

by Matthew Legge

An historian at Trent University recently uncovered the fact that in 1951 the Prime Minister of Canada authorized a top secret surveillance program about which Parliament was kept in the dark. The program, code-named “Picnic”, involved spying on Canadians felt to be “subversive” for reasons including in some cases that they were homosexuals. In 1954, Canada’s involvement in the Korean War, which had resulted in special powers to create national security programs like Picnic, was over. Yet the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) lobbied for, and won, the ability to maintain the “emergency” wiretapping program indefinitely. Even today Canada’s Privy Council Office refuses to release key information about the program.¹

In 2015, the present government came to power promising to “repeal the problematic elements” of the Anti-Terrorism Act, 2015 (Bill C-51), and to increase oversight of Canada’s national security agencies.² A consultation on national security was launched, and Canadian Friends Service Committee made a submission.³ The historical information about Picnic highlights several trends we discussed in our submission, ones that appear to be getting worse.



From National to Shared Security

Photo Credit: Tim Fritz CC-BY

The first trend is to keep our elected representatives uninformed. A recently proposed law aims to create a Parliamentary oversight committee for national security agencies for the first time. But the law contains so many loopholes that the oversight committee would not be able to do its job.⁴ The importance of oversight could not be greater. Multiple Canadians have been tortured after inaccurate information about them was shared by Canadian national security agencies. More than one of these agencies has also been found to break the law over long periods of time, and apparently without consequence.⁵

A second familiar trend is that once surveillance powers have been created, agencies like the RCMP will do what they can to maintain and expand on these powers, calling them important for national security. Evidence that this is true is never made public, and it is unclear if the necessity of these surveillance powers is ever systematically reviewed. Clearly this issue has gotten much worse today, as greatly increased surveillance through new technologies and new laws like Bill C-51 make it possible to spy on just about everyone all the time. Is this bulk data approach a useful way to think about and act for security?

A third familiar trend is to label people as threats not due solely to a likelihood that they will engage in violence,

Continued on page 6

1. Seglins, Dave and Rachel Houlihan. (2016, December 15). *Federal cabinet secretly approved Cold War wiretaps on anyone deemed 'subversive,' historian finds.* <http://www.cbc.ca/news/investigates/surveillance-cold-war-picnic-1.3897071>; and *Documents reveal how St-Laurent government extended secret Cold War wiretapping.* <http://www.cbc.ca/news/investigates/wiretapping-bell-rcmp-1.3897340>

2. Liberal Party of Canada Platform. <http://www.liberal.ca/realchange/bill-c-51/>

3. Read our full submission at <http://quakerservice.ca/NationalSecurity>

4. International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group. (2016, November 14). *Bill C-22: An Inadequate, Worrisome, and Insufficient Bill.* <http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/HOC/Committee/421/SECU/Brief/BR8611164/b-r-external/InternationalCivilLibertiesMonitoringGroup-e.pdf>

5. Boutillier, Alex. (2016, November 3). *CSIS program illegally spied for a decade, judge rules.* Toronto Star. <https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2016/11/03/csis-illegally-kept-sensitive-data-about-people-for-a-decade-federal-court.html>; and Bronskill, Jim. (2016, January 28). *CSE Broke Privacy Laws With Metadata Sharing, Watchdog Says.* The Canadian Press. http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2016/01/28/canada-csec-spying-privacy-law_n_9099830.html

KEEPING UP WITH FRIENDS

THANK YOU READERS

Thank you to everyone who has answered our reader survey so far at <http://quakerservice.ca/QCSurvey>. As a result of your feedback, we're pleased to launch a new website for *Quaker Concern*: <http://quakerconcern.ca>! We hope the site will make it easier to read *Quaker Concern* online, particularly for those using mobile devices, and to share individual articles with family and friends. Print copies will continue as usual.



GIVING THANKS FOR THE LIFE OF VIVIEN ABBOTT

Many Friends have been inspired by the peaceful life and witness of Vivien Abbott. Her son Mark shared with us, "On April 9th Vivien completed this part of her life with the same calm, quiet dignity with which she approached so much in her life. The void she leaves quickly fills with waves of mixed emotions: enormous gratitude that we were lucky enough to share space and time with such an inspiring spirit; deep affection and appreciation for the generous, intelligent, lovely person she was; and love for the example of faith in human beings and an undying belief in the goodness of all life. Vivien showed us all that gentleness, wisdom, respect, high and unbending principles can co-exist with cheerful optimism, laughter and down-to-earth common sense. We will miss her

gentle wisdom as much as her unabashed silliness and so much more."

