



June 2024 Newsletter



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consider doing so soon! Email
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more information on how to
donate.



**PLOUGHSHARES CALGARY
SOCIETY PRESENTS:**

RECOMMITTING TO PEACE IN 2024 PLOUGHSHARES CALGARY SOCIETY AGM

**JOIN US IN PERSON AT PARKDALE
UNITED CHURCH OR ON ZOOM**

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 12TH

7:00PM MDT

Please RSVP to: office@ploughsharescalgary.ca

Contact Us:





CLARK MAKES PASSIONATE PLEA

Doug Roche
The Hill Times
May 27, 2024
Summary

- Joe Clark used the 45th anniversary of his election as Canada’s 16th prime minister on May 22 in Ottawa to politely rebuke the modern Conservative Party for worsening the divisions in the country today.
- Clark turned what might have been just a last hurrah for the Red Tories into a passionate call for a return to “co-operation across our differences,” and a plea to “counter the negativism that characterizes public debate today.”
- He invoked the names of Lester Pearson, Robert Stanfield, and Nelson Mandela as political leaders who healed the divisions of their times, and brought people together. “That spirit is not present today,” he said.
- At 39 years old, he was the youngest person ever to become Canada’s prime minister, but he has endured and is now a robust 85-year-old statesman who has never lost the dream of building Canada into an important middle power playing a key role in world affairs.
- Clark’s criticism of politicians today did not stop with his obvious main target, the Conservatives. He did not mention the Liberal government by name when he lamented that Canada today is not living up to the “inherent Canadian capacity” to find agreements among diverse nations. It is the Liberals, however, not the Conservatives, who manage foreign policy. He doesn’t think much of Canada’s present foreign policy, which, he commented needs a lot more funding
- Mathew Hayday, a professor of history at Guelph University (who is set to publish a biography of Clark), says that Clark, supported by Brian Mulroney, developed a strong agenda marked by boldness, and a desire for activism and constructive international engagement on a multitude of fronts, including trade, human rights, arms control, the environment, and peacekeeping.
- As he put it in his book, **How We Lead: Canada in a Century of Change**, Clark believes passionately that Canada can “make a difference” in the world by employing soft-power engagement with international partners



FROM DECADES OF REPORTING, A LONG VIEW OF HOPE

Nicholas Kristof
 The New York Times
 May 12th, 2024
 Summary

- In the New York Times for May 12, there appeared an article by Nicholas Kristof: **“From Decades of Reporting, a Long View of Hope.”** Kristof, who normally reports on disasters, tragedies, and serious wrongs, described positive developments and important signs of progress. He acknowledged the profound risks of nuclear war, climate change, and democratic decline but emphasized progress in nutrition, health, and life expectancy.
- Despair is dangerous, inhibiting positive action. And there are reasons not to despair. Regarding education, health care, and well-being, Kristof argues that now is the best time to be alive, stating that about one million fewer children will die this year than in 2015. “Extreme poverty has plunged to just 8 percent of the world’s population.” We are close to 90% adult literacy. AIDS has become a manageable disease and is not a death sentence, with at least 25 million lives saved so far. A study in Kolkata, India found that the number of children in brothels was reduced by 80% since 2016. Kristof notes the bravery of protesters in Beijing in 1989; he witnessed the events. Democracy did not prevail in the short term but its long-term future is another matter.
- Kristof defends hope, admitting that its grounds are shaky. We only hope when things are not certain. Citing a Swedish development expert, Hans Rusling, he introduces the term “possibilism.” History supports the view that good things are possible. This is a basis for action and should never be forgotten.



'SHOCKED' BY HARSH RESPONSE TO ENCAMPMENT

**Letter To The Editor
Trudy Govier
Calgary Herald
May 28th, 2024**

At a university, people should be able to express themselves and debate important issues without police intervention.

Our premier was “glad” to have a pro-divestment encampment at the U of C dismantled by police. As supporters of free expression and nonviolent action, we are shocked and disappointed at this harsh response. Glad? Anything but.

