marsh on Friday, September 13th, 2024.

units that were to be built to respond to the housing crisis and at the same time in maintaining their African Nova Scotian identity.

in the community over the multiple deaths of indigenous youth at the hands of the RCMP in wellness checks. This became a national issue and we later learned that MPs met the following day in the House of Commons in an emergency debate. NDP MP Lori Idlout characterized this string of seven deaths since August 29th as a "disturbing pattern" (City News Halifax). This had me puzzling over whether this incident was part of a rising pattern of "command and control" tactics that our institutions were deploying to protect citizens and bring safety back to the community. Using the gun to resolve mental health issues is an enterprise of maiming, killing and creating terror and this is the very antithesis of creating a peace-loving society.

While the land was being blessed, I was reminded of how the Canadian exchequer is spending far too much on military armaments (the most expensive of which are nuclear arms) instead of taking up unique housing projects, like Down the Marsh, and this gave added value to our presence at the function.

Along with the group were Gandhian peace activists from India. Gradually it dawned on the group that the daily walking was more than just a one-time nonviolent social action. It was a way of building nonviolence in the society, building stronger movements of change, so even when the government responded with violence, the people could see that there were other ways

At another moment in the journey,



Here is little Immanuel with father Tristen asking people in their cars to honk for peace.

of handling disputes and conflicts. Marching with a faith in nonviolence is another avenue to make our political representatives more accountable. The



Rajagopal, the Gandhian Leader, with Joy Masuhara, ensuring that no walker is left behind.

Indian participants came to Canada to walk believing that the Canadian Government has had a history of peacemaking, and countries like India and Canada need to combine Gandhi's nonviolence with peacemaking.

During our walk, we heard that there were multiple walks going on simultaneously in India. According to the sources we received, fifty-five marches took place between the 11th and the 21st of September mostly on the issues of land and livelihood in seven states with a call to establish a Peace Ministry and to reduce military budgets for people's security. To verify the extent of these activities, Ekta Parishad, a member of the Jai Jagat, (one of the sponsors of the Nova Scotia march), sent copies of some of the 268 articles and electronic news stories that had been published in the newspapers and on TV across the country. This was the beginning of building greater solidarity between nonviolent actors of these two countries. In addition, after the NS march, four global Gandhian/Buddhist peace walkers traveled to the western coast of the US to walk for one-and-a-half months from Seattle to Los Angeles to bring

an atmosphere of peace to residents in advance of the bitterly divided country's national elections.

The walk from the Dartmouth peace pavilion across the Halifax harbour bridge towards Dalhousie University was an unforgettable finale. A long string of peace activists with their banners and flags on one side of the bridge, led by the Mi'kmaq Grandmothers was a sight to behold, especially as it traversed past two large warships in the docks below. Then in a sizeable group at Dalhousie's Student Union building we had speeches by Senator Marilou McPhedran, Canadian Pugwash representative Robin Collins, peace activist El Jones, and

many others, all hosted by Lia Holla, Director of the IPPNW and Joy Masuhara, of Women Transforming Cities. The audience and students were constantly reminded of the importance of signing the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Finally, you never know how information flows from these kinds of actions. In this case, at the same time as the Halifax event, there was a meeting occurring by the Sant'Egidio in Paris (which is a Catholic lay organization of people working as volunteers on peace worldwide) and it had an assembly of 10,000 persons inaugurated by the President of France, Emmanuel Macron. The Jai Jagat representative, Anuradha Shankar attended the meeting and gave her speech mentioning the Nova Scotia Walking Together for Peace and she was met with a standing ovation. Later she wrote to say that

because of her speech "she was asked to attend the dinner hosted by him [President Macron] at the Élysées, and she joined it with a group of padres and others and had more occasion to talk with President Macron about his role in peacemaking".

In conclusion, there seems to be many people keen to see peace, and have not figured out how to drive the political will. One of the signature songs of the march Jai Jagat (which means "victory to all" or "no one left behind"), continues to rhyme in my ears, the gist of the meaning is: the good acts make the impossible possible and we need to let people come together and act for peace. ■



Walking over the Halifax Harbour on September 21st, 2024

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See the 15-minute film of *Walking Together for Peace* by Jase Tanner at <https://youtu.be/0yEysIVK52Q>

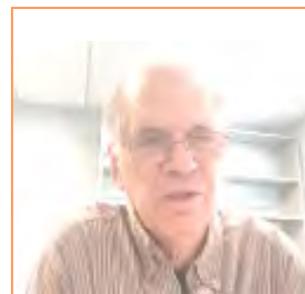
Physicists Against the Bomb



PHYSICISTS COALITION FOR NUCLEAR THREAT REDUCTION



Roohi Dalal



Stewart Prager

In a recent forum, two physicists introduced us to their new organization: the “Physicists Coalition for Nuclear Threat Reduction – <https://physicistscoalition.org/>

A UNIQUE RESPONSIBILITY FOR PHYSICISTS

Stewart Prager, a physicist at Princeton and one of the founders of the coalition, emphasized the unique position of physicists in the nuclear debate. “Physicists played a role in inventing nuclear weapons, and we continue to be involved in their development and maintenance. It’s our responsibility to speak up and advocate for nuclear threat reduction,” Prager explained. He noted that the coalition was established with the support of the American Physical Society, giving it a strong foundation within the scientific community.

The coalition aims to educate physicists about the current dangers of nuclear weapons, which have increased in recent years, and to turn them into advocates for reducing these threats. By leveraging the credibility and expertise of physicists, Prager believes their voices could carry more weight in political and public discussions.

EXPANDING AWARENESS AND ADVOCACY

The coalition’s efforts have primarily been within the United States, reaching out to physics departments across the country to raise awareness. According to Prager, they have recruited around 1,500 physicists so far, but the goal is not simply to increase membership.

We want advocates, not just people on a mailing list. When physicists speak out on these issues, it can influence policymakers more effectively than people in other professions,” he noted.

The coalition also seeks to engage early-career scientists, offering fellowships to encourage younger physicists to get involved in advocacy. Roohi Dalal, a recent PhD graduate in astronomy who is now working on space security issues, had been one of these fellows at Princeton.

CHALLENGES AND ETHICAL QUESTIONS

Probably the major challenge the coalition faces is the reluctance of many physicists to engage with these issues. Prager acknowledged that a significant portion of physicists are focused solely on their research and have little time or inclination to get involved in political advocacy. However, Dalal was more upbeat about her own generation of scientists. She insisted that there is growing interest among younger scientists in exploring the ethical implications of working on projects related to nuclear weapons or other military technologies.

The coalition is addressing the ethics of physicists working on nuclear weapons programs. “We want to catalyze a discussion in the physics community about the ethics of this work,” Prager said, noting that many physicists in national laboratories are involved in research funded by nuclear weapons programs, often without

considering the broader consequences of their work.

LOOKING FORWARD: EXPANDING INTERNATIONALLY

While the coalition’s focus has been primarily within the United States, Prager and Dalal are looking to expand its reach internationally. This effort is complicated by the fact that discussions about nuclear weapons are highly restricted in many countries, including Russia and China. However, the coalition has already made some inroads, holding a workshop in Italy last year with participants from 20 nations. The next steps involve reaching out to physicists in countries like Canada, where they see a more open opportunity to build collaborations. For example, a member of the coalition will address the Canadian Pugwash Group at its annual meeting in October.

CONCLUSION

The Physicists Coalition for Nuclear Threat Reduction is still in its early stages, but it represents an important movement within the scientific community. See its website: <https://physicistscoalition.org/>. By educating and mobilizing physicists, the coalition aims to bring a powerful voice to the public discourse on nuclear weapons. As Prager aptly stated, “We need to think big, and if we can unify the physics community, we can make a transformative change in the global effort to reduce nuclear threats.” ■

The World Court's Opinion on Israel's Occupation

BY THOMAS WOODLEY

For decades, supporters of Palestinian self-determination have talked of Israel's "illegal occupation." But while many of Israel's brutal policies – e.g. colonization, apartheid – have been patently illegal for decades, the UN system had never declared "occupation" itself illegal.

Now however, with the momentous advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) from July, Israel's occupation itself is formally established as "illegal."

The Court rendered its opinion as the result of a request by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in December, 2022. The UNGA challenged the Court to study Israel's presence in the occupied Palestinian territories (OPT) and determine if – whether due to the prolonged nature of Israel's occupation, or whether due to the discriminatory practices of Israel's occupation – the occupation itself could now be considered "illegal."

In addition to declaring the occupation "illegal," the resounding "yes" from the Court additionally stated that Israel must end its colonization of the Palestinian territories, that Israel must make reparations to the Palestinians, and that "all states are ... not to render aid or assistance in maintaining the situation created by the continued presence of the State of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory."

The Court's edict not to "render aid or assistance" should, in theory, have had particular resonance with the Canadian government. In policies and practices entrenched during the Harper years, and sustained under the government of Justin Trudeau, Canada consistently turns a blind eye to Israel's scan-



dalous practices against the Palestinians and their land – deemed "apartheid" by both Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.

One way that Canada has rendered "aid or assistance" to Israel is through its trade policy. Among other things, the Court directed states to "abstain from treaty relations with Israel in all cases in which it purports to act on behalf of the [OPT...];" and "abstain from entering into economic or trade dealings with Israel concerning the [OPT] or parts thereof which may entrench its unlawful presence in the territory."