NEW HANDOUT EXPLAINS THE IMPORTANCE OF PAROLE

CFSC is pleased to share a new double-sided flyer *Parole and its role in rehabilitation and community safety*. While the term "parole" may be familiar, most of us don't actually know much about it, including why it matters, or how it helps or harms people. This handout explains parole and answers key questions about its place within Canada's criminal justice system. Please contact CFSC to request free print copies of the flyer or find it at: <http://quakerservice.ca/Parole>

UN DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

CFSC continues to share information to raise the profile of the *UN Declaration*. A newly updated fact sheet explains the *Declaration* and is perfect for bulletin boards or to hand out at educational events:

<http://quakerservice.ca/UNDeclarationFacts> We also helped draft the new ecumenical resource from KAIROS on implementing the *Declaration*, *Let Justice Roll*:

<http://quakerservice.ca/LetJusticeRoll> You can pair these resources with pocket-sized copies of the *Declaration*. Did you know we've helped to distribute over 200,000 copies nationwide? Contact the CFSC office to order yours.

RESPONDING TO HATE

Incidents of white supremacy and other forms of hatred, in particular Islamophobia, anti-migrant and refugee sentiments, and antisemitism, seem to be on the rise in Canada and elsewhere.

CFSC believes that our responses must be informed, and show care for all, so as to speak to the humanity in others, and not to escalate potentially violent situations. But how can we respond when surrounded by hate? We've put together a list of many excellent resources and suggestions on this important topic: <http://quakerservice.ca/RespondingtoHate>

PEACE TAX RETURN

A Peace Tax Return is a gesture of resistance to military spending. You may choose to register your conscientious objection to paying for war either by declaring your objection (an email will be sent with a copy to your MP), or by taking the further step of withholding the portion of your taxes that would fund Canada's military. Both options are available via this year's online Peace Tax Return form: <http://www.consciencecanada.ca/epr/>

Quaker Concern

Canadian Friends Service Committee

Quaker Concern is the newsletter of Canadian Friends Service Committee (Quakers). Published three-times a year, it features articles on CFSC projects and concerns of Friends.

Canadian Friends Service Committee (CFSC), is the peace and social justice agency of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Canada. Since 1931 we have been a small team, mostly volunteers, but we've had a significant impact.

Donations are received with gratitude. We rely on the support of individuals to carry out our work. CFSC issues tax receipts for donations over \$10.

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by Joy Morris

It's been over 35 years since Canadian Quakers approved a Minute on abolishing prisons, reflecting that "the prison system is both a cause and a result of violence and social injustice," while recognising a "need for [compassionate] restraint of those few who are exhibiting dangerous behaviour."¹ This concept remains shockingly radical in mainstream society. A typical initial reaction is fear. After all, we hear frightening stories of crime in the news on a daily basis.

I gathered with other Quakers in Calgary on the final weekend of February to participate in a CFSC workshop on penal abolition. The workshop was led by Sarah Chandler, who has been active in CFSC's work since 1992. Some of the participants were people who work with troubled youth or know people who have been in trouble with the law, while others (including our youngest participant, aged 11) had very little knowledge of the criminal justice system. CFSC has been running these workshops for a couple of years to remind Quakers of what we mean by penal abolition, the reasons behind our long-standing commitment to it, and to connect us to, and inform us about, recent developments in this area.

When we examine the ideas behind penal abolition, they quickly become less radical and frightening. People usually overestimate the percentage of crimes that involve violence. Statistics Canada suggests property crimes (theft, break and enter, fraud, etc., that do not include any physical threats) comprise about 45% of crimes reported in Canada in recent years,² while violent crimes (including all crimes that involve physical threat or assault³) comprise less than 15%.⁴ We need to be very clear that by penal abolition we do not mean removing all restraint on those who are a danger to themselves or to others.

