



Science for Peace

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President's Letter: Climate Justice, Contraction and Convergence, and Eliminating GHG Emissions

by Judith Deutsch

Barak Obama “You have my word that we will keep drilling everywhere we can” (March 22, 2012)

Nnimmo Bassey “Delaying real action until 2020 is a crime of global proportions....An increase in global temperatures of 4 degrees Celsius, permitted under this plan [Durban], is a death sentence for Africa, Small Island States, and the poor and vulnerable worldwide.”

There is a children’s story entitled “It Could Always be Worse.” In it, a peasant father complains to a rabbi about the misery of his very crowded and noisy house. Each day the rabbi advises the father to take yet another farm animal into the house and the peasant becomes ever more overwhelmed. Finally the rabbi suggests removing all these additional animals and the peasant is very grateful for the wise advice for he feels his house is no longer crowded. Perhaps charming, this is also a tale of wishful positive thinking, stupidity, manipulation – no one actually has to work at getting along with each other.

There are parallels in the past half century of history: the United Nations, reacting to the horror of the Second World War (“it couldn’t be worse”), committed to end all wars and shortly thereafter invaded Korea, killing at least three million civilians and destroying the country’s entire infrastructure. Two horrific atom bombs heralded the real possibility of human-caused human extinction, but then the nuclear-armed states assumed control of the United Nations and built tens of thousands of much more lethal nuclear weapons. By 1990, it was well-known that accelerating greenhouse gas emissions threatened human existence, but the powers-that-be orchestrated an enormous increase in emissions.

One difference from the parable of the rabbi is that for the new ministers of prosperity and death, all this additional military power and energy production “couldn’t be better.”

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The really appropriate children’s story is “Where the Wild Things Are” – in order to provide life’s basic necessities, namely food and shelter and human relatedness, monstrous behaviour has to *stop*.

Yet, when it comes to climate change, the predominant measures of adaptation, or of partial and gradual substitution of energy sources in limited sectors, does not mean “stop”.

Here are several propositions:

1. Stopping needs to start with the largest emitters, resulting in a substantial and immediate decrease in demand.

This step entails radically reducing and eliminating whole sectors whose emissions are exempt under Kyoto: the military, international aviation and international shipping.¹ Steep reductions are required in industrial agriculture² and in the use of the most energy-intensive materials like cement and steel.

This would necessitate rigorous measurement of lifecycle emissions and the rationing of greenhouse gas emissions to

¹ According to Monbiot in 2005, a return flight from London to New York would cost all the allotted CO2 emissions for a year if per capita energy were rationed at levels of acceptable risk. P. 173 *Heat*.

² On the land grab in Canada, see “LandRush” in Briarpatch Magazine. Feb 28, 2012

<http://briarpatchmagazine.com/articles/view/land-rush>

On the Canadian wheat board, see <http://www.stopthesteamroller.ca/>

the projects that are most essential for public health. The practice of substituting energy sources generally leaves out life cycle analysis and externalities. Overestimating the effectiveness of energy substitution derails identifying and eliminating the major emitters. For example, the energy cost of hybrid cars (considered a plausible adaptation and mitigation measure) should include the manufacturing process, the car's material (mining, transportation of parts), the electronic components, and externalities. According to Lester Brown of the Earth Policy Institute, the addition of 12 million cars each year consumes, in new roads, highways, and parking lots, roughly 1 million hectares of land, enough to feed nine million people if it were cropland, and he adds that most highways are located on the best cropland. There is also the socioeconomic inequity of government rebates to the affluent purchaser vs. decreased funding for public transportation which then increases incentive to use private cars.

2. Contraction and Convergence of per capita greenhouse emissions was first researched by Aubrey Meyer and then described by George Monbiot in *Heat*. Here are concise definitions of contraction and convergence from the website Global Commons Institute:

Contraction refers to the 'full-term event' in which the future global total of greenhouse gas [GHG] emissions from human sources is shrunk over time in a measured way to near zero-emissions within a specified time-frame...Calculating future emissions contraction, looking at concentrations and sink performance, is a non-random way of responding to the objective of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Convergence refers to the full international sharing of the emissions contraction-event, where the 'emissions-entitlements' for all countries result from them converging on the declining global per capita average of emissions arising under the contraction rate chosen. Converging at a rate to be agreed - the example shows 2030 - is a non-random way of responding to the principle of 'equity' in the UNFCCC, whilst still meeting its objective.

Negotiating the rate of convergence is 'the main equity lever'

³ Ian Angus and Simon Butler⁴ explain a crucial point in calculating per capita emissions by looking at the case of Ira Rennert (p. 166-169): "Quantitative increases in income lead to qualitative changes in social power exercised not through consumption but through ownership and control of profit-making institutions." Rennert owns 95% of the Renco Group which includes mining subsidiaries. "As a consumer he lives an excessively wasteful life. But as a chief executive

officer (or CEO), he holds responsibility for toxic sites identified by Green Cross as one of the ten worst polluted places on earth. "As a CEO he has shortened the lives of tens of thousands of people and laid waste to entire ecosystems....As a capitalist, he has power over the way that other people live—and the way they die. That fundamental difference can't be reduced to too many people consuming too much."