Yet the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement (CIFTA) makes no distinction between Israel and the OPT. As such, CIFTA operates as if the OPT were formally annexed by Israel, and even extends trade benefits to Israeli colonies (a.k.a. "settlements") – which are the most glaring symbols of Israel's occupation.

Similarly, given the Court's opinion, Canada must repudiate the Canada-Israel Strategic Partnership, established under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) during the Harper era. The Strategic Partnership calls for collaboration between Canadian agencies and Israeli agencies – like the Israeli Minis-

try of Defence and the Israeli Ministry of National Security – which are directly involved in supporting Israel's illegal occupation.

Despite Israel's bombardment of Gaza, Canada also renders aid and assistance by providing arms to Israel. Since Oct. 7, 2023, Canada has issued many confusing and contradictory statements regarding its trade in arms with Israel. Clearly, however, Canada's arms sales to Israel are at a historic high. And while government officials have sent mixed signals about the status of certain arms export permits for Israel, reports make clear that Canadian arms sales to Israel continue to skyrocket – despite accusations of genocide against Israel.

While the ICJ's message is unambiguous, it's unclear whether the Trudeau government will act on its recommendations. In one potentially encouraging development in September, Foreign Affairs Minister Melanie Joly appeared to close a loophole which would have allowed 50,000 Quebec-made mortars to be shipped to Israel through the US. But years of equivocation from the Trudeau government on Israel's human rights violations give little reason for hope.

It is easy to be disappointed with the "international rules-based order," so often touted by Trudeau government officials, but consistently ignored in regards to Palestine. But it's hard to conceive of any other international mechanism that can oblige rogue governments to respect the rights of oppressed peoples. ■

Thomas Woodley is the president of Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME, <https://www.cjpmc.org>).

Pleistocene Park

By JOHN BACHER



Late Pleistocene landscape, with woolly mammoths | Wikimedia

Pleistocene Park is a 20-square-kilometer north-eastern Siberian nature reserve incorporated as a charity under American law in Pennsylvania. It is based on a Soviet era Arctic research station, which serves as its headquarters. This complex legal status, involving Russia and the United States, shows the remarkable global co-operation it has inspired in two great challenges facing our planet the threats to biodiversity and anthropogenically induced climate change.

NO ANTHROPOCENE

One idea that is not popular among the supporters of Pleistocene Park is the concept of a recently triggered Anthropocene epoch. Supporters of Pleistocene Park led by the founder of the Northeastern Arctic Research Station, Sergey Zimov, do not regard the disastrous human meddling in the biosphere of our planet as being of recent origins sparked by the industrial revolution as do the advocates of the Anthro-pocene. They see the creation of the Holocene epoch itself as being human-triggered, ten thousand years ago.

Advocates of Pleistocene Park see the end of the Pleistocene as a consequence of the invention of projectile spears which made it possible for humans to exterminate large mammals through spears and the emergence of the Clovis Point weapon. Like deniers of anthropomorphic climate change today, Zimov and his increasingly influential network of prestigious scientific allies face sceptics who challenge their shared views about the end of the Pleistocene. They believe the change from the Pleistocene to Holocene was triggered primarily by human overhunting of large megafauna. This brought about, for instance, the end of the biome known as the Mammoth Steppe.

The Mammoth Steppe's richness in diverse wildlife has caused it to be compared to the African savannahs. The now extinct Woolly Mammoth in the wilds of Siberia played an ecological role comparable to the Forest Elephant and Savannah Elephant species surviving in Africa's savannah in reducing tree densi-ties. Elephants are unique in their ability to knock down trees. Similarly, the Woolly Rhinoceros, wiped out in Siberia during the Pleistocene extinc-

tions, was a cold-weather variant of the White and Black Rhinoceros which survive in Africa.

While advocates of Pleistocene Park like to jokingly make references to their dream in comparison with the fictional cinematic Jurassic Park about the age of Dinosaurs, their idea was first put forward long before such science fiction fantasies. The concept of Pleistocene Park was used in 1970 by the authors Prince Phillip and James Fischer to describe African National Parks, which provide refuge for surviving megafauna such as Elephants and Rhinoceros.

In originally proposing his version of Pleistocene Park, Zimov was concerned with increasing habitat for surviving mammals that escaped the Pleistocene extinctions. One successful restoration was the Musk Ox, which after being wiped out in Asia, were imported from Canada during the Soviet era to Wrangel Island. This isolated Siberian Island was the last refuge for the Woolly Mammoth after it was quickly wiped out when humans arrived there 6,000 years after it was extirpated on the mainland. It has become a refuge for the Wisent (European bison), formerly confined to

Poland and Belorussia. When grassland conditions improve, it is planned to restore populations of the endangered Saiga Antelope and Bactrian Camel.

When Pleistocene Park was established in 1996 it had already a substantial population of caribou and wolves. It also held abundant populations of the European Brown Bear and Wolverine. Moose populations, however, had undergone a significant decline because of an increase in poaching in this part of north-eastern Siberia over the past 20 years. Moose were introduced from other parts of Russia and a fence was built which was designed to permit the species to move in but not out. The Altai Wapiti (Elk), a common species in Siberia, was restored through introductions.

The Pleistocene Park has not engaged in any research to bring back the Woolly Mammoth from extinction, but Zimov has indicated his goal is to provide proper habitat for it, should it succeed. The park has used a bulldozer, jokingly called a “baby Mammoth,” to knock down trees and improve habitat for grazing herbivores.

Zimov’s change in emphasis for Pleistocene Park from enhancing biodiversity to climate change prevention emerged from the peculiar circumstances of his Chersky region of Siberia in the Sakha Republic. The region has some of the worst impacts in the world of human-induced climate change.

Nowhere else on the planet have temperatures risen so quickly as Siberia, tripling since 1975 when the Northeast Siberian Research Station was founded. Temperatures in the region have risen by three degrees. Buildings here that were built on the assumption that permafrost would endure are cracking and collapsing. Fur clothes are being abandoned as unnecessary during the coldest winter months. Trees are twisted by the melting permafrost, which also releases methane, a potent greenhouse gas, and appear as drunken forests. Roads leading out of Chersky have sunk from the melting permafrost. Methane is leaking out of Thermokarst lakes. The biggest permafrost crater in the world is the Batagaika Crater, in the Chersky

range area. It is in the form of a one-kilometer-long gash, some 328 feet deep. The crater is growing in size from the constant thaw of permafrost and regular landslides into its rim. The crater has revealed fossils from the Ice Age era, most notably a species of horse that vanished during the Pleistocene extinctions.

Within Pleistocene Park Zimov, by increasing the density of various grazing animals, has been able to compress snow cover, thereby decreasing soil temperature and preventing the loss of permafrost. The landscape is now dominated by grasslands, replacing moss. Through increasing the density of herbivores to 114 per square kilometer (including domestic horses), the annual soil tempera-



Restored grasslands in Pleistocene Park, Siberia | Wikimedia

ture was reduced by 1.9 degrees Celsius. This cooling protects permafrost from melting. In most of the regions where permafrost exists, the only large herbivore is the Caribou, which tends to have a lower impact on snow compaction, with densities usually not exceeding 10 animals per square kilometer. These results were published in the prestigious scientific journal Nature, in an article in March 2020 by Sergey Zimov, his son Nikita, Christian Beer and Johan Olofsson.

NO ALTERNATIVE

There appears to be no alternative remedy to arresting permafrost decay with its doomsday scenario of out-of-control methane emissions than increasing the grazing of herbivores, which is the project of Pleistocene Park. Its advocates are in a race against

time. Despite this reality, the park has had great difficulty in securing the animals best suited to its ambitious goals of stopping permafrost melting through compacting and grazing. Negotiations were made with the Canadian government to secure Wood Bison well suited to grazing in the boreal forest conditions of Pleistocene Park. This animal is the closest survivor to the exterminated giant Steppe Bison. Unfortunately, authorities in the Sakha Republic insisted that the Wood Bison be transferred to them for their own ecological restoration projects. With considerable challenges, two importations were made of Plains Bison, from the Dittlevsdal Bison Farm in Denmark, so the herd in Pleistocene Park now numbers 35 animals.

Although sceptics ridicule Pleistocene Park without understanding the lack of an alternative remedy to the threat of a methane-releasing time bomb, the most disturbing aspect is about its small size in relation to the huge task of converting the desert-like tundra in Siberia, Alaska and the Canadian Arctic to a lush species-rich savannah. Even when the Sakha Republic transfers a 600-kilometer buffer to Pleistocene Park, as promised, it would only be 620 kilometers in extent. This is tiny in comparison to templates for Pleistocene type restoration projects in the largest national parks in Canada and the United States, where free-roaming bison herds are expanding amid political debate and controversy. These, the last refuge of the American bison, are Yellowstone, some 3,468 square kilometers in extent, and Wood Buffalo, 44, 741 square kilometers.

At the start of the 20th century, those who struggled to save from extermination the bison then holed up in Wood Bison and Yellowstone national parks, were racing against time, much as now are the architects of Pleistocene Park. Then the threat was poaching of the last legally protected bison; now it is the melting of permafrost from rising temperatures. ■

John Bacher is an environmentalist in St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada.