Trudy Govier, Past president, on behalf of Calgary Ploughshares Society board



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

We are looking for volunteers to help with our library, with digitising resources, with maintaining our social media presence, with our upcoming Lantern Festival in August and Pathways to Peace Walk in September. If you are interested in helping us out a little with any or all of these, please contact the office.

Interested in a deeper involvement?

Ploughshares Calgary Society Board currently has vacancies. Do you have a passion for peace? Would you consider working with our long-standing local organisation and its great team of other passionate individuals, to help us achieve a “just world at peace.” If you would like to discuss this possibility and what it might entail, please call or email the office. We would love to have a conversation with you!





CHECK THIS OUT!

- On January 27th, Pax Christi USA hosted a forum entitled, **“Building a World Without Nuclear Weapons - An Urgent Imperative.”** Moderated by Claire Schaeffer-Duffy of the Center for Nonviolent Solutions, special guests were Most Rev. John C. Wester, Archbishop of Santa Fe, NM, and author of “Living in the Light of Christ’s Peace: A Conversation Toward Nuclear Disarmament,” Marie Dennis, Senior Program Director of Catholic Nonviolence Initiative/Pax Christi International, and Dr. Ira Helfand, Past president of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War and a member of the International Steering Board of ICAN (International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons). To watch or share the January 27 Forum, go [here](#).



- Annie Jacobsen, a Pulitzer Prize finalist and national security reporter, recently published a new book entitled, **“Nuclear War: A Scenario,”** a thoroughly-researched page-turner, offering a narrative of how nuclear war might happen. Her book rose to #4 on the New York Times bestsellers nonfiction hardcover list, and is now #3 on its nonfiction audio books list. Mother Jones magazine stated, “This terrifying book is a must read for every world leader.” Calgary Public Library has copies of the hardcover book, as well as the audio book, available for loan (although currently, there is a long waitlist, which is a good thing, we suppose!) If anyone purchases their own copy, and would like to donate it later to our library, we would be most grateful. If you would like to submit a book review of this, or another book relevant to peace and nonviolence, please contact the office with your ideas.



‘Thermonuclear Monarchy: Choosing Between Democracy And Doom’ Review By Dr. Arthur Clark

“This book is about weaponry that enables a tiny number of people to annihilate millions of people,” writes the author in “The Floor of the World,” which serves as the Introduction to this book. It’s a slender summary edition of the original. At just 70 pages of text, this summary edition is ideal for a book discussion, as it can easily be read in an afternoon.

During his 1974 impeachment proceedings, President Richard Nixon told reporters, “I can go into my office and pick up the telephone, and in 25 minutes 70 million people will be dead.” His statement was a stark – but completely accurate – description of presidential power. Since the invention of atomic weapons, the US has had a presidential first-use policy: it was in place, but not yet codified into a single, formal written document, which has continued in force...and is in place today.”

Kings had never had a power like that. Kings had to have the participation of a very large number of their subjects to conduct a war, and the wars they conducted did not remotely have the apocalyptic potential of those today. Nuclear weapons have proliferated, and the global “nuclear array” is one of two “staggering inventions” that exist side by side. The other is the social contract. Referring to the writings of Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau, the author notes that the social contract has taken many forms through the centuries. The author concludes the Introduction with the statement that “the social contract and the nuclear array are mutually exclusive. To exist, each requires that the other be destroyed. Which one will it be?”

The title of Part One of the book is “The United States Constitution Outlaws Nuclear Weapons.” The author explains: “Two provisions of the United States constitution are radically incompatible with nuclear weapons. The first is the constitutional requirement for Congressional declaration of war. The second is the constitutional requirement that distributes to the entire adult population shared responsibility for use of the country’s arsenal – the provision we know as the ‘right to bear arms.’ ...No war could be fought unless it was formally declared by the national legislature and then carried out by the population. By their participation in the fighting, the population ratified the congressional act.”