Some considerations:

The military takes climate change seriously, and this is ominous. The military is the world's largest greenhouse gas emitter and for this reason alone it should be dismantled. In his article "NATO: The Military Enforcement Wing of the West's 1%"⁵, Rick Rozoff quotes from NATO chief Rasmussen's article "Piracy, cyber-crime and climate change – bringing NATO and insurance together" and from NATO's new guiding charter, the Strategic Concept. Fifteen of seventeen NATO issues have to do with climate change. The Pentagon Report (2003) on climate disaster proposes the development of "tunable lethality" to deal with millions of displaced people. The US Department of Defence should plan "no-regret (military) strategies" for worst-case global warming events, to start "building a virtual wall around its national boundaries, restricting the movement of people into the country, developing technologies of political control, and preparing for increased threats from nuclear war." (p. 68).⁶

It's critical to look unflinchingly at the whole picture. Resources are available to make radical changes without endangering our biosphere or causing premature human death, and there are plenty of necessary jobs in the water, food, and shelter sectors worldwide if people are to survive. But rapid shifts are required in an increasingly precarious socio-political situation. Necessary reform of banks, the electoral system, laws, redistribution of wealth, labour protection and job creation, etc. will not in themselves reduce emissions unless bound by the contraction and convergence "acceptable risk" budget (p. 40, Meyer).

The narrowing time frame requires real results: the B.C. carbon tax is regressive and coincides with the push for tar sands pipelines and expansion of coal mining in B.C. According to a Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) report (June 24, 2008), "the richest 10% of Canadians create a bigger ecological footprint – a whopping 66% higher, than the average Canadian household". Have the wealthy and powerful reduced emissions because of the carbon tax? There is much smoke and mirrors. A recent British report airbrushed emissions from outsourced manufacturing and transport and from British offshore investments (not to mention the

⁵ <http://rickrozoff.wordpress.com/2012/04/09/nato-the-military-enforcement-wing-of-the-west-1/>

⁶ Dave Webb. "Thinking the worst: *The Pentagon Report*." In D. Cromwell and M. Levene (2007) *Surviving Climate Change: the struggle to avert global catastrophe*.

³ <http://www.gci.org.uk/index.html>

⁴ Ian Angus and Simon Butler (2011). *Too Many people: population, immigration and the environmental crisis*.

Kyoto exempt emitters). Climate change's most dangerous impact will be on food and water. The World Bank report on dams received much acclaim but no reactions when it was not adopted by the World Bank.⁷ Bill S-8 is supposed to provide safe drinking water in First Nations communities but there is no funding for adequate infrastructure, no regulations, no staff training -- hot air and no water.⁸

"The technological fix is a mantra, too for [the] traditional power-money-knowledge nexus: a largely university-based scientific establishment... the group also has at its core leading environmental NGOs." (p. 14, Levene and Cromwell). At its core the nexus is detached from the human victim side of this catastrophe. Climate change and its human impact is not an integrated piece of knowledge: here at the University of Toronto are large cement and steel building projects, monuments to the very corporate donors who treat human societies and their environments despicably – and the university library still does not carry James Hansen's book *Storms of My Grandchildren* [there is a copy at St. Michael's College library but not at the Gerstein Science library or the Earth Sciences Library—editor's note]. Christian Aid warned that by 2050 as many as one billion people could be refugees because of water shortages and crop failures. The political writing on the wall is that billions of people are dispensable. "The only logical response has to be one not of incremental but of revolutionary change; revolutionary, that is, without precipitating nations, societies, and communities worldwide into unmitigated and ultimately suicidal violence against each other"(Cromwell and Levene p xi): a global commons based on the principle of equity in the basic resources essential for life.

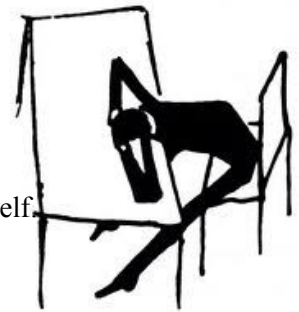
Judith Deutsch is the President of Science for Peace.

The Trial of Hassan Diab

The Trial

Kafka visited me
He asked how I was doing
I told him about my trial
And he told me about his
We compared notes
It pained us very much
That history keeps on repeating itself
In the archaic law of extradition
I can't introduce evidence
That shows my innocence
But they can file handwriting reports
One after another
Even though it is not mine
They said I can change my writing
Strangely that was what they said
Of Dreyfus one hundred years ago
Did we learn anything?
Did anything change?

-Hassan Diab



Hasan Diab is a sociology lecturer at the University of Ottawa and Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) arrested Diab on November 13, 2008 at the request of French authorities who wanted to extradite him to stand trial for his alleged role in a 1980 bombing outside a synagogue in Paris.

Diab has denied all the charges saying that he did not enter France in 1980, and friends, colleagues and former professors have expressed shock at his arrest. In 2009, Diab had been hired to teach a summer course at Carleton University; however, on July 28, 2009, B'nai Brith Canada, a pro-Israeli group with influential ties to the Canadian government, released a statement in which it condemned Carleton University for employing what it termed a suspected terrorist. University officials then terminated Diab's employment and hired a replacement.

Carleton University professors continue to support Diab stating that his termination violates the university's contract obligations, while the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) has condemned the actions of Carleton University's administration.

Handwriting analysis is pivotal to the Canadian federal government's Crown's case which is based upon a hotel registration card believed to have been signed by the person who planted a bomb outside the French synagogue. A comparison of Diab's handwriting on American government documents while he was a student at Syracuse University in the mid-1990s was compared to the hotel registration card, believed to be signed by the bomber. The origin, and commonality, of the handwriting samples are central to the Canadian federal government's handwriting analysis evidence. France has disavowed two handwriting experts

⁷ Eric Toussaint (2008). *The World Bank: a critical picture*. P 188-89.

⁸ Lloyd Dolha. "Water legislation fails to address lack of infrastructure, resources, training. March 2012. *First Nations Drum*

which Diab's lawyers have discredited; however, the Canadian government prosecution now plans instead to introduce evidence from a third, new French handwriting expert, who found a "very strong presumption" that Diab is the author of the hotel registration card.