Modern child-rearing philosophies tend to encourage a combination of empathy and discipline. It is widely understood that punishment does not effectively teach a child that a behaviour is wrong, even though it may teach them to try to avoid punishment.⁵ Yet this idea of punishment as a remedy is precisely the philosophy that the penal system continues to promote.

Under this "us" vs. "them" mentality, the idea of locking "them" away to keep "us" safe is very attractive. However, only extraordinarily serious combinations of crimes result in someone who has done harm being permanently incarcerated. Virtually every person who gets into trouble with the law will at some point be released.

The idea that the prison system serves as a deterrent that keeps people on the straight and narrow has long been



Workshops on Penal Abolition

Workshop participants Joy Morris, Harmony Morris, and Heidi Dick chart a path that would support implementation of Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada *Calls to Action* on justice issues.

Photo Credit: Sarah Chandler

debunked by studies showing a high rate of reoffending in comparison to what can be achieved through other methods of treatment and justice.⁶ We need to look for the root causes that led to the offense, and to work with the offender and the community to address those causes. As Quakers reflected in 2010 in another Minute, "justice is done when those most affected by crime are satisfied that things have been made as right as possible, when the affected communities learn from the past, and are confident in their ability to undertake, with compassion, expectancy, faith, and hope, the task of building and sustaining peace."⁷

It is important to recognise that the penal system significantly over-represents many classes of vulnerable Canadians. This includes people who are mentally ill,⁸ brain injured, or developmentally delayed, as well as those who struggle with addictions. It also includes those who live in poverty or have lower levels of education.

Continued on page 6

1. Canadian Yearly Meeting. (1981). *Minute on Prison Abolition*. <http://quakerservice.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/CYM-Minute-on-Prison-Abolition.pdf>
2. Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. (2016, July 20). *Uniform Crime Reporting Survey*. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2016001/article/14642-eng.htm>
3. Definitions for the different categories of crimes can be found at <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2016001/article/14642-eng.htm#a13>
4. *Uniform Crime Reporting Survey*.
5. See for example Haapasalo, Jaana and Elina Pokela. (1999). *Child rearing and child abuse antecedents of criminality*. *Aggression and Violent Behaviour* 4. pp 107-127.
6. For example see Public Safety Canada. (2003, January). *Restorative justice and recidivism*. <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/jstc-rcdvs/index-en.aspx>
7. Canadian Yearly Meeting. 2010. *Justice is Possible*. <http://quakerservice.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/CYM-Minute-79-Justice-is-Possible.pdf>
8. Statistics Canada. (2009, March 17). *Overview of issues - Mental health and the criminal justice system*. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-561-m/2009016/section-a-eng.htm>

by Heather Neun

There are striking parallels between Indigenous Peoples in Canada and Colombia. This is a hemisphere where efforts have been made since contact to eliminate Indigenous Peoples through policies of physical and cultural genocide. While there are clear differences, the shared experiences are of structural discrimination and destructive policies leading to marginalization, displacement, and barriers to obtaining title and effective control over ancestral territories.

We have serious conflicts with the State about their mining vision. They say that the subsoil is theirs; we say that the land is one with the subsoil; you cannot separate it from a spiritual point of view. This is the war we are waging... to have the air, the land, the subsoil, together.¹

This is a statement by the leader of the Cañamomo Lomapieta Indigenous Reserve of the Embera Chamí people in western Colombia. His words reflect the clash of paradigms inherent in the decades long armed conflict and continuous threats to the survival of Colombian Indigenous Peoples. Colombia is home to more than 100 culturally distinct Indigenous Peoples. Around 70% live in rural areas, many on reservations that cover about 30% of the country's territory. Colombia's 1991 constitution provides that the communal lands of Indigenous Peoples and Afro-Descendant communities are "inalienable, inextinguishable, and immune from seizure". And yet, as in Canada, despite constitutional protection of Indigenous rights, there is minimal enforcement through recognizing land title or obtaining consent to developments affecting their lands. This contrasts starkly with the government's expedited processes for granting concessions to the extractive and resource sectors. A July 2010 mission of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues recorded that commercial concessions were granted in 80% of the Indigenous reserves without adequate consultation or consent, and without informing the affected communities.²