‘Thermonuclear Monarchy: Choosing Between Democracy And Doom’ Review By Dr. Arthur Clark

The author then makes four key points: “First, the only way to bring nuclear weapons into line with the Constitution is to eliminate them. ...Second, once Congress was stripped of its responsibility for overseeing war – as happened the moment atomic weapons were invented – it was, in effect, infantilized. Deprived of its most weighty and arduous burden, it lost the very work that had given it its gravity as an institution.” The sense of obligation to the citizenry gradually deteriorated as a result. The third point is that the citizenry has also been stripped of their responsibility for oversight. “We ought, instead, to have kept our population [in the role of oversight for military affairs] and discarded the weapons – an alternative still open to us.” The fourth point is that “the purpose of nuclear weapons is to annihilate many millions of people in a few minutes: that outcome is not a ‘by-product’; it is the outcome they exist to bring about.” Referring again to those two Constitutional provisions, Elaine Scarry concludes Part One with this: “Future generations – and, over millennia, future civilizations – will look back with astonishment at the seventy-year period during which the people of earth stood by while a tiny number of men held in their hands the power to destroy the earth. By taking these two constitutional provisions in our own hands we can remove that power from their hands. We can ensure that thermonuclear monarchy ends after seventy years and thereby ensure that our shared world does not end. What is at stake in democracy is something much greater than democracy: the future of earth and the thousands of species who share its ground.”

In Part Two, entitled “The Social Contract Outlaws Nuclear Weapons” – after referring to founding documents of countries other than the United States to show that they too outlaw nuclear weapons – the author emphasizes that “far from being an accidental feature of particular constitutions, the war-impeding feature is essential to the social contract, part of its deep structure – so much so that without it the contract is profoundly incoherent and simply ceases to exist.”



‘Thermonuclear Monarchy: Choosing Between Democracy And Doom’ Review By Dr. Arthur Clark

The social contract, she explains, has a fundamental design with three essential steps: “the social contract is a brake on injuring; the brake works by providing an actual material obstruction to the act of injuring; the material part of that obstruction is the human body.” If each and every competent human adult knows that their own life depends on the vitality of the social contract, they will take responsibility for that vitality.

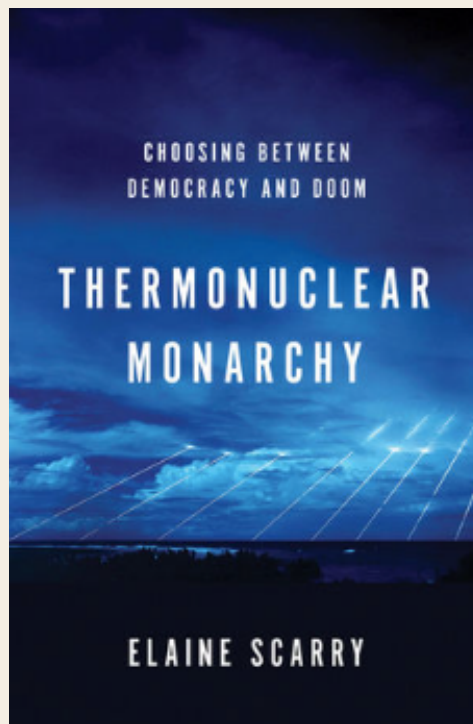
The bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki alerted intelligent adults to the fact that human life on earth can rapidly come to an end due to self-inflicted violence. Human life on earth is hanging by a thread. In my own lifetime I have seen awareness of this fact fade even as the danger has increased. The author states a root cause of this complacency: “Once we internalize our own irrelevance, the idea of nuclear weapons incites neither applause nor indignation; we can set aside the thought of savage world-ruining weapons with a shrug or brief lament, then turn to other thoughts.” That’s how it is in our culture today. We must relentlessly transform our culture.