Meanwhile, Diab is required to abide by strict bail conditions, and can only leave his home for work, legal, or medical appointments. When he leaves his home, he must be accompanied by one of the five people who posted his combined \$250,000 in bail. Diab must also observe a 9 p.m. to 7 a.m. curfew and report to the RCMP once a week. He is not allowed to hold or apply for a passport or to own a cellphone. He is also required to wear a GPS electronic ankle bracelet and must pay the \$2,500 monthly surveillance costs himself.

In the interim, Israeli war criminals such as Israeli minister and former military chief Moshe Yaalon (responsible for dropping a one ton bomb on a densely-populated area of Gaza in 2002, killing 14 civilians, including eight children), who cancelled a United Kingdom visit because of fears of arrest for alleged war crimes, have no such qualms about entering or leaving Canada where Israeli war crimes have been sanctioned by Canadian government officials such as Immigration Minister Jason Kenney, Foreign Minister John Baird and Prime Minister Stephen Harper. When Israel attacked an essentially defenseless civilian population in Gaza in 2008 and 2009 killing 1400 people, Baird declared Palestinian resisters to be cowards. In 2006, during a vicious Israeli attack on Lebanon which killed at least 1200 Lebanese, Harper opposed a ceasefire and called Israel's actions "measured and justified." The Jewish Defense League (JDL), which the American Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) declared in 2001 to be a "right-wing terrorist group", succeeded in persuading Jason Kenney to ban British Member of Parliament George Galloway from entering Canada in 2009 and also in 2012 of cutting funding of a settlement program administered by the Palestinian non-profit organization Palestine House based in Mississauga, Ont.. Both the JDL and B'nai Brith (which also fully supported the banning of Galloway and the de-funding of Palestine House) encourage sending soldiers from the Israeli Army to provide cover for Israeli war crimes via speaking engagements on Canadian university campuses.

Resist U.S. imperialist war threats on Iran

by Sara Flounders

There is growing apprehension that through miscalculation, deliberate provocation or a staged false flag operation, a U.S. war with Iran is imminent.

The dangerous combination of top U.S. officials' public threats, the Pentagon's massive military deployment, continued drone flights and industrial sabotage against Iran provides an ominous warning. The corporate media have been more than willing to cheer industrial sabotage, computer viruses and targeted assassinations. War maneuvers with Israel scheduled for mid-January were suddenly postponed Jan. 15 until May or later.

The U.S. Congress overwhelmingly voted to include binding provisions in the National Defense Authorization Act, and President Obama signed the legislation Dec. 31 ordering Iran's economic strangulation. These NDAA provisions demand that every other country in the world joins this economic blockade of Iran or face U.S. sanctions themselves. This itself is an act of war.

Iran has directly charged the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) for the Jan. 11, 2012 assassination of physicist Mostafa Ahmadi Roshan, which has outraged Iranians. Roshan is the fourth scientist killed in five targeted assassinations in two years.



Whether or not a war will actually erupt, it is essential to look at the powerful forces that lay the groundwork for such a conflagration.

A U.S. war would kill hundreds of thousands of Iranians and create region wide destabilization. It would cause a wild, speculative hike in oil and gas prices, devastating fragile economies of the poorest countries and unhinging the increasingly shaky Eurozone.

Revolutionary Marxists like Fidel Castro, political leaders in China and Russia, and even a hardened Israeli general have joined many political commentators to warn that a U.S. or U.S.-supported Israeli attack on Iran could quickly become a far wider war.

While defending its sovereign right to develop energy self-sufficiency, Tehran has made every effort to deflect U.S. threats and charges. Iran has submitted to years of intrusive inspections of its research and industrial facilities to confirm its compliance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

But Washington insists on stopping Iran's development — and not only its nuclear energy development to assure its future as oil production declines. For decades Iran was forced to import refined oil. Washington has tried to stop

Iran from importing parts to build oil refineries, as it has tried to stop all Iran's development since the 1979 revolution.

The myth of stimulus from war

David Broder, Washington Post political correspondent for 40 years and news show pundit, described in an Oct. 31, 2010, article how Obama could deal with his weakened situation when the Republicans swept Congress. He argued that to fix the economy and regain popularity, the solution is obvious and unavoidable: "War with Iran."

Broder had more than 400 appearances on "Meet the Press." He even won a Pulitzer Prize. Broder could be counted on to reflect political thinking and planning in Washington. Only the war machine can pull the U.S. out of economic stagnation, Broder argued.

"Look back at FDR and the Great Depression," wrote Broder. "What finally resolved that economic crisis? World War II. [A showdown with the mullahs] will help [Obama] politically because the opposition party will be urging him on. And as tensions rise and we accelerate preparations for war, the economy will improve." Upon Broder's death in March, Obama called him "the most respected and incisive political commentator of his generation." (New York Times, March 9)

Broder's statement shows an absolutely criminal mindset. It also shows a dangerous illusion. Broder calmly proposed the murder of tens of thousands of people, the devastation of entire cities, the destruction of a whole culture as a temporary economic fix to win a U.S. Election.

Others commentators just as coldly argued with Broder that war with Iran would not be large enough, because all the weapons needed already exist and are in place. So no surge of military orders would follow. A larger war would be needed to give a big enough push!

In 1939, reviving shuttered U.S. steel, rubber and textile clothing plants with government orders for tanks, ships, jeeps, helmets, uniforms and life vests for sale to Europe was a big stimulus. The entry of the U.S. into World War II in 1941 provided an enormous surge of productive capacity that pulled the U.S. economy out of a 10-year economic depression. What worked as an economic stimulus 70 years ago, before the existence of the gargantuan, bloated, high-tech military-industrial complex, is long past.