Indigenous communities are extremely vulnerable as a result of centuries of subjugation and dispossession. A 2009 landmark ruling of the Constitutional Court of Colombia³ found that more than one third of Colombia's Indigenous Peoples are threatened with "physical and cultural extermination". Of the 100 or more Indigenous groups, 66 were formally declared as being at high risk of disappearance, and 36 were at risk of extermination. These disproportionately heavy effects of the armed conflict are due to encroachment



CFSC supported a recent tour to Canada by Colombian Indigenous leader Luis Fernando, who came to raise awareness and make connections. Here he meets with Cree MP Romeo Saganash in Ottawa.

by extractive activities in the mining and energy sectors. Recent government efforts to try to restore lands to those dispossessed are failing – a storyline similar to the 'land question' in Canada.

In the current era, Indigenous Peoples of Canada and Colombia face increasing pressure from business interests in the energy, mining, and extractive sectors. The imposition of large scale "development" projects without consent is generating conflicts that threaten Indigenous Peoples' very existence - both from a cosmological and cultural perspective, and through an economic model that imperils their territories, and ultimately, the planet. For the original land defenders, the latest wave of extractive activities has led to intensified conflicts, as respective governments back corporate access to land and resources. We see this in Canada too, where Indigenous Peoples are engaged in frontline struggles to demand that governments obtain their free, prior and informed consent to projects like pipelines and energy projects.

Indigenous Peoples in Canada are struggling to ensure that companies are accountable for the environmental harms and human rights abuses caused by their operations. The parallels to Colombia are evident as Canada's justice system regularly

Continued on next page

1. Chief Governor of Cañamomo Lomapieta Indigenous Reserve, cited in *Forest Peoples Programme, Pushing for Peace in Colombia: Indigenous and Afro-Descendant Peoples join forces to uphold their rights, address mining related conflict, Executive Summary (2014-2015)*. (2015, December). p.5.
2. ONIC. (2015, July). "Datos extraídos de Informes anuales de Derechos Humanos y DIH 2013, Enero-Septiembre 2014", procesados por OCHA Colombia, cited in Colombia Working Group, *Colombia in the shadow of human rights abuses*. p20
3. Constitutional Court Order 004. (2009)



Photo credit: Jorge W. Sanchez Latorre

Paramo de Santurban, where the company Eco Oro wanted to drill through mountains to extract gold deposits.

fails, as in the case of the tailings pond spill in August 2014 at Imperial Metals' Mount Polley gold and copper mine in British Columbia. Indigenous Peoples living near the site rely on the region for food, medicines, and livelihoods, and they are still suffering. The BC government's failure to investigate and take action against those responsible breaches the rights of those harmed under international human rights law.⁴

In the past few years, the threats have been constant; the objective has been to dispossess the people of their territories.

A recent Global Witness report⁵ chronicles the alarming acceleration of attacks on land defenders, citing Colombia as third in the number of killings in 2015. Indigenous Peoples were particularly vulnerable and made up 40%; at least nine Indigenous leaders were killed in Colombia.

The reason for this trend is clear. Those closest to the land are struggling to protect it from predatory businesses, both domestic and foreign. In truth, the armed conflict in Colombia has endured due to persistent conflict over access to land and resources. This intensified in recent years when government efforts to secure conditions for foreign investment perpetuated the violence to make way for megaprojects. Amnesty International observes that forced displacement and misappropriation of land is the "defining feature" of the internal armed conflict.⁶ These human rights violations were targeted primarily at Indigenous Peoples and other groups closely connected to the land.

This violent context presents another linkage between Canada and Colombia. Canadian corporate mining activity in Colombia is increasing, and according to the authors of *Blood of Extraction: Canadian Imperialism in Latin America*,⁷ Canadian mining is "deeply implicated in the war economy of violence and dispossession from which it benefits". Put

plainly, Canadian companies profit from processes that harm Indigenous Peoples.

I travelled in 2016 to northeast Colombia, where Indigenous communities and others have organized to oppose the activities of Canadian mining companies. The company Eco Oro was granted a mining concession in a high altitude wetland. This fragile ecosystem is the source of water for over 1.5 million Colombians. The company's plan was to drill through the mountain to extract gold. Its exploration activities occurred alongside the dislocation of local communities, threatening their livelihoods, food and water security. Through the courageous and unrelenting efforts of land defenders and their international allies, this project has been stopped, although the company has since filed notice of its intention to sue the Colombian government for millions of dollars under the *Canada-Colombia Free Trade Agreement*.