Part Three, **Everyday Consent and Emergency Deliberation**, emphasizes that since command and control of nuclear weapons was removed from democratic governance, there have been a series of very close calls. “Nuclear weapons cannot be reconciled with governance. Since their invention, their ungovernability has been registered in many direct and indirect ways. During the 1970s and 1980s, the obsessive writings on ‘command and control’ made audible the recognition that they were always, at best, just barely ‘under control.’” The author describes a series of escalations and mishaps that again and again have taken us close to game over. Concluding Part Three, she writes, “It might be argued – presidents and the executive officers of nations have argued this many times – that the democratic operations of consent ...are all well and good for peacetime but have to be suspended in wartime and other emergencies. But...this claim is preposterous. Constitutions, social contracts, and consent exist in order to safeguard against injury: to say that in a situation of potential injury they must be put aside is a logical absurdity. ...The structures of power in the nuclear age have corralled populations into a philosophically untenable proposition according to which we are in charge of our own self-preservation except where our actual preservation is at stake.”



**‘Thermonuclear Monarchy: Choosing Between Democracy And Doom’
Review By Dr. Arthur Clark**

In a conclusion, **Against Us All**, this: In 2008, the commander of STRATCOM, comparing “the nuclear mission” with “other missions,” said that the nuclear mission was one where you could not make mistakes, you had to be perfect and added: “We are not perfect.” Scarry insists it’s not just the nuclear mission at stake. It’s the earth’s surface, with its “unthinkable array of beautiful creatures – dazzling in their numbers, colors and forms ...[which now because of nuclear weapons] – has been converted into a surface where all that swims or swoops or skips or sways – arabesques of aliveness so hilariously inventive they are like laughter itself – can, within a few hours be burned, sickened, and slain.” She then notes that in his Second Treatise of Government, John Locke quotes an observation about one of history’s most notorious tyrants: “And of Caligula...he wisht that the people had but one neck, that he might dispatch them all at a blow.” Scarry writes, “Nuclear weapons and the highly practiced arrangements for their use have made Caligula’s wish come true: the people of earth now have but one neck and can be dispatched all at a blow.”



If you would like to read this book, Dr. Clark has generously donated copies to Ploughshares Library, and they are available for borrowing. If anyone is interested in participating in a book discussion group of this title, please contact the office.



UPCOMING PLOUGHSHARES CALGARY EVENTS

- On Wednesday, June 12th, **Ploughshares Calgary Society** will be hosting their **Annual General Meeting**. Join us on Wednesday evening for our annual business meeting, followed by a presentation by **Dr. Trudy Govier** regarding our newest travelling exhibit celebrating Canadian Peacemakers. You will also learn about our other travelling exhibits. We invite you to share your own ideas about how we can further the reach of these exhibits, encourage our communities to recommit to peace, and support each other in the peace work that is more important than ever. This event will take place at Parkdale United Church (2919 8th Avenue, NW) at 7:00pm.

Refreshments will be served!

Did you know PCS members have voting rights at our AGM?

If you haven't had a chance to become a member, click [here](#) to sign up today!

*PCS membership is \$25 OR pay what you can

*Membership forms will also be available to fill out in-person at the AGM on June 12th

We strongly encourage everyone to attend in person if possible.

We will meet in the spacious church auditorium, with lovely garden views and windows to open for fresh air.

However, if attending in person is not possible, we also offer an opportunity to join us via Zoom.

Please RSVP to this event via our Eventbrite page, or by emailing our office at: office@ploughsharescalgary.ca