Today the U.S. has a military machine and a military budget larger than that of the rest of the world combined, exceeding \$1 trillion a year in stated and hidden costs, even without another war. It is guaranteed to grow at a rate of 5 percent to 10 percent a year. This is built into the Pentagon's budget projections even without cost overruns.

World won't bow to U.S. Dictates

Washington's plans to easily conquer Afghanistan and Iraq and set up stable puppet regimes were frustrated. The U.S. plan for economic war on Iran has also exposed U.S. weaknesses.

Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner launched a tour of East Asian nations in early January to convince south Korea, China, India and Japan to cut their massive Iranian oil imports and abide by the sanctions.

China and India — both major economies — refused directly. China buys a third of Iran's oil exports.

The Obama administration said that the U.S. would offer countries that applied for a temporary waiver to continue oil purchases from Iran while they made other arrangements. An Indian cabinet minister said India will continue to do business with Iran. South Korea said it would apply for a U.S. waiver because it planned to increase oil purchases from Iran.

Japanese officials, when meeting with Geithner, seemed to agree. But after his departure Foreign Minister Koichiro Gamba backtracked, saying, "The United States would like to impose sanctions. We believe it is necessary to be extremely circumspect about this matter." (AFP, Jan. 13)

Russia announced its refusal to comply with sanctions. So did North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) member Turkey. The European Union insisted on a six-month delay, due to fears of the economic consequences to debt-ridden Italy, Spain and Greece. The Greek government said it needs at least a year.

Saudi Arabia's crude oil contains more sulfur than lighter Iranian oil and requires substantially higher refining costs. In a time of global capitalist recession, this added cost is no easy sell.

Even outright U.S. collaborators are refusing Washington's demands. Pakistan, for example, refused to abandon a pipeline to transport Iranian natural gas into Pakistan and in the future even into India.

All of this would be good news. But the danger is that U.S. corporate power, seeing on every side its declining ability to ram through its dictates, is increasingly driven to military solutions.

This is exacerbated by U.S. setbacks in Iraq and Afghanistan that have weakened the U.S. superpower's dominance of Southwest Asia relative to Iran. The more the U.S. loses its grip on the region, the more desperate imperialism may become to risk all in a mad adventure to recoup its past position.

Every voice must be raised at this urgent hour against sanctions and war.

Sara Flounders is Co-chair of the International Action Center – an activist organization that resists US militarism, war and corporate greed as well as advocating against oppression and racism.

Another Bank is Possible

by Jim Deutsch

The international financial institutions' structural adjustment programs and austerity measures are washing ashore on the industrialized world, inflicting destruction on the "First World" just as they have done to the so-called developing world.

In a recent conference on Modern Monetary Theory held this year in Rimini, Italy (<http://www.democraziammt.info/documenti/17-summit-eng-home.html>), economist and historian Michael Hudson and colleagues addressed the austerity measures being imposed on European countries. Initially, financiers providing credit for military adventures drove nation-states toward democracy. This meant the captive citizenry now became a guarantor of debt which was more reliable than a mortal monarch. More recent times have seen a takeover and deregulation of the states' own financial systems by private oligarchies.

Hudson argues that academic economists teach a fiction of a "parallel universe" omitting the 99% of money flow that is essentially debt electronically created out of thin air. Economic forces, now largely divorced from real goods and services, push the European Union (E.U.) and the United States into increasingly massive indebtedness to the European Central Bank or the Federal Reserve Bank, both functionally privatized.

The result is an enormous drain on nation-states and their populations, with governments asserting there is no money to pay for social programs even while they accumulate more debt to pay for military and security and to subsidize wasteful and destructive industries. Asset prices balloon while wages and consumer prices stagnate. The status quo pits "financial interests against national self-determination".

In her book, *Web of Debt*, and on her related website, www.webofdebt.com, lawyer and author Ellen Brown helpfully analyses public versus private banks and provides much detail regarding how the massive "shadow banking system" quietly moves enormous amounts of digital money around, gutting governments at all levels before they know what hits them. She describes numerous maneuvers that give private banks massive advantages.

In "Oh Canada! Imposing Austerity on the World's Most Resource-rich Country" (April 1, 2012, www.webofdebt.com/articles/canada.php), Brown describes how the Canadian government's debt skyrocketed beginning in 1974 when it ceased to borrow from its own government



Bank of Canada. Prior to this, debt was "effectively interest-free, since the government owned the bank and received the benefit of interest." Many projects could thus be achieved.

In 1974, Brown notes the Basel Committee was established by the Central Bank Governors of the Group of Ten countries of the Bank for International Settlements (BIS), which included Canada. By confusing the public with "central banks" that are actually in private hands, and with the fiction that government money creation (as opposed to that created by private banks) would cause inflation, a *de facto* coup took control of government finance in the name of "maintaining the stability of the currency." However, as Brown further notes, "private banks create the money they lend, just as public banks do". The corrupting special relationship between the politicians and the private banking sector becomes parasitic and potentially inflationary.

Money need not serve such destructive purposes. Brown tells how the Bank of North Dakota, the only state-owned bank in the US, weathered the credit crisis of 2008, and continues to belie the myth that "government bureaucrats are bad businessman". The Bank of North Dakota provides a community service and is not profit-driven. It loans money to farmers and others to weather hard times and good times at rates that are essentially a service fee to cover costs and ensure sustainability over time. The money stays in North Dakota rather than being siphoned off by Wall Street schemes. In this manner, fluctuations in the economy are moderated. In the Great Depression of the nineteen-thirties, person-to-person contact meant that the Bank of North Dakota staff worked with bankrupt farmers to forestall foreclosures and maintain their farms.