Exploring Ocean-Based Climate Solutions:



A Project Save the World Forum with Kathryn Moran and Peter Fiekowsky

When it comes to the challenge of solving climate change, there are many proposed solutions. One of the more controversial and thought-provoking is Ocean Iron Fertilization (OIF), a method of enhancing the ocean's capacity to sequester carbon dioxide (CO²) by introducing iron to stimulate phytoplankton growth. This controversial method was the focus of a recent discussion hosted by Project Save the World where we invited Peter Fiekowsky, a Silicon Valley entrepreneur, and Kathryn Moran, President and CEO of Ocean Networks Canada, to delve into this topic. Their conversation

revealed the promise, risks, and nuances of OIF, as well as other emerging technologies in the fight against global warming.

The host, Metta Spencer, began by introducing Peter Fiekowsky as a familiar face in Project Save the World discussions. Fiekowsky has a background in physics and engineering from MIT and is deeply invested in climate restoration initiatives. His interest in OIF and other technologies has led him to focus on the pressing need for large-scale CO² removal.

Kathryn Moran, a newcomer to Project Save the World conversations, joined from her office in Victoria, British Columbia,

accompanied by her two poodles. Moran brings extensive expertise in ocean science, having led significant research efforts at Ocean Networks Canada. Her work spans ocean observation and carbon removal technologies, including the ambitious "Solid Carbon" project, which combines direct air capture and ocean-based CO² sequestration.

SOLID CARBON

The discussion began with Moran explaining the mission of Ocean Networks Canada: to advance ocean observation and develop data-driven solutions to better understand and mitigate the effects of climate change. One of her organization's

key projects is solid carbon, which captures CO² from the air and stores it permanently in basalt formations beneath the ocean floor.

Moran highlighted the potential of basalt for long-term carbon storage, noting that oceanic basalt offers the largest potential capacity, with some formations capable of holding hundreds of gigatons of CO². This sparked a comparison with Iceland's Climeworks project, which similarly sequesters CO² in basalt, demonstrating that permanent storage is possible and scalable.

Fiekowsky, with his entrepreneurial mindset, approached the conversation from a solution-focused perspective. He emphasized the urgency of the climate crisis and advocated for rapidly implementing the most effective and proven methods, pointing to the natural cycles of ice ages as a potential

model for large-scale CO² removal. His focus is on methods that can be deployed quickly and at a large scale, such as OIF, which has shown potential in increasing phytoplankton growth and thus enhancing the ocean's natural ability to absorb CO².

IF YOU HAD TO PICK ONE APPROACH

Spencer asked: If we could only invest in one method of carbon removal, what should it be? Moran diplomatically responded that she couldn't pick just one. Instead, she argued that we should continue investing in research across multiple methods to gather data and make informed decisions. It's not about choosing one solution, but about understanding how different solutions can work together. She emphasized the importance of conducting experiments to measure the risks and benefits of each approach.

Fiekowsky, on the other hand, had a more direct answer. He expressed strong support for OIF as a low-cost, high-impact solution, citing the example of past volcanic eruptions like Mount Pinatubo. The eruption not only cooled the planet temporarily by releasing sulfates into the atmosphere but also deposited iron-rich dust into the ocean, which stimulated phytoplankton growth and

drew down CO² levels.

Fiekowsky believes that replicating this natural process could be one of the fastest and most effective ways to remove CO² from the atmosphere. He mentioned that OIF could cost as little as one cent per ton of CO²,

It's not about choosing one solution, but about understanding how different solutions can work together.

making it a remarkably affordable option compared to more expensive methods like direct air capture.

However, Moran cautioned that while OIF has promise, it needs to be thoroughly tested and understood before being scaled up. She pointed out that one of the biggest concerns with OIF is the potential for harmful side effects, such as harmful algal blooms, which could disrupt marine ecosystems. Additionally, there's uncertainty around whether the CO² absorbed by phytoplankton will remain sequestered in the deep ocean or will eventually be released back into the atmosphere. These are questions that need to be answered through carefully designed experiments.

INVOLVING INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

The conversation also touched on the role of indigenous communities in climate solutions. Moran, whose work involves collaborating with coastal indigenous communities, stressed the importance of involving these communities in discussions about climate interventions. Indigenous people, she noted, have a deep connection to the ocean and a vested interest in its health, but their perspectives on geoengineering solutions like OIF vary widely.

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Moran emphasized that any large-scale climate solution must be accompanied by social research to ensure that communities understand the risks and benefits and have a voice in decision-making processes.

Toward the end of the discussion, the host brought up a notable experiment conducted by the Haida Nation in collaboration with entrepreneur Russ George, which involved sprinkling iron into the ocean to boost salmon populations. While the experiment reportedly led to a significant increase in salmon numbers, it was controversial and labeled by some as “rogue geoengineering” because it didn’t go through the proper regulatory channels. Moran clarified that while this experiment garnered attention, it wasn’t the first of its kind; scientific OIF experiments had been conducted earlier in the Southern Ocean. However, the Haida experiment did highlight the potential for OIF to benefit not only the climate but also fisheries, a crucial resource for many indigenous communities.

The conversation closed with both Fiekowsky and Moran agreeing on the need for more research and experimentation. Fiekowsky remains optimistic about the potential of

OIF, believing it could provide a quick and effective solution to the climate crisis. Moran, while more cautious, sees value in exploring OIF as part of a broader portfolio of ocean-based carbon removal strategies, but only with the necessary safeguards in place to avoid unintended consequences.

The conversation underscored the complexity of addressing climate change. There is a need for diverse approaches, open-minded research, and careful consideration of both the scientific and social implications. Whether through OIF, direct air capture, or other emerging technologies, the path to a sustainable future will require innovation, collaboration, and a willingness to take calculated risks in the pursuit of global climate repair.

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You can watch this forum on Project Save the World’s website and then join the discussion by clicking on the blue Comment button on this page: <https://tosavetheworld.ca/episode-631-ocean-solutions-to-climate>. ■

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Lois Wilson

**‘Extraordinary Christian of witness and service’,
Died on September 13, aged 97**

Senator, human rights advocate and United Church minister Lois Wilson died in Fredericton, NB, on Sept. 13, at the age of 97. She was concluding her much-anticipated summer tour visiting all her four children.

Family was very important to her and she rejoiced every time she officiated as a minister at one of her 12 grandchildren’s weddings. It was a good way to conclude such a meaningful life.

Being a Peace Magazine patron was only one of Wilson’s community involvements and long-term contributions to Canada.

In February of this year CBC’s Ideas program paid tribute, and introduced her with these words: “She’s a United Church minister, a community organizer, the first female moderator of the United Church of Canada, a president of the World Council of Churches, a staunch human rights advocate who visited South Africa, South Korea, and Argentina — all in one year, and a former independent member of the Senate of Canada who found common cause with both left and right.”

There is no facet of human concern that Wilson was indifferent to and to which she did not add her vision, her wisdom, her humour, and her universality. In her words, she was guided by these two questions: “what’s hap-



pening in the community? and “what can I do about it?”.

She was a vibrant and wise presence at Christie Gardens for

“Whether people do or don’t have faith, the question is, what can we do together.”

more than a decade, and sharing lunch with her was always a treat. The stimulating conversations flowed easily on matters of kayaking and canoeing, garden naturalization, local, national and international social and cultural issues -- such as national securi-

ty, disarmament, Indigenous reparation, social housing, education, literature or music.

Well into her 90s Wilson was most concerned with the increasing inequality and precarity of the life of so many Canadians.

She became intimately involved with the campaign asking the federal government to create a permanent “guaranteed livable income,” adopting and learning from the successful examples in Canada and around the world of emergency programs.

Her life and works were the subject of a book, *For the Sake of the Common Good: Essays in Honour of Lois Wilson*, published by McGill-Queen’s University Press and written by people who worked with her.

At the book launch, she said with characteristic modesty, “I hope that this helps unite us and spurs us on to do some things together. It is obvious that I didn’t do anything on my own. It was always with other people. And you won’t get anywhere if you’re on your own... we need to remember that.” Words that were part of her lifetime philosophy and legacy. ■

By Bruna Nota, a past resident of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom.

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My Life in Politics

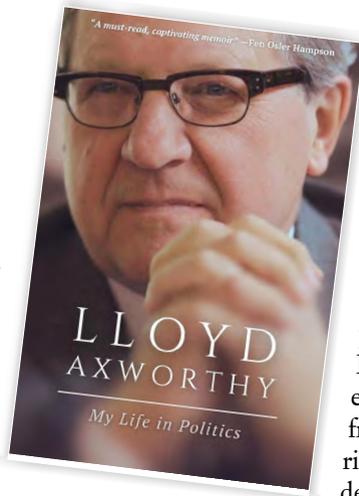
By Lloyd Axworthy,
Sutherland House, Toronto, 2024

On December 5, 1997 at the Ottawa Conference Centre, Lloyd Axworthy signed the Anti-Personnel Landmines Convention on behalf of Canada. The moment marked a crowning achievement in the history of Canadian foreign policy and also the peak of Axworthy's career as one of Canada's most consequential foreign ministers. Kofi Annan, the U.N. Secretary-General at the time, hailed the treaty as "a landmark step in the history of disarmament, a victory for the weak and vulnerable of the world."

In this splendid memoir, Axworthy tells the story of the "Ottawa Process," in which like-minded governments, civil society and international organizations linked their efforts to advance the concept of human security. Of all the weapons of war, the landmine has been one of the deadliest, Axworthy writes. "It doesn't put just combatants at risk during a war, but also innocent civilians who, years and decades after the conflict is over, traverse land seeded with hidden mines."

In the end, 122 states signed the treaty and, over the years, many thousands of lives have been saved. Axworthy drove the process, which had to overcome the obstacles posed by the recalcitrant major states, and in so doing coupled his courageous political skills with a finely developed conscience.