EVENTS

- On Saturday, June 8th, **Big Brothers Big Sisters of Calgary and Area** will be hosting **Coffee and Conversation**. Communication can be hard, especially when emotions are high. Come and learn some new tools about how to have difficult conversations and manage conflict with kids. The morning will be filled with connecting with mentors, volunteers, and people within the community working with youth/children. You will walk away with practical insights, a new friend, and learned experiences from others. This event starts at 10:00am at Big Brothers Big Sisters of Calgary and Area (5945 Centre St SW). This event is free, however a donation of \$10 is encouraged. Grab a ticket on eventbrite.ca.
- On Saturday, June 15th, **Slixer Events** will be hosting **Footsteps for Fathers Urban Challenge 2024**. This Event is designed to support and promote the work of CCMF Alberta by raising awareness around Men's Mental Wellness concerns and celebrate the value of Fatherhood. CCMF Alberta provides support services for men and their children who are struggling due to intimate relationship breakdown and turmoil. All proceeds from this event will go towards funding parenting programs such as Fueling Fathers and Positive Parenting (Triple P). This event starts at 9:30am at 115 4 Ave SW. Tickets are available for \$9.50 on eventbrite.ca.
- On Sunday, June 16th, **Breathe Outdoors** will be hosting a **free, family friendly event for Father's Day**. Some activities to look forward to at the Adventure Expo include learning about hiking, camping, climbing, trail running, & backpacking; participate in fun, family-friendly activities for a chance to win swag and prizes from some of their brands. This event starts at 1:00pm at North Glenmore Parking Lot B (North Glenmore Park Road, SW). Tickets are free on eventbrite.ca.





GOOD NEWS

- Members of the **Muscle Car Cruisers of Alberta (MCCA)** hosted their 5th annual toy drive on Sunday May 26. Organizers of the event are inviting members of the public to join them to check out their eye-catching vehicles and support their effort. “All people have to do is bring a brand-new unwrapped toy and they’re in,” MCCA founder Tracy Forsyth-Lundy said. MCCA will be turning over the donated toys to the Kids Cancer Care (KCC). About 150 car enthusiasts brought their vehicles to the MCCA toy drive. The toy drive also provides a chance for all ACH patients and their families to check out the MCCA vehicles, driving by the Children’s Hospital so that the kids can see. (Global News Calgary, May 23rd, 2024).
- Calgary children’s book author Maria Marianayagam is encouraging girls to break down some traditional barriers in her latest publication, **The Amazing Power of Girls**. The book focuses on some of the basic forces of physics, such as gravity and buoyancy, and opens up the possibility for more girls to get into the fields of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). As a chemical engineer, Marianayagam is herself involved in STEM, having worked as an engineer for 10 years in the energy field. With men still dominating many STEM fields, the students were encouraged by much of the material in **The Amazing Power of Girls**. “I love that the book tells you that girls can do anything,” Grade 4 student Sara Parsons said. “I think girls should believe in themselves and try something new that they haven’t tried.” (Global News Calgary, May 30th, 2024).



Photo credits: Global News Calgary



GOOD NEWS

- When a dying veteran’s last wish was to receive a high school diploma, a superintendent teamed up with an American Legion Outpost commander to make it happen. At Sharon School District in Pennsylvania, Superintendent Justi Glaros got a call from Legion Post 247. The caller, 247’s second vice commander, James Cappuccilli, explained that a marine who had given up higher education to fight in WWII, Korea, and Vietnam, was hoping to receive an honorary diploma. The marine, Richard Remp from Sharon, had watched when another elderly marine was presented with a diploma, and thought he might like to have one too. Glaros spent four-and-a-half hours driving down to Remp’s home and delivering the diploma by hand as part of a graduation ceremony in the man’s living room. Remp passed away on Sunday, May 19th, at the age of 98. He had received a combat commendation ‘V’ for valour. (Good News Network, May 24th, 2024).
- Victoria Thiessen is caring for a family of foxes on her rural property just north of Calgary. The foxes are living underneath an old coop in which the previous owners had kept racing pigeons. Thiessen prepares and takes in daily meals for the foxes, part of her strategy for protecting the babies from coyotes. Foxes have been denning at Thiessen’s place since she moved in 10 years ago, never with more than four babies at a time. But this spring, there are eight of them. She has also installed cameras around the coop as part of her efforts to protect the foxes. The cameras are capturing all kinds of lively fox behaviour and Thiessen is posting some of the highlights online. Those videos are getting views all over the world. (Global News Calgary, May 31st, 2024).



Photo credits: Global News Calgary