Brown and Hudson call for nation-states to regain control over their monetary systems in order to avert otherwise inevitable monetary collapse. A large proportion of banks in the world, e.g., in the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India, and China), are public-sector.

In December, 2011, a lawsuit was filed in Canadian federal court to restore the Bank of Canada to its original role. Citizen oversight is needed, to ensure the highest social justice and environmental standards. It remains to be

seen whether truly democratic control can be achieved in such a way that efforts can be rapidly directed toward correcting social injustices and drastically reducing greenhouse gas emissions, including the massive quantities stemming from the military, extraction industries, agribusiness, and global trade, all currently supported or subsidized by heavily-indebted governments.

Jim Deutsch received his AB in analytical biology at Columbia, PhD in biochemistry at Caltech, and MD at Yale. He is on the faculty of the Dept. of Psychiatry at University of Toronto and of the Toronto Psychoanalytic Institute. He is interested in the challenges of understanding "the causes of the causes" of things.

Iran Teach-In, February 25, 2012

On February 25, 2012, Science for Peace held a teach-in entitled "Geopolitics of War and Sanctions against Iran: Another World is Possible, but is Another War Probable?" Featured panellists were York University Associate Professor of Political Science, Robert Latham, speaking on the global networks of power; International Action Center (US) co-director Sara Flounders; Canadian author Yves Engler; Iranian-Canadian student Shadi Chaleshtoori; U of T Professor of History and Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi; and University of Montreal Professor of Contemporary History Dr. Yakov Rabkin.

The political situation shifts constantly and unpredictably, but in February it seemed possible that the United States and/or Israel could imminently launch an attack on Iran. The powers that be were suggestive in their communications. "All options are on the table" seemed to include increasing economic and diplomatic sanctions, an attack on Iran's various nuclear facilities, and threatened use of nuclear weapons (British and US nuclear weapons are stationed in the Gulf). Much public reporting focused on whether or not Iran already had a nuclear weapon (an Ohio congressman reported that Iran was capable of a nuclear strike on Ohio), how close Iran was to building a weapon, whether Israel would attack without permission from the United States, and whether such an

attack would plunge the world into economic chaos because of retaliatory withholding of oil. Fairly neglected by the media and leaders was the possible death of hundreds of thousands of Iranians. Many assume that Israel will attack at some undetermined time.

Paramount realities are left out of all the media drumbeating for war that frames Iran as an existential threat to Israel (and to the West). Our handout referred to the forty-five US bases surrounding Iran, to Israel's and India's newfound strategic co-operation allowing Israel to launch an attack from the Indian Ocean and which sanctions both countries to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states. The nuclear fear-mongering omits the fact that there are still about 23,000 nuclear weapons in the world, many on high-alert status. Iran does not have any nuclear weapons and is a signatory to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) unlike the nuclear weapons rogue states Israel and India. Iran has not launched a war of aggression for several centuries (unlike the U.S. and Israel which have repeatedly invaded and attacked other countries).

According to veteran investigative reporter Seymour Hersh, who has written about nuclear weapons and the Middle East for several decades, the United States allowed, and has participated in Israel's nuclear program since the 1960s. Hersh points out that Israel routinely claims that Iran is just about to produce nuclear weapons and he believes that Israel's possession of nuclear weapons make

inevitable the acquisition of nuclear weapons by other Middle East states. The Israeli and American economies depend on the military complex, and the political leadership uses war to garner political support. Sara Flounders stated that the danger of rash military intervention could increase as United States' power and influence decline.

The presentations and discussion focused on geopolitics and history. While the business of war and surveillance is highly profitable (demonstrated by a 22% increase in worldwide military sales), the wars of the last half century have not achieved military victory. In fact, there is no way to "win" a nuclear war as it would cause total destruction and devastation to civilian

*Another World is Possible
But is Another War Probable?*

TEACH-IN:
THE GEOPOLITICS OF WAR
AND SANCTIONS AGAINST IRAN

SCIENCE FOR PEACE PRESENTS:

SARA FLOUNDERS, Co-Chair of the International Action Center and keynote speaker.
MOHAMAD TAVAKOLI-TARGHI and VICTORIA TAHMASEBI (U of T), and SHADI CHALESHTOORI (York U) on Iran.
YVES ENGLER (author) on Canada.
YAKOV RABKIN (U of Montreal) on Israel and Russia.
ROBERT LATHAM (York U) on Global Networks of Power.

SATURDAY 25 FEBRUARY 2012
10:45 AM – 5PM
SIDNEY SMITH HALL – RM. 2102
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
100 ST. GEORGE STREET
\$10 OR PWYC
www.scienceforpeace.ca

life. The United States and Israel in their attacks first destroy the means of life – electricity infrastructure, potable water, sewage facilities, hospitals and medical supplies (reconstruction is also highly profitable). The United States is equally vicious in its application of economic sanctions.

Canada's current role in the Middle East is consistent with past policy. Historically, Canada has always supported militarism and neo-colonialism behind a façade of peacemaking and peacekeeping. Yves Engler quoted MacKenzie King on the use of the atom bomb against Japan: "It is fortunate that the use of the bomb should have been upon the Japanese rather than upon the white races of Europe." In his latest book, Engler details how Lester Pearson knowingly endorsed overwhelming military interventions in Korea, Indonesia, and Malaysia. Pearson concealed a report suggesting discussions between the United States, Canada, and Britain on the use of biological warfare and supported development and Canadian stationing of nuclear weapons. Primary sources reveal that uppermost in Pearson's mind was preventing conflict in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

As background, we distributed a paper by Dr. Rabkin entitled "A Tale of Two Claims: Ahmadinejad and the Jews" in which he challenges the deliberate and dangerous distortions conflating Ahmed Ahmadinejad (current President of the Islamic Republic of Iran) with Hitler, conflating Jews with Zionism, and mistranslating Ahmadinejad to represent him as a Holocaust denier and as anti-Semitic.