Recent victories in Colombia⁸ are signs of the promise we see here in Canada as well. This month saw the welcome decision of the Stk'ém'lúpsemc te Secwépemc Nation (SSN) to withhold their free, prior, and informed consent to the development of lands and resources at Pípsell (or Jacko) Lake (on the outskirts of Kamloops, BC) for KHGM International's Ajax open-pit copper and gold mine.⁹ The SSN asserts an irreplaceable historical, cultural, and spiritual connection to Pípsell, which they believe would be irreversibly harmed by the proposed mining operation. The basis of their decision lies in their inherent rights, backed by international human rights law and Canadian law. It lies in the belief system that is shared with the Indigenous Peoples of Colombia, that their territorial rights are founded in sacred connections to lands and waters, which are fundamental and must be protected for the generations to come.

Heather Neun is a member of Vancouver Monthly Meeting and CFSC's Indigenous rights program committee.

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4. Amnesty International. *Mining and Human rights in BC*. <https://www.amnesty.ca/our-work/issues/business-and-human-rights/human-rights-at-mt-polley-mine>
 5. Global Witness. (2016, June). *On Dangerous Ground. 2015's Deadly Environment: The Killing and Criminalization of Land and Environmental Defenders Worldwide*.
 6. Amnesty International. (2015, November). *Colombia: Restoring the Land, Securing the Peace, Indigenous and Afro-Descendant Territorial Rights*. (AMR 23/2615/2015). p.3
 7. Gordon, Todd and Jeffery Webber. (2016).
 8. The activities of another Canadian company, Gran Colombia Gold Corp, were recently ceased by a decision of the Constitutional Court on February 28, 2017, ordering the government to engage in consultation with the affected communities. TeleSUR. (2017, March 2). *Big Win for Colombian Community Against Canadian Mining Giant*. CaribFlame. <http://www.caribflame.com/2017/03/big-win-for-colombian-community-against-canadian-mining-giant/>
 9. Zeidler, Maryse. (2017, March 4). *First Nation-led environmental review panel rejects Ajax mine in Kamloops, B.C.* CBC. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/first-nation-led-environmental-review-panel-rejects-ajax-mine-in-kamloops-b-c-1.4010569>

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Security

but due, at least in some cases, to prejudiced discomfort with them. The scant information available about Picnic shows that some were targets of surveillance in part because of their sexual orientation. We noted in our submission that in today's national security thinking:

"The assumption appears to be that violence committed by members of certain religions, creeds, races or ethnicities is 'radical' and worthy of particular attention and resources to prevent, while violence committed by others is not...

Canada's responses to *all forms of violence* should be proportionate to the harm created by that violence, and should seek to prevent and reduce harm for all, taking great care not to increase harm deliberately or accidentally."

A fourth trend underlying the issues mentioned above is the limited understanding of "security". The idea seems to include that Canada's security can only be attained through circumventing democratic institutions and undermining individual human rights. We strongly disagree, noting that prevention of violence:

"must be prioritized, recognizing that it is never going to be 100% effective. If prevention is largely

effective and does not increase harm, those should be taken as measures of major success....

Security should be re-conceptualized as 'shared security', meaning that no community or country is secure on its own, and our security will be greatest when all communities are most secure, and therefore least steeped in the conditions that lead to violence. This approach seeks to engage with other parties involved in conflicts, rather than distancing from them and escalating hostilities. It recognizes the complex and interrelated nature of emerging threats, which must be addressed on multiple fronts at once, not by attacking only certain symptoms, like violence.

The security of majority populations cannot be won through state pressure on and further alienation of certain communities. Shared security means working to meet the human needs and uphold the human rights of all."

Matthew Legge is CFSC's Peace Program Coordinator. You can stay up to date on the issues raised in this article through the weekly email newsletter of the International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group: <http://iclmg.ca>

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Penal Abolition

Indigenous people are dramatically over-represented in prisons,⁹ a challenge that has been noted in several of the justice-themed *Calls to Action* of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.¹⁰

The CFSC-led workshop I took part in explored all of these themes, and drew on the experience and understanding of participants, as well as on videos, statistics, and other sources of information. We discussed examples of justice systems in Canada and abroad that support healing.