Conscience is at the core of Lloyd Axworthy. Where other politicians hold their finger up to see which way the wind is blowing, Axworthy



dives into his soul to determine what is right. The Ottawa Process was no accident. It was the culmination of years of Axworthy's efforts for the most vulnerable peoples — whether as a Princeton student (he earned a Ph.D.) on the front lines of the civil rights movement in the deep south of the U.S. or a minister in the Canadian government fighting for social policy reform in a patchwork federalism.

He has always wanted foreign policy to be about the humanitarian goal of protecting lives, an aspiration that led him, on behalf of the government, to plead with NATO to review its outmoded nuclear weapons policies. NATO did launch such a review in 1999, but refused to make a change, and to this day calls nuclear weapons the "supreme guarantee" of security. Axworthy was hailed by The Simons Foundation for at least prodding NATO. Although this also was a highlight of Axworthy's career, he is strangely silent about it in the book. He devotes much more attention to Canada's work in developing the International Criminal Court, the protection of child soldiers and creating the doctrine of the Responsibility to Protect. All these endeavours emerged out of the consistent application of his conscience to alleviate suffering. This is a beautiful and stirring mark of a visionary who sees politics not just as a vehicle for self-advancement but a craft for the continued development of a peaceful human species.

He has had wrenching moments, not least when he assented to NATO's bombing of Serbia and Kosovo in 1999

to stop the brutal aggression against the Kosovars by the forces of Slobodan Milosevic. It was a very controversial action because NATO seized the reins from the deadlocked U.N. Security Council. Axworthy agonized over the issue and sought spiritual counselling. As a senator at the time, I took the position that bombing was not the answer to the "ethnic cleansing" Milosevic was perpetrating. There were certainly two sides to this debate over whether to use force without the sanction of the Security Council. But never for a moment did I doubt that Axworthy was following his conscience to try to stop the murdering of innocent people.

It is when we do not follow our conscience that troubles multiply and havoc breaks out. Axworthy cries out for governmental action to protect targeted civilians in the march toward more and bigger destructive wars the world is witnessing today. He cites Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Hamas-Israeli conflict, and the melees created by the warlords in Sudan and the murderous generals in Myanmar among other examples of the suffering of humanity. Then he comes to the central point on his mind: What about Canada in the threatening environment that the world has become? "We've placed ourselves pretty much on the sidelines."

His criticism of Canadian foreign policy today is withering: He scorns Canada's absence in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons: "We neither participate nor observe." The Pearsonian legacy of peacekeeping has been "abandoned by a risk-averse military high command." The Harper government presided over a full retreat internationally, he charges. In 2015, Justin Trudeau was elected with the promise "we are back." But the cuts continued and peacekeeping commitments have fallen to corporal's guard levels. Our failure to win a seat on the Security

Council was a sign of our losing traction with other countries. On addressing contemporary human security issues, we are seen as “shirking responsibility.” “I believe that Canada is in need of a reckoning—a hefty kick in the pants.”

This is pretty strong language for an ordinarily soft-spoken former foreign minister to use against his own government. I think it comes out of his frustration watching Canada bob and weave on the main security issues today. Axworthy proved during his four years as foreign minister from 1996 to 2000 that soft power is a mighty political and diplomatic device. Knowing that Canada can do so much better as an important middle power with access to the world’s power centres, his conscience won’t let go.

Axworthy points the way forward: “As Canadians, we must take the lead. We should boldly assert the need for international action...Where better to champion this cause than at the United Nations?” He seeks a fresh iteration of the Responsibility to Protect doctrine—one that not only addresses the killing and maiming of civilians but also considers the impact of climate change. He is clear in his call: “Canada should lead the way in advocating for a resilient, compassionate world—one where the safety of civilians transcends borders and where our commitment to humanity is top priority.” He takes hope that “ordinary citizens, supported by a new generation of politicians, are taking matters into their own hands.” When Axworthy talks about a deliberative de-

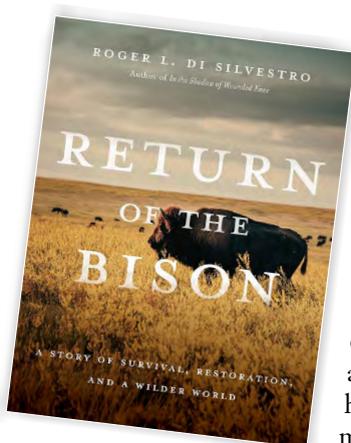
mocracy, he means a vigorous civil society.

Axworthy’s book is definitely worth reading. There were times I could hardly put it down. It would have benefited from better editing, but as a *cri de coeur* for this wonderful land of Canada to recover its valiant stand for practical policies to develop global security, it is an inspiration. ■

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Reviewed by Douglas Roche, a former Canadian Senator and Ambassador for Disarmament. His latest book is Keep Hope Alive: Essays for a War-free World

Return of the Bison: A Story of Survival, Restoration and a Wilder World

By Roger L. Di Silvestro;
Mountaineers Books, 2023.
254 pages



The eminent father and son science team, Sergey and Nikita Zimov have encountered difficulties in rewilding their “Pleistocene Park” in Siberia. Their problems are instructive when we turn to the advocates of another similar project, the Buffalo Commons, in North America. The common challenges are

vividly illustrated in Roger L Silvestro’s monumental work, “*The Return of the Bison.*”

The Zimovs have made their relatively tiny Pleistocene Park an island of sound land management in a time of human induced climate crisis. Compare that to the approach taken in the U.S. at the start of the 20th century for bison, where the same approach was adopted by two national parks: Wood Buffalo and Yellowstone. From the “few dozen animals” that found refuge in these precious reserves, are descended virtually all of the approximately 500,000 that live on the earth today.

While Di Silvestro recognizes that the rescue of the American Bison from

extinction “is one of the greatest conservation comeback stories in American history,” his book identifies the constraints on efforts to have more free ranging bison herds. He tells this part of the story most vividly in Chapter 8, on Yellowstone, which he calls, “The Last Refuge.”

From “the few surviving buffalo” that the US army protected in the late 19th century when it managed America’s National Parks, Yellowstone has about 5,400 Bison. Free ranging, they are the largest herd on public lands in the United States. Di Silvestro points out that “they don’t range entirely free, given that they can be shot if they wander outside the park or beyond certain, designated, adjacent lands.”

By wild grazing, the herbivores in Yellowstone have improved the park’s ecological health – benign effects that Zimov has also found taking place in Pleistocene Park. Yellowstone Bison have been documented as detecting

“which grasses have higher nitrogen content, a vital element to plant and soil ecology.” They return ingested nitrogen to the soil through urine and manure, and in so doing, according to Rick Wallen, a biologist with the American National Parks Service, provide “nutrients for ants, beetles, and other animals that in turn make the nitrogen accessible to plants.” Through such interaction bison not only eat plants but “contribute to Yellowstone’s annual growth of 165 million to 172 million pounds of plant matter.”

The Parks Service, the US Forest Service, together with the Assiniboine and Lakota First Nations developed a plan for a modest increase in the Yellowstone herd to “number up to eight thousand bison after calving.” This herd expansion sadly, however, has become a lightning rod for criticism from private cattle ranchers and the Republican Party dominated state of Montana.

Bison range expansion has become a scene of cultural warfare between Republicans and Democrats in Montana. In 2020 the Democratic Governor of

Montana Steve Bullock developed a site-specific plan for bison restoration areas of public lands. However, after Republican Grant Gianforte was elected Governor, twelve years of planning for bison restoration was abruptly terminated.

Gianforte helped spearhead the passage to two anti-bison laws by the Montana legislature in 2021. Such attitudes have prevented Bison in Montana from being introduced even into US National Wildlife Refuges in Montana. Such right-wing Republican hostility has created a situation where Yellowstone bison are confined to a mere 15 percent of their original “7,720 square-mile historical range in the Yellowstone area.”

One place where Republican reactionaries have prevented bison restoration in is the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Area. This refuge, Di Silvestro laments, has been “long the center of controversy involving bison restoration.” It has, he finds, “vast grasslands” which “could provide a release valve for burgeoning herds at Yellowstone and other parks and refuges.”

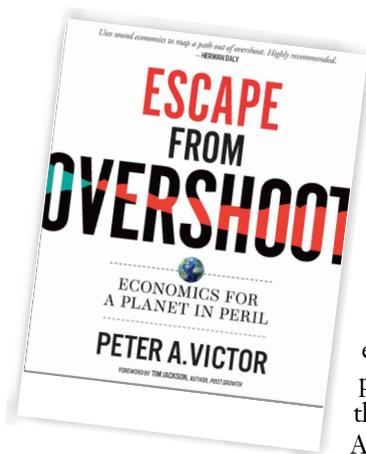
It would also aid the Fort Belknap and Fort Indian Peck Reservations” where the author finds, “bison restoration has been ongoing for over a decade and now sustains several hundred bison.”

The bitter controversies in the open politics of Montana, a contemporary version of the game of cowboys and Indians that have hobbled Bison restoration, mirror the more secretive intrigues that have delayed progress in Pleistocene Park in Russia. One of the tragic early decisions when Vladimir Putin became President of Russia was the termination of caribou censuses, which are needed to ensure the minimal grazing by herbivores in the Siberian wilds. These herds pack snow and protect permafrost. The publication of “Return of the Buffalo” at least should help in pushing Pleistocene rewilding onto the front pages, where it can help heal our wounded planet. ■

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Reviewed by John Bacher, an environmental activist in St Catharines, Ontario.