Dr. Rabkin spoke about "Russia, Iran and Israel: a Scalene Triangle" and covered the complex, multifaceted links between the three countries. The "special relationship" between Israel and Russia involves interstate diplomatic and military relations, business and technology, culture and tourism. The roots of all Israel's prime ministers are Russian, and Russians make up one-quarter of new Israeli immigrants who are generally ultra-conservative and nationalistic. The two countries collaborate in supplying security material to other countries, while Israel capitalizes on growing anti-Islamic sentiment in Russia and has refrained from selling arms to Russian antagonist, the Republic of Georgia. Russia's well-established contacts in Iran and Syria play a role in Israel's policy. Russia does not view Iran as an "existential threat" and counters attempts to marginalize Iran.

Meanwhile, Israel was closely allied with Iran under the shah. At present, Israeli liberal commentators and several former generals strongly oppose an air strike against Iran. There are 30,000 Jewish-Iranians who prefer to stay in Iran despite pressure and enticements from Israel to emigrate.

Shadi Chaleshtoori was deeply critical of the Iranian neo-liberal theocracy and also of the Western leftist and rightwing political movements that distort and grossly simplify the Iranian resistance along the lines of self-interest. She said that the Green Movement was extremely heterogeneous and includes some with deep ties to the

repressive establishment. She took issue with the inaccurate characterization of the movement as being non-violent in the tradition of Mahatma Gandhi, but also on the other side the denial of Iran's proto-imperialist involvement in the region.

The presentations generated discussion over the possibility of incorporating these complexities in a unified and cohesive way to prevent a catastrophic war, the concern having to do with divisiveness due to a non-Manichaeian assessment. Again, I am reminded of the words attributed to Pericles: "We are all involved in either the proper formulation or at least the proper review of policy, thinking that what cripples action is not talk, but rather the failure to talk through the policy before proceeding to the required action." In the end, it comes down to reality versus delusion and deception.

The filmed conference will be accessible soon on the SfP website.

Book Review: *No Debate: The Israel lobby and free speech at Canadian universities*

By Jon Thompson

Lorimer, 2011

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Reviewer: *Chandler Davis*

It should be obvious to the most casual observer that in Canada today criticism of Israeli policy is controversial. However factual and indisputable such criticism is, it immediately becomes controversial because a corps of defenders of the Israeli government springs into action to denounce it. This pattern is repeated with dreary predictability, and no doubt grow unimportant to some bystanders simply because it is tedious.

If it remains controversial, we can keep debating it. (However, to keep it more interesting, all sides might undertake to enliven it with new arguments.) Nonetheless, this controversy is often not a debate, and this is the central point of the book at hand. Instead of debate, the Israeli advocates attempt to deny the critics a hearing, and at this point the tradition of academic and political freedom must be made part of the discourse. It must be emphasized that Israeli supporters have succeeded in classifying criticism of Israeli policy as controversial, and so they have won this part of the argument!

The next challenge is how to handle the controversy. It is not fair to dismiss the critics with a raised eyebrow by stating George Galloway is so controversial or Noam Chomsky is so controversial! However, how do we handle controversy? Snort and turn away?

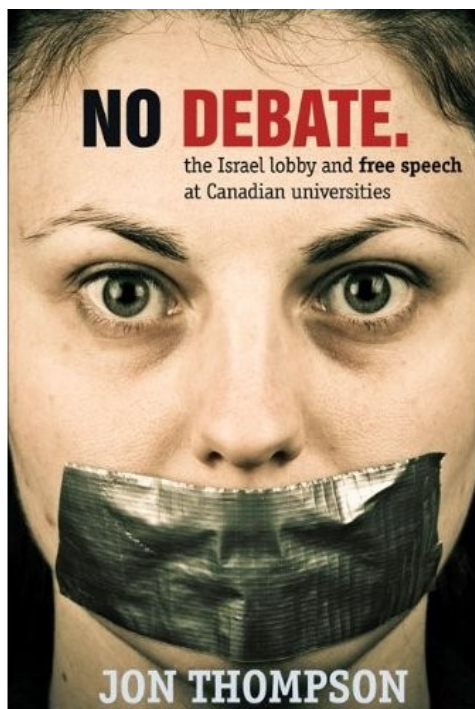
Rather, we democrats welcome controversy. We foster it. As progress in culture generally is nurtured by debating

different opinions, we should provide friendly arenas for such confrontation, and pay it due respect and attention. This answer is true, deeply so, but it is not the entire answer.

Let's face it: some disreputable opinions deserve their disrepute and cannot give birth to valuable insights no matter what the arena, no matter who their disputant. Though it is not fair for loyal Israeli partisans to dismiss a critic unheard, it is fair for them to demand that the critic establish credibility.

The trouble with the simple assertion of welcoming dissent is that it is so very hard to implement in practice. "You can't think that, of course," said the Christian or Jew to the atheist in pre-Enlightenment Europe, and the time their viewpoint seemed too obvious to contest. A point of view really can be shouted down--literally shouted down--at any forum, for the moment, but also figuratively for a lifetime. It is hard to recognize what thoughts are even possible. Let ideas contest in the arena of public opinion, but what ideas are allowed entry into the arena?

The defense of academic freedom requires defending the right of a view to be given a hearing--some views, that is. I don't want to give a university platform to the thesis that the Earth was created six thousand years ago; and yet three hundred years ago the cause of free thought would have demanded giving that view a hearing (but already then one might have struggled to get a hearing also for the opposing view). Today, many of us would defend giving a hearing to both sides in, say, the desirability of the long gun registry. The question is to what issues does the stance of open-mindedness apply? And the question is not easy.



In the case of loyalty to Israel, the difficulty is personally painful in my experience and the experience of many of us. "I can't talk about the Middle East with my family," say

many Canadians today (especially Israeli émigrés, but we hear the same far beyond that small community). Naturally, those families where criticism of the Israeli government is not a legitimate component of conversation may think it normal to try to de-legitimize it in a public forum too. "What-- are you defending gas chambers?" they may say, at least implicitly, and think the exclusion too obvious to contest.

Now, I have said that these are difficult questions, and even if the immunity of Israel to criticism were the only instance of challenge to academic freedom before us, a full and balanced analysis would be beyond the scope of one book. The author of a book such as "No Debate" is faced with an insoluble quandary. Here is how Jon Thompson deals with it.

He describes one case among many of recent attempts to forestall academic debate on Palestine. He gives ample discussions—philosophical, political, and practical--of the larger context, but he segregates those into a few chapters rather than weaving them into the narrative as he might have tried to do. The reader is not allowed to forget them but is left the task of finding their application. Jon Thompson takes his one case and treats it in full detail; and for all his breadth of vision, he does not deal with it as a historian. Rather, he treats it juridically. He is looking for verifiable violations of standards of academic and societal freedom, with identifiable culprits.

At this point I have to lay on the table my relation to the author. In one sense, I am much too close to Jon Thompson to qualify as a reviewer of this book. Not only do I know him and value his friendship, I admire him enormously, and feel gratitude which I hope most others share for his service in past independent inquiries such as the Fabrikant case at Concordia University and the Olivieri case at the University of Toronto. I am terribly predisposed in his favour. Well, perhaps his example of judicious treatment of these cases will inspire me to be sufficiently judicious toward the present book.

In another sense, I am very far removed from Thompson's approach. His task is to assign blame only where blame can, in his reading, be assigned beyond reasonable doubt. This is part, but only part, of what readers need to do in order to live on our discordant campuses. I will argue below that we need to supplement such a quasi-judicial account as this, no matter how well done, and Thompson does it very well indeed.

There is a third respect in which you might wonder about my closeness to the author. I am partisan on this issue. To me, the critics of Israeli policy are, on the whole, correct. To me, the testimony and analysis of speakers like Amira Hass, Omar Barghouti, Uri Davis, Noam Chomsky, Eyad El-Serraj, and Ilan Pappé are especially convincing. (I cite only a few illustrative voices, and I know they needn't invariably agree.) Now I don't know whether Jon Thompson is in their camp. It is not part of his mission to take a stand on Near Eastern politics. It is essential to his

deliberation that he puts this sort of view in the category of views deserving a hearing, and he does that, but it is not essential for him to accept or reject them, and he doesn't. As I am grateful for his impartiality, I applaud his setting aside his own conclusions.

I reserve the right, for sure, to hash this whole mess over with him some time next year! If he wants to air his policy conclusions to me after closing the examination of the case, it will be a pleasure to have it out with him. For now, for the duration of this review, he has fully neutral status.

The episode under study in this book is the planning of a conference "Israel/Palestine: Mapping Models of Statehood and Paths to Peace" at the Glendon Campus of York University for June 2009. The organizers were in the Law Schools of York and Queen's; the project had from the outset sponsorship by York University, Queen's, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). The scheme of the conference, as drawn up at the outset, was to give the history and rationale of alternative models of peaceful resolution of the Israeli Palestinian conflict: so-called one-state as well as two-state models. Scholars of diverse political persuasions were invited, from Israel, Palestine, and elsewhere.

Criticism began as soon as the conference was announced, and intensified in the spring of 2009. The criticism came from two professors who had been scheduled speakers but withdrew complaining that other speakers would be "Israel-bashers". The condemnation came from pro-Israel organizations such as the Jewish Defence League (JDL), the Council for Israel and Jewish Advocacy, and B'nai Brith; and they came from many "angry individuals". York's leaders, including President Mamdouh Shoukri, Dean Patrick Monahan, and Chair of the Board of Governors, Marshall Cohen, at first expected to weather the storm without difficulty, but by mid-May they were sufficiently concerned to take seriously the calls for postponement of the conference, or for moving it off campus, or for changing the roster of speakers. Indeed, permission to hold it at Glendon was withdrawn at one point, to the dismay of the organizers! They were given to understand that the Glendon location was contingent on changes in the speakers and in the composition of the committee. After what must have been a very confusing week, the Glendon location was reinstated without major sacrifices by the organizers. Meanwhile, the critics found a receptive ear in the Conservative government, which formally called on the SSHRC to give the conference grant a second evaluation; the SSHRC managed to avoid doing the whole peer review process anew.

The conference was held 22-24 June, pretty much as originally conceived, with many of the originally invited speakers and a few additions. Nobody picketed or disrupted. However, criticisms continued, most conspicuously from Prof. Gerald M. Steinberg of Bar Ilan University. The theme of the criticism was first that one-state models were allowed on the table, and second, that the speakers included a few

people the critics considered anti-Israel "activists"; the tone of much of the criticism was shrill. Yes, there were speakers at the conference opposing the one-state solution along with those supporting it, but this did not appease the critics one whit, nor did the fact that many speakers supported Israel as a Jewish state. The university, according to many of the attackers, ought never to have allowed such a conference to take place.