Escape from Overshoot: Economics for a Planet in Peril

By Peter A. Victor;
University of Toronto Press, 2018.



A growing number of books attempt to provide a way out of the climate crisis. Peter Victor’s *Escape from Overshoot: Economics for a Planet in Peril* is a powerful antidote for anyone

looking for an escape from the abundance of inadequate individualized solutions, merely technological quick fixes, or other wishful economic thinking proposed to “solve” the climate crisis. A very accessible read, the author includes a rich assortment of figures and illustrations along the way to pass along not only understanding, but also the author’s intuition, to the reader.

True to his academic tradition and pioneering work in the field of ecological economics, Victor situates our economy within Earth’s ecological and material systems to lay out how the global economy is overshooting these planetary systems. This overshoot is due to the capitalist economy’s incessant need for growth, and he makes it clear, partly through informative figures and graphs, the existential urgency to chart a new post-growth course.

Instead of immediately diving into solutions, after a discussion of different ways of thinking about the future, Victor steps back to survey how our economic system works and what scholars of the past have observed regarding economic

growth. Not simply a survey into one economic school of thought, the author explains and explores classical and neoclassical economics, Keynesian/post-Keynesian findings, as well as the broader Marxian tradition, albeit with a notable absence of Marxian or decolonial scholarship that comes out of the global south. In these chapters, readers from conventionally minded economists all the way to the radical activists will find useful and persuasive insights.

From here, Victor presents to us essential but highly concerning trends – spanning economics, demographics, energy use, and more – to ground a discussion of what can only be addressed by planning for a post-growth future.

The author makes a multi-pronged argument against so-called “green growth” that cannot be dismissed. A key point, illustrated with helpful graphs, is that that an already materially enormous global economy is essentially impossible to decarbonize on any reasonable timescale, if it also growing at any exponential rate. Additionally, the

author makes it clear that it’s not just the rate of emissions reductions that matter, but the still growing overall “stock” of emissions already in the atmosphere that are locking in dangerous amounts of future global warming. It is now evident that green growth is a distraction from the need to tackle growth, particularly in rich countries, as the central feature of any sustainable path forward.

With a critical but charitable approach, the author surveys post-growth frameworks, from a Steady-State Economy to the popular Doughnut Economics to the more recently popularized and radical Degrowth and Ecosocialist proposals. Victor additionally examines the plausibility and strengths of aspects of these, as well as exploring computer modeling work, including his own LowGrowSFC model.

The book leaves the reader with a logically-grounded sense of hope. Victor finishes with some thoughts on policy as well as a framework for economically planning for an escape from overshoot, to be worked out as appropriate in each

location and people’s particular context.

More politically inclined readers may find the lack of a broader concrete political and institutional formulation and some policy eclecticism somewhat frustrating, but this is clearly an intentional choice and overall serves the author well, keeping him from stepping outside his strengths in ecological economics and economic policy.

In surveying proposed frameworks and policy ideas, Victor intentionally leaves open a broad spectrum of ideas, from reformist to revolutionary solutions based on the analysis presented in the book. It is left up to us to come together to choose how we will find an escape from overshoot – by design and not disaster. ■

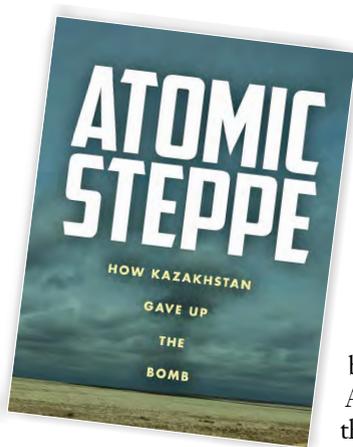
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Reviewed by Andrew M. M. Reeves, PhD, who is the Postdoctoral Fellow in Ecological Macroeconomics and Metrics at York University and part of the Ecological Footprint Initiative. He also roots his work in community organizing and activism for a more just and sustainable future.

Atomic Steppe: How Kazakhstan gave up the Bomb!

By **Togzhan Kassenova**;
Stanford University Press, 2022.

Kazakhstan is a blank spot on the map for most North Americans, as Togzhan Kassenova points out in *Atomic Steppe: How Kazakhstan gave up the Bomb*. About the size of Western Europe, it is the largest landlocked country



in the world. One reason for our ignorance is Soviet authorities trying to keep secret that Kazakhstan was one of two locations in the country where atomic bombs were tested. An archipelago in the Arctic Ocean was the other location. For 40 years, 1949 to 1989, an astonishing number of tests of nuclear devices were conducted at the Semipalatinsk Test Site, 340 un-

derground explosions and 116 above ground. The test site alone is the size of Belgium.

When Kazakhstan declared its independence from the Soviet Union in December 1991, more than one thousand nuclear weapons were in its possession and thus the blank spot on the map unintentionally became for a brief period the fourth-largest nuclear power in the world. In addition, the Soviets left tons of highly enriched uranium and Kazakhstan possessed the second largest known uranium reserves in the world.

Togzhan Kassenova has the ideal background to write about nuclear politics in her home country. She is tri-lingual – Kazakh, Russian, and

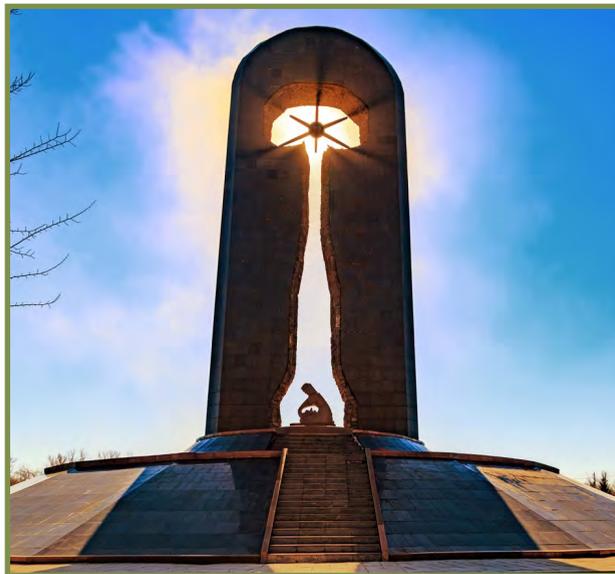
English – and delighted to follow in the footsteps of her father, Oumirserik Kassenov, who headed the center now called the Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies. She left Kazakhstan at age 19. The book is a mix of three genres of writing: personal memoir, objective scientific report, and social criticism. The biographical detail is interesting but it can get in the way of understanding the author's main story. Nonetheless, *Atomic Steppe* will certainly serve as a reference book for a long time.

The author is aware that Kazakhstan benefitted from Russian modernization, but at an unacceptably high price. She writes in restrained language. Testing was at the expense of the health of the local population and the environment. It could have been done without wrenching cruelty. It probably could not have been done without countless lies, however. Like the political elite of France, Great Britain, China, and the United States, ethnic Russians chose their Kazakhstan test site with little or no consultation with the local population. Leaders of the four countries understandably chose areas with small populations, but racism is also an issue since it is not an accident that local residents were from ethnic minorities that differed from the nations' dominant majorities.

Giving up the bomb in Kazakhstan required confronting a surprising number of challenges that did not have obvious solutions. Kazakhstan borders two superpowers possessing nuclear weapons, Russia and the People's Republic of China. Some Russians believed, including Nobel-Prize recipient Alexander Solzhenitsyn, that Kazakhstan was essentially an artificial country whose borders had been established by ethnic Russians rather than Kazakh nationalists and thus they did not need to be

respected.

Circa 1990, the Chinese population was expanding annually at the rate of the entire Kazakh population, then about 12 million people. Islamic terrorists were not far away. The basic question was whether Kazakhstan would at some future point need nuclear weapons in order to defend itself.



The Stronger than Death monument in the Kazakh city of Semei | © gov.kz

In 1991, Kazakhstan lacked armed forces of its own as well as its own currency. Some unnamed Islamic-majority states wanted the country to keep nuclear weapons because this would be the world's first Muslim nuclear bomb.

Despite obvious dangers, security at the military installations was lax. Neither metal scavengers nor unemployed men formerly working in the nuclear industry could be trusted. Kazakhs did not have the expert knowledge required to test, dismantle, or launch nuclear weapons. There was international agreement that only Russians had the required expertise. Thus, it was essential to avoid provoking Russia.

The argument in favor of abolishing nuclear weapons was convincing. The most serious issue was that no Kazakh

politician in the 1990s could stop the launch of nuclear weapons from their territory. Only the President of Russia had the authority to make that decision. It is apparently still not clear who controlled nuclear weapons in Russia during the 1991 coup against Gorbachev.

Nuclear tests are not the first example of Russian racism in Kazakhstan. To mention only one such event in the 1930s, Stalin's forced collectivization and sedentarization resulted in the death of approximately 1.3 million Kazakhs. Kassenova estimates that one million Kazakhs have died prematurely due to nuclear testing. It should not be a surprise that the anti-nuclear movement in Kazakhstan began in 1986, three years before the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Atomic Steppe is an impressive overview of exactly how the country's politicians gave up the bomb. But the uniqueness of the situation in Kazakhstan makes it difficult to see what peace activists in other nations could learn from their experience that could be applied in the future. This is not a criticism of the author. A small number of politicians working in a culture of centralized decision-making had to find solutions to immediate problems while distracted by the work of creating a new nation. That small number of the nation's elite probably made it easier to control the debate about weapons.