The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) had been contacted by the organizers several times to intercede when the independence of the conference seemed threatened. After it had been held, in reasonable autonomy, the CAUT realized that academic freedom had at least been compromised, and commissioned this inquiry. Professor Thompson laboured long and patiently, as he had learned to do in other inquiries; he got cooperation from most of those involved but not all; and he produced this splendid report, comprehensive, fair, and often subtle.

He has no trouble in determining that the Israel-first forces were attacking the freedom to study Israeli-Palestinian society, for they proclaim their intention of excluding from the universities a wide range of non-Zionist opinion (and some Zionist). What needs investigation is the uncertain fidelity of those in power to the defense of academic freedom. The investigation consists of interviews, scrutiny of the documentary record, revisiting of the subject to be studied, and an insightful re-examination of the tradition of academic freedom itself.

Let me not keep up the suspense. I'll tell you the bottom line. In the conclusion, some blame is cast.

As expected, Minister Gary Goodyear's heavy-handed demand for SSHRC to reconsider the conference grant comes in for condemnation. Perhaps more surprisingly, the report on the case to York by ex-Justice Frank Iacobucci is shown convincingly to be bizarrely unfair. But the main focus is on the disorderly scramble over several months by the President, his deanery, his board, and his donors to behave appropriately in an air of crisis. Here, the report concludes that on certain occasions Dean Monahan made inappropriate demands on the organizers to change their plans to appease critics, and used the threat of the withdrawal of administration support to increase pressure on them. The President, who after some indecision made a strong affirmation of the legitimacy of the conference, is not faulted. Procedural recommendations are made as well; even these are restrained.

Does this sound like a weak ending to a dramatic tale? I assure you, readers who take the trouble to trace the ins and outs will not be bored.

So four earnest legal scholars thought they'd have a scholarly conference on a current topic, they applied for sponsorships and grants and got them, they held the conference, and wise words were shared. Though some offences were committed against their right to do so, they

prevailed. This is a success story.

Yes, it is, and I join in celebrating it. It was a success against powerful enemies, and it was made possible in part by the steadfastness of the organizers and their allies, and by the timely intervention of CAUT. However, at this point I part ways with Prof. Thompson, as I told you I would have to do, for I am not bound by the mandate he was given, and on a wider mandate I must ask some questions he did not.

I call on you to consider whether open exchange of views on the future of Israel and Palestine was advanced by the experience. Yes, the conference itself was a positive contribution. Yes, the victory over attempts to quash or denature the event can inspire our courage for the next attempts. But the story confronts us with an unmistakable, daunting warning that there will be great obstacles to overcome. This success in bucking the Israel lobby may put almost as severe a chill on future organizing initiatives as would a failure.

The anti-conference furor--and remember, I am not talking about any position in the controversy, I am talking about opposition to any airing of all sides in the controversy--enlisted some members of the administration, several influential members of the faculty, and potentially some donors.

The President, surrounded by demands for repression coming from within his own organization as well as from external pressure groups, could see the virtue of resisting, but would have to weigh it against possible damage to his institution, damage he could escape by capitulating. No wonder he hesitated, and gave sometimes confusing messages before taking the moral stand.

How much comfort does this give us for the future? Another time, the pressures will be repeated, and some of the features that helped save this conference may be missing.

First, the organizers this time stayed alert and responded promptly to challenges. It was not enough to make a good plan and carry it out; they needed to respond to unexpected assaults, and they did.

Second, there were some bits of good luck. One that stands out, to me, is the Chair of the Board, Marshall Cohen. Though his first reaction was to find the negative messages familiar and plausible, he kept his equilibrium and ended by taking a fair position. I cringe at the thought of what might have been with a different Chair.

Third, the conference was conceived from the beginning as a comparison of various proposed policies for the Near East, not as an exposition of any one. This is a good kind of public meeting, but it is not the only good kind. As I already mentioned, I have opinions on Israel and Palestine myself, I hear too few commentators I think make sense, and I am especially concerned to make those heard. Some of the meetings I have helped to bring to Toronto have presented opposing opinions, but some have not. At Jeff Halper's talks [Jeff Halper is co-founder and Coordinator of the Israeli Committee Against Home Demolitions (ICAHS)], there was no speaker favouring demolition of Palestinian houses. At

Eyad El-Serraj's talks [El-Sarraj is a Palestinian Gazan psychiatrist] there was no speaker favouring war or siege of Gaza. At Matan Kaminer's talk on resisting the occupation of the West Bank by refusing military service there was no speaker favouring the occupation or service in the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF); however, to be sure, opposing remarks could be made from the floor. These were one-sided presentations. That did not invalidate them as contributions to campus exchange of ideas.

Now one-sided presentations are a commonplace on our campuses. In passing, the book under review describes one at the Munk Centre, 8-9 March 2009, featuring as speakers some of the same people who were trying to squelch the York conference; this event was almost as it sided with Zionist policy, not balanced by any other view.

Some of the administrators and senior academics who threatened to close down the York conference softened their opposition when they saw the wide spectrum of opinion it presented. They would have been adamant in opposition, I fear, if they had not had to concede that it was "balanced". They might have joined the JDL in trying to prevent (say) Omar Barghouti or Judith Butler from speaking without "balance". Even sadder-- they might not have seen any inconsistency in also approving the one-sided March affair at the Munk Centre.

We should defend not only our freedom to hold a balanced meeting but also our freedom to advocate. We should expect to have to fight for it.

Chandler Davis has been in Science for Peace from its early days, has been a math professor at University of Toronto since 1962, coming here as a refugee from his native USA.

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