The military could not play a decisive role in decision-making because it barely existed. Decisions had to be made without full understanding of the problems since Russian scientists were reluctant to share sensitive information including data about health and how much and what kind of nuclear material was stored in specific locations. It should also be noted that politicians were not forced to abolish nuclear

weapons in the context of a country that was defeated in war, a situation that may arise in the future.

The final decision to dismantle nuclear weapons was delayed as long as possible because it was a bargaining chip for the Kazakh politicians in dealing with leaders of other nations, especially the United States. Kazakh authorities needed financing from Western powers to pay for the dismantling and to subsidize the indigenous oil industry. Given the political situation in the United States in the 2020s, it is difficult

to imagine another Senate agreement any time soon – both self-serving and altruistic – like the Nunn-Lugar Act negotiated by Democratic Senator Samuel Nunn and Republican Senator Richard Lugar. American taxpayers paid many of the expenses for dismantling Russian nuclear weapons. The Soviet Nuclear Threat Reduction Act which set the objectives included Buy American clauses that delayed the dismantlement of the weapons.

The story the author tells in *Atomic Steppe* is essentially reassuring. Such a

positive outcome rarely makes the news. The major news values for commercial mainstream journalists are novelty, negativity, and deviance. Whatever the topic, it is reported from this angle, which is a distortion of everyday life. We are not constantly confronted by events that are new, startling, and tragic. For this reason, the story Kassenova skillfully tells should be widely known. ■

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Reviewed by Stephen Harold Riggins, a professor emeritus of sociology, Memorial University.

Saying No to War

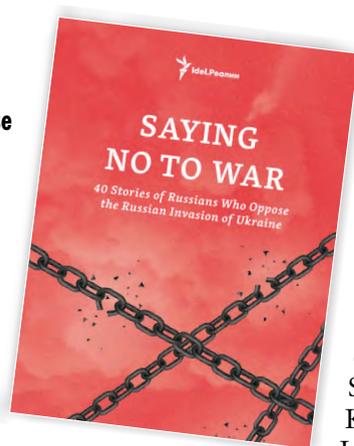
40 Stories of Russians Who Oppose the Russian Invasion of Ukraine

It was a night that made world history.

In August 1991, the massive statue of Felix Dzerzhinsky – an architect of Stalin’s terror – was toppled from Moscow’s Lubyanka Square, to the cheers of a euphoric crowd. And many Russians felt as though its 15 tonnes of iron were also lifted from their shoulders.

Under Mikhail Gorbachev the Soviet Union dissolved, and with it the last of the repressive communist system. The new era, under President Boris Yeltsin, although chaotic, brought freedoms many Russians could not have imagined: freedom of expression exploded in ways that began to reshape Russia.

But it would last less than a decade, until former KGB official Vladimir Putin came to power. And his war on Ukraine enabled a return to some of the darkest days of the Soviet Union.



It is now evident that more people are being tried for “extremism” and criticizing the authorities than were tried for “anti-Sovietism” during the post-Stalin eras of Nikita Khrushchev and Leonid Brezhnev.

Putin’s widening campaign suppresses all opposition by physically, emotionally and financially intimidating citizens. Their families are threatened, their livelihoods and pensions are at risk of massive fines, they are beaten and imprisoned. Human rights defenders and their lawyers are subject to “disciplinary, administrative and criminal harassment and prosecution, and physical violence amounting to torture and ill-treatment.” Those viewed as politically dangerous, like Alexei Navalny and Vladimir Kara-Murza are targeted for assassination. Both were poisoned and sentenced to bleak Siberian prisons -- and in Navalny’s case, murdered.

The granular details of Putin’s systematic reinstatement of mass repression is laid bare in *Saying No to War*, available online and written and edited by a group of Russian journalists, one of whom, Alsu Kurmasheva, was sentenced to 6 ½ years in prison then released in a prisoner exchange after she was falsely convicted of “spreading fake information” and “failing to register as a foreign agent.”

The case of Kurmasheva, a human rights advocate, journalist and editor for the Tatar-Bashkir service of Radio Liberty, could itself have been included in the book. And it answers both the question of why so many Russians are silent about the war and how far the Putin regime would go to repress all free speech, however unassuming, since the war in Ukraine began.

In Putin’s Russia today, spies, informers and police are pervasive and no one is immune. As in the darkest Soviet days, public trust is extinguished and citizens hesitate to speak their minds even behind closed doors. Once again neighbours fear their neighbours.

The book is a series of testimonies from people from the Volga region of southern and eastern Russia, 40 of

whom told the reporters their fears for themselves and Russia, and their experiences in traumatizing encounters with the security forces and Putin's repressive legal system.

While state-controlled media broadcast "patriotic" propaganda, sweeping laws criminalize a wide swath of free speech. Criticism of high-level corruption is "extremism" and speaking out on the war is "discrediting the army." Protests can be equated with "hooliganism" or "vandalism." And reporting or circulating true news events is "spreading disinformation."

Even watching Ukrainian TV or studying the language can fall under the axe of military censorship.

"In each story is heard the voice of a conflicted person who understands that it's impossible not to do something, but any activity is senseless," says exiled Russian political scientist Ekaterina Schulmann. "And all around these activists is a frozen desert, populated by people who understand everything, who are guilty of nothing but who will remain forever silent."

Those who reject silence, or even stage silent protests, find themselves -- and often their families -- punished in draconian ways.

As repressive laws and enforcements have grown, say the book's authors, the media was "crushed." (Even the wildly popular YouTube, family entertainment

for millions, was recently subject to outages.) The Internet is blocked and virtually all media controlled by government. The options for following what is happening in the war are strictly limited. Yet the book points out, there are still Russians who refuse to be silenced, at the cost of their freedom, livelihoods, and sometimes -- like Navalny, Putin's most vocal opponent -- their lives.

Even "a peaceful protest or inaccurate post can carry a prison sentence comparable to that of murder." As the book illustrates, the war's opponents are from a range of educational levels, ages, backgrounds and convictions, from the politically engaged to those who fear for their grandchildren's fate. But "all of this comes for one purpose," to "stop the criminal war and steer the country from a path, where the final station is the abyss."

A sampling of their stories is both poignant and inspiring.

Polina Mukhacheva, a student in Kirov, put a green ribbon in her hair to symbolize peace. After walking "literally three minutes" in a main square, "officers of the Center for Combatting Extremism informed me that I was being apprehended." She was loaded into a police bus and forced to remove the ribbon. She was interrogated, threatened and told never to wear green ribbons or clothing again.

Ravil Sharafutdinov, a lawyer from Samara, held solitary pickets in a city centre until he was seized by police who accused him of being a drug addict, when he refused to accompany them to the police station. After he refused medical testing "they began to push me, they knocked me to my knees... and handcuffed me, threw me into their (police) van." He was then locked in a cell with "total drunks."

Richard Rose, a photographer in Kirov, was so horrified by the outbreak of war that he conducted "information war" against it on Instagram. As he went to meet his wife one evening armed soldiers jumped out of a police vehicle, "(they) knocked me to the ground and started to beat my legs with clubs." After handcuffing and arresting him they also detained his wife.

For those in the West, Saying No to War makes it clear that the silence of millions of Russians is not just a result of patriotism by those who believe in Putin's propaganda, but of an all-pervasive fear from which there is no escape. It is a tribute to the heroism of ordinary people who reject the state-enforced repression, but against great odds obey their conscience. ■

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Olivia Ward is a member of Peace Magazine's editorial board and former Toronto Star Moscow bureau chief.

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CURRENT CONTROVERSIES



Fighting of Betta fish | © Adobe stock

Is Political Violence Ever Justified?

BY ROBIN COLLINS

George Orwell wrote in 1944 that the reason we know the name of the slave Spartacus is that he disobeyed the mantra to not resist evil, and instead he revolted: “I think there is a moral in this for pacifists.”

It is widely believed that democracies can avoid political violence and terrorism, at least internally, if they protect rights and freedoms. And democracies, it is said, very rarely go to war – at least against each other. In his book, *Disarming Conflict*, Ernie Regehr put it this way: “[T]he prevention of armed conflict depends on measures that address and mitigate the ways in which people and communities experience insecurity -- by meeting basic economic, social, and health needs; respecting fundamental rights and freedoms; controlling the instruments of violence and prohibiting the means of mass destruction; and honouring the dignity and worth of all people.”

This will resolve most conflicts but probably not all. For the others, many argue, we should look at legal responsive

measures to deter authoritarians or put down other spoilers.

CAN PEACE AND SECURITY COEXIST?

Regehr, reflecting on the early establishment of the peace group Project Ploughshares, said they understood that “pacifistic ideals and nation state practicalities could [both] be honoured and respected through advocacy of foreign and defence policies oriented toward violence reduction, the peaceful settlement of disputes, a basic wariness of the efficacy of military force in settling disputes and promoting security, and a recognition that in a heavily armed world, arms control and disarmament were essential ingredients of peace and stability.”

Cesar Jaramillo, Executive Director of Project Ploughshares, adds: “It is not only the justification of violence that demands scrutiny, but its foreseeability. The failure to confront systemic injustices and deep-seated grievances—whether at the individual or state level—allows resentment to fester, making violent eruptions less a question

of ‘if’ and more a question of ‘when.’ Understanding this is crucial—not to condone violence, but to prevent it by tackling the root causes before they spiral out of control.”

In terms of international law and weapons proliferation, but also the permissible resort to violence, there is some tension between Article 26 of the UN Charter (diminishing the diversion of armaments) and Article 51, (the right to self defence) that cannot be easily satisfied outside a “non-provocation” and non-aggression posture. In principle, responding with violence cannot be justified unless and until other protective measures are unavailable or fail. However, delaying violence, and trying everything else first, could also make the political goal (peace, democracy, justice or human rights) more difficult to achieve. An authoritarian state, for instance, might opportunistically use the negotiations process to undermine oppositional challenges. And as Virginia Held writes in her book *How Terrorism is Wrong*: “When nonviolent protest is met with

bloodshed and consistently fails to change the offending policies even when they are unjustifiable, it is hard to argue that nonviolence works, whereas terrorism does not.”

JUST WAR THEORY

The contemporary self-defence norm and just war theory can be traced to the humanist Dutch philosopher Hugo Grotius who claimed (in 1625) the preservation of the individual “self” and protection from injury were inherent natural human rights that could not be limited by law. This essentialist concept would be extended to states as collectives of individuals, and armed forces that could defend that collectivity. Because this idea is foundational in history, it

3. Based on a moral principle that can’t be achieved by other means.

The late historian Tony Judt in *When the Facts Change*, while agreeing that terrorism is the weapon of the weak, also believed its use is morally indefensible even if it has “characterized resistance movements of all colours for at least a century.”

VIOLENCE AS INEVITABLE RESPONSE

Justification for use of violence (force) isn’t only about the power to influence and retain or gain security, but it usually involves some kind of self-defence logic – as a response to other violence or evil. This presumes, therefore, the illegitimacy of violence outside that limiting boundary. The

unilaterally determined preemption. The latter was a transparent invention of the George W Bush administration in 2002 as part of his War on Terror and the invasion of Iraq, based on unproven stores of weapons of mass destruction. Absent a verified imminent threat, any such justification is considered illegal in international law.

In the case of Afghanistan, the UN Security Council agreed that harbouring or supporting the 9/11 Al-Qaeda terrorists could justify a collective self-defence response under international law. In retrospect there was also broad agreement (although not consensus) that international intervention was justified in Rwanda to stop a genocide. The NATO



The American struggle | © Jacob Lawrence

is found to flow also through Article 51 of the UN Charter, as an inherent right of nation states, and in turn to collective self-defence. And as Trevor Findlay wrote, “it has been clear since the advent of peacekeeping that states are unwilling to provide forces to the UN if they are not accorded the right of self-defence.”

Just war theory undergirds much of international law and makes certain responsive forms of violence acceptable, but thereby also more likely. Is there a similar argument for terrorism? Because she does not categorically distinguish war from terrorism, Held believes political violence might be justified if: 1. It doesn’t lead to worse violence; 2. Consequences are prompt and better than the alternatives; and are

source of this restraint is said to be either human nature by way of an evolutionary determinism, or justifications based on

*Just war theory
undergirds much of
international law and
makes certain responsive
forms of violence acceptable*

religious-cultural grounds and doctrine (‘eye [only] for an eye’, for instance).

The mission of self-defence predictably expanded into preventive or deterrence measures, and eventually also

intervention into Kosovo/Serbia was much more controversial, which is why the International Commission report concluded that it was “illegal but legitimate”, although not everyone agreed. The “responsibility to protect” (R2P) doctrine was subsequently devised to help clarify international practice when conflict within states risked slipping into gross atrocity. But after the Libya intervention, R2P lost some favour because the excesses of the self-interested or powerful intervening forces seemed to violate the terms of the UN resolution authorizing -- but also restraining -- use of force.

Richard Price, author of *The Chemical Weapons Taboo*, found that because there is a “general feeling of abhorrence” against chemical weapons



Pointing fingers and responsibility | © Adobe stock

use, there were desperate efforts to find rationales to justify indiscriminate killing. This would range from dehumanizing the enemy to alleging that only soldiers were targeted, or retaliation arguments (“they used it first”). In the cases of aerial explosive and fire bombardment during wartime, either the military-industrial targets were ‘regrettably’ surrounded by civilians, or civilians were indeed targeted to convince leaders to end the war, and so save countless others (on either side of the conflict), a familiar argument made to justify the atomic bombings against Japan. While weapons of mass destruction taboos may not always hold, these norms notably still do not expand to prohibitions against the use of all violence. More positively, Price argues that the taboos that do constrain us may at least challenge realists’ claims that war is inevitable.

OCTOBER 7

When terrorism is not acknowledged as a form of national liberation available to an oppressed people, it is at least said to be predictable (i.e., it naturally can follow from prior events.) On

Terrorism can be a threat directed in a way to cause broad political change and horror...

October 7, last year, 695 Israeli civilians, including 36 children, as well as 373 security forces and 71 foreigners were killed -- a total of 1,139 killed. In the conversation about this Hamas violence the purported pretext is the ongoing occupation by Israel of Palestinian

lands, and the ugly conditions of the “world’s largest outdoor prison” in Gaza. A similar argument is made for Putin’s invasion of Ukraine (inspired by a combination of: NATO expansion, neo-Nazis, the Maidan coup, Russia’s historical empire and non-existence of a unique Ukraine nationality, or in defence of the Russian minority that was being persecuted by Ukraine nationalists.)

Where the victims are civilian, there is no bright line separating the wars from the terrorism. Virginia Held argues that one also isn’t necessarily worse than the other. How does killing of children on school buses ethically differ from “shock and awe” warfare, she asks? There is some agreement also that terrorism isn’t only the tool of non-state actors. It can be state-sourced.

Terrorism is not necessarily only the deliberate killing of innocent civilians



Canon of global wars | © Adobe stock

either (which is the much-quoted Michael Walzer's core definition of it). Yet, this may be the consensus as it pertains to international law (which tends to be state-centric). Terrorism can be a threat directed in a way to cause broad political change and horror but which is inflamed by narrower terror acts such as the assassination of a political or military leader (Israeli targeting of Hamas leaders, for instance.) In this distinction, soldiers and police killed on October 7 by Hamas and Islamic Jihad are classified as legitimate targets, while the civilian deaths are not, because the violence chosen was simply the 'sole' available method at hand. But in that sense, even Israeli civilians who were armed or who had undergone military training would thereby be similarly categorized as legitimate military targets. (Some do make this argument even though International Humanitarian Law is more prescriptive.)

Comparative casualty figures are sometimes offered in legitimating acts of terror where the purpose is to end an ongoing occupation or oppressive regime responsible for far more deaths over a prolonged period. And, there may be objection to the killing of civilians, but there is compounded revulsion towards the intentional (or unintended) killing of women, children and the elderly, who are seen to be particularly innocent, unlike military-age civilian males.

Separate from its status as terrorism, there is the efficacy of political assassination. Many will agree that the killing of Hitler during the war was justifiable as a measure to end the war. His murder in the crib might even be seen as acceptable, albeit impractical, given he was evil only in hindsight. Aside from the political blowback that should ensue from infanticide, is the killing of any

authoritarian leader that oppresses his people ethical, even if carried out by a foreign state?

NOT ACCEPTABLE

For Bill Bhaneja, "violence begets more violence, the cycle of hate and

"sufficient evidence exists to show that a global nonkilling society is thinkable"

retribution continues" and therefore instead, "the root cause of violence has

superiority of other moral approaches for much of human value." Care (which she defines as responsiveness to need, sensitivity, empathy and trust, a 'feminist' concept) alone can cut across the cycle of violence. This, she believes, may be the best we can do. Held admits that prioritizing an ethic of care will compete with "the model of morality that is based on impartial justice and liberal individualism", and therefore will be a tough but (in her view) a necessary path to take. We can, however, "deter and restrain rather than obliterate and destroy; to restrain with the least amount of necessary force so that reconciliation remains open; and, in preventing violence, to cause no more damage nor pain to all concerned, than are needed."

In the famous debate between Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus in the 1940s and 50s, Sartre came to support violence as a Marxist "necessity" and as an obligation of worker solidarity, whereas Camus who (unlike Sartre) had been active in the French resistance, moved away from violence and towards championing freedom and liberty. He became an ardent defender of free speech as the most important tool to deal with disagreement and prevent conflict. He saw imposing limits on speech as isolating people and destroying their

potential for solidarity. Unlike Sartre, he was repelled by violence. Nevertheless, he believed insurrection would still occur and therefore should only be tolerated to build "institutions that limit violence, not... those which codify it." But violence, he wrote, "is both unavoidable and unjustifiable." ■

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Robin Collins writes about war and peace from Ottawa.



War is a racket u know - it's time for peace! | Wikimedia

to be addressed and dealt with." He believes there is no legitimacy to any violence, political or otherwise, and he points to Glenn Paige's work that suggests "sufficient evidence exists to show that a global nonkilling society is thinkable" and maybe possible.

This view is not that distant from that of Virginia Held who developed arguments for the duty and ethics of care. She argues that this "recognizes the gross limitations of law and the

Project Save the World's Summer 2024 Online Forums

All the video talks on this list can be seen on your computer, tablet, or smartphone at Project Save the World's website: <https://tosavetheworld.ca>. At the top of our home page, just type into the search bar the title of a show, the episode number, or the name of a speaker. These conversations are also accessible on the website page as audio podcasts and (often) as transcripts or summaries. There is also a comment column where you are invited to discuss the show after watching it, hearing it, or reading the transcript. If someone replies, we will let you know.



Episode 612 Whales, Dolphins, Monkeys

Heidi Pearson is a professor of marine biology at the University of Alaska Southeast, where there are lots of whales. She is concerned since they are injured and traumatized by the noises of ships and sonar. She studies dolphins comparing them intellectually to other land-based animals. <https://tosavetheworld.ca/episode-612-whales-dolphins-monkeys>.



Episode 613 Global Town Hall June 2024

Lou Kriesberg, Peter Wadhams, Richard Denton, Charles Tauber, Sandy Greer, John German and Alexey Prokhorenko are alarmed by the US Supreme Court's Chevron decision, the infirmity of Joe Biden, and the continuing war crimes against the Palestinians....lots of people like the idea of creating committees for Project Save the World activism. <https://tosavetheworld.ca/episode-613-global-town-hall-june-2024>.



Episode 614 Decoupling Economic Growth and Carbon Emissions

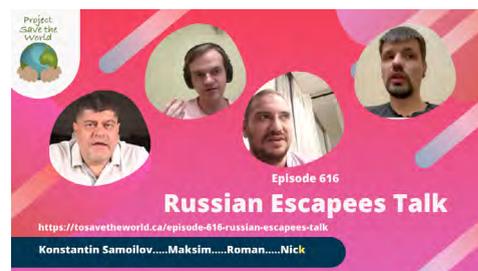
Peter Victor is a professor emeritus of environmental studies at York University. Ron Baiman is a professor emeritus of

economics at Benedictine University. Both are concerned with the economic implications of the current urgent need to reduce greenhouse gas from the atmosphere. Can it be done without causing such cutbacks in the economy that will create hard times for the whole human population – especially the poor? For the video, audio podcast, transcript or summary and comments: <https://tosavetheworld.ca/decoupling-economic-growth-and-carbon-emissions>.



Episode 615 Thinning Icy Clouds

David Mitchell is a climate change scientist who is exploring the possibility of reducing global warming by seeding cirrus clouds at the poles during the winter months. Paul Beckwith is a climatologist who holds regular video lessons about developments in global warming. For the video, audio podcast, transcript and comments: <https://tosavetheworld.ca/episode-615-thinning-icy-clouds>.



Episode 616 Russian Escapees Talk

Konstantin Samoilov, Roman, Maksim, and Nick are all Russian men who fled from their homeland to avoid being sent to kill Ukrainians. They are all finding it difficult or impossible to immigrate to another country of their choice. This is typical; most escapees are treated with suspicion in Europe, North America, or indeed most other countries now when they apply to immigrate. For the video, audio podcast, transcript, and comments: <https://tosavetheworld.ca/episode-616-russian-escapees-talk>.



Episode 617 Ocean Fertility

Robert Tulip is a leading member of the climate change webinars Healthy Planet Action Coalition. Robert McNamee is the founder of Lucent Bio, an organization that produces a soil amendment from rice husks. He had been actively engaged in the experiment led by the Haida tribe on British Columbia to increase the population of salmon with iron fertilization of the ocean. For the video, audio podcast, transcript and comments: <https://tosavetheworld.ca/episode-617-ocean-fertility>.



Episode 618 Combined Ways of Cloud Cooling

Franz Oeste keeps coming up with new discoveries about cooling the planet. Now he says that white clouds produce OH radicals, which destroy methane. Clive Elsworth works with him. We discuss it with a financial manager, Sander Epema, Robin Collins, and David Price. For the video, audio podcast, transcript and comments: <https://tosavetheworld.ca/episode-618-combined-way-of-cloud-cooling>.



Episode 619 Global Town Hall July 2024

Climate experts Peter Wadhams and Brian von Herzen discuss hydrogen energy and kelp with Katia Emami and Mohammed Haque, who worry about brutal governments in their homeland, and Sandy Greer, who worries about the rights of indigenous Canadians. For the video, audio podcast and comments: <https://tosavetheworld.ca/episode-619-global-town-hall-july-2024>.



Episode 620 The Sometimes-Icy Clouds

Cloud physicists Diego Villanueva and Jasper Kok explain the potential and also the risks of a new method of climate interventions: the thinning of mixed-phase clouds, which are sometimes made of ice and sometimes water. For the video and comments: <https://tosavetheworld.ca/episode-620-the-sometimes-icy-clouds>.



Episode 621 Oceans and Spray

Jessica Wan models climate processes. She explains to Patricia Quinn and Robert Tulip that the effects of marine cloud brightening may be beneficial today, but not by mid-century, when the climate will be warmer. Such an intervention done locally will have global effects that are hard to predict, so it is important to do research now about these processes. For the video, audio podcast, transcript and comments: <https://tosavetheworld.ca/episode-621-oceans-and-spray>.



Episode 622 Grandparents and Climate

Carole Holmes is the current co-chair and Lorraine Green a previous co-chair of GASP, while Janet Hudgins is active in Seniors for Climate. These are two of the 52 organizations in Canada for people who work to keep this planet in livable condition for their grandchildren by blocking climate change. For the video, audio podcast, and comments: <https://tosavetheworld.ca/episode-622-grandparents-and-climate>.



Episode 623 Firepower and Security

Simon Dalby, a professor emeritus at Wilfrid Laurier University, discusses the importance of fire for human security, previously mainly because of the use of combustion for weapons' firepower, but now for its causal connection to the climate crisis. For the video, audio podcast, and comments: <https://tosavetheworld.ca/episode-623-firepower-and-security>.



Episode 626 Physicists Against the Bomb

Stewart Prager is one of the founders of the Coalition of Physicists for Nuclear Threat Reduction. Roohi Dalal is an astronomer who has been a fellow with that organization, through which the members have been reaching out to physicists across the United States and now abroad. For the video, audio podcast, and comments: <https://tosavetheworld.ca/episode-626-physicists-against-the-bomb>.



Episode 624 Sustainable Economies

Marc Jaccard heads British Columbia Energy Commission. John Feffer heads a project on Just Transition. They discuss whether (and how) resources can be conserved and pollution minimized while economic growth continues - and what such growth would look like. For the video, audio podcast and comments: <https://tosavetheworld.ca/episode-624-sustainable-economies>.



Episode 627 Stolen Pride

Arlie Hochschild, professor of sociology U. California, discusses her new book, Stolen Pride, which explains the political shift among white males in a former coal-mining town from Democrat to pro-Trump, who helps them externalize blame for their downward social mobility. For the video, audio podcast, and comments: <https://tosavetheworld.ca/episode-627-stolen-pride>.



Episode 625 Global Town Hall Aug 2024

Andre Kamenshikov talks from Kyiv about the war. Brian von Herzen, Paul Werbos, and Peter Wadhams talk about ice, ocean currents, seaweed, and climate. Bill Leikam talks about wildlife and the price of copper to thieves. For the video, audio podcast, and comments: <https://tosavetheworld.ca/episode-625-global-town-hall-aug-2024>.



Episode 628 Beyond Iron vs Methane

Franz Oeste and Clive Elsworth have been working on methods of removing methane from the atmosphere. Peter Fiekowsky follows and has supported their work, as well as an earlier proposal to use iron salt to oxidize methane – an idea that would still work but may not be as effective as Oeste's new ideas. For the video, audio podcast, and to comment: <https://tosavetheworld.ca/episode-628-beyond-iron-vs-methane>.



Episode 629 Saving the Ice

Vinton Cerf, Robert Axelrod, a professor emeritus, at U. of Michigan and a specialist on cooperation, work on the committee with Alex Luebke promoting research into a new method of preserving ice sheets in the Arctic and Antarctic. It will involve pumping water from below the ice sheets, so they rest on solid rock or soil and will not slide so fast into the ocean. For the video, audio podcast, and to comment: <https://tosavetheworld.ca/episode-629-saving-the-ice>.



Episode 630 Fixing Democracy to Fix Climate

David Levai is working with the ISWE Foundation to develop an independent global citizens' assembly to complement the United Nations but represent the whole human population. We discussed whether such a body could work effectively by meeting on Zoom instead of in person. For the video, audio podcast, and comments: <https://tosavetheworld.ca/episode-630-fixing-democracy-to-fix-climate>.



Episode 631 Ocean Solutions to Climate

Kare Moran is CEO of Ocean Networks Canada. Peter Fiekowsky has founded an organization promoting climate restoration. We discuss her organization's task - collecting data about the oceans, especially data that may help clarify the potential value or risks involved in proposed climate solutions. For the video, audio and comments: <https://tosavetheworld.ca/episode-631-ocean-solutions-to-climate>.



Episode 632 SAI or Why Not

Ye Tao is the founder of MEER, an organization that promotes the potential use of mirrors on land to reflect heat back into space. John Nissen and Herb Simmens are both leaders of HPAC, the Healthy Planet Action Coalition, which considers the possible effects of various proposals for cooling the planet -- especially the Arctic. For the video, audio podcast, and comments: <https://tosavetheworld.ca/episode-532-sai-or-why-not>.



Episode 633 Let's Get them Talking

Wouter van Dieren is a Dutch activist who worked on the Limits to Growth book in the 1970s. Viktor Jaakkola is a member of the Finnish youth activist organization Operaatio Arktis, which works on communicating scientific knowledge. We discuss the perilous present climate situation and ways to perhaps stimulate greater public engagement, including with the participation of celebrities. For the video, audio podcast, and comments: <https://tosavetheworld.ca/episode-633-lets-get-them-talking>.

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