In one activity, we broke into small groups to draw paths to justice-related goals. We showed impediments as physical obstacles to be overcome, and drew solutions as physical ways of surmounting or bypassing the barriers. One group mapped routes to a unified community at the top of what they called the "Mountain of We." This involved asking those in privileged groups, who had a relatively easy path to the top, to help others up more difficult paths by extending ropes and helping hands. Many of our maps started out in what one group called "the deep swamp of our own ignorance". Nevertheless, we

persisted and found ways forward.

We were deeply moved by the workshop, which lasted for five hours, broken into two parts (other penal abolition workshops offered by CFSC have typically been three hours). At the conclusion, many of us made concrete commitments for carrying this work forward: from trying to reduce the punitive mindset in our personal relationships, to general support for the work of CFSC, to meetings with politicians.

CFSC is happy to offer this workshop to Quaker or non-Quaker groups who have a commitment to social justice issues. Please let us know if you're interested.

Joy Morris, Calgary Monthly Meeting, is a member of CFSC's justice program committee.

9. Office of the Correctional Investigator. (2013, September 16). *Aboriginal Offenders - A Critical Situation*. <http://www.oci-bec.gc.ca/cnt/rpt/oth-aut/oth-aut20121022info-eng.aspx>

10. Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Calls to Action*. http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf; see calls 25-42.

The Doomsday Clock: Can it Help the World Disarm?

by Murray Thomson

Ten years ago I gave the annual *Sunderland P. Gardner* lecture at Canadian Yearly Meeting on the theme *Toward a Culture of Peace: Can we afford to pay the price?* It was a time, like today, when the human race faced a combination of threats to our very existence. The Cold War ended long ago, yet half the world's population still lives under governments with nuclear weapons, many on hair trigger alert. More than \$12 trillion has been spent on these instruments of mass murder. And Canada's policies are shamefully contradictory. On the one hand, Canada says it favours efforts to reduce nuclear weapons. On the other, it supports the nine nuclear weapon policies of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Those policies include the most heinous of them all: that nuclear weapons can be used on the population of another country first. Further, they must be maintained indefinitely, and can be used on non-nuclear weapon states.

Why? NATO tells us nuclear weapons are "the supreme guarantee of our security".¹ Yet the underlying policy is one of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD), described by former General Lee Butler, Commander of all US Nuclear Forces as "the single most absurd and irresponsible document" he had ever seen.²

The United Nations General Assembly has approved an historic resolution to launch negotiations in 2017 on a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons. The resolution was adopted by a large majority, with 113 UN member states voting in favour, 35 voting against and 13 abstaining. Support was strongest among the nations of Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific. A cross-regional group comprising Austria, Brazil, Ireland, Mexico, Nigeria, and South Africa initiated the resolution and are likely to lead next year's negotiations. Sadly, Canada boycotted and did not take part in the discussions, siding with the Nuclear Weapon States led by the US and Russia.

Friends should find ways to remind the Canadian Government about the Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968-70. It calls for all states "to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to the cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date, and to nuclear disarmament under strict and effective international control."

Disarmament is not a cause that attracts and involves a great many people. Yet without disarmament today, the world is living on borrowed time. And without disarmament, the nine nuclear weapon states will likely increase in number. There is pressure in Japan, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, and Iran to join the nuclear club.

Once nuclear weapons are created, they're difficult to safely dispose of. The estimated number of nuclear warheads built worldwide since 1945 is over 128,000. Many of them use separated plutonium, which has a half-life of 24,000 years.

In 1947 a group of scientists envisioned a new role for a simple household device used every morning to arouse us from our nightly slumbers, an alarm clock. The Doomsday Clock was created as a symbol showing a countdown to possible global catastrophe. The opinion on how close the world is to a global catastrophe is expressed as a number of "minutes" before midnight. Its most recent move earlier this year - to two and a half minutes to midnight - has alarmed citizens in many countries. The Doomsday Clock has been used by everyday citizens, more than 7,000 mayors, and hundreds of the world's religious and parliamentary leaders.

If we could finally cast-off the nuclear nightmare in which we live today, we could then embrace and build the United Nations with the resources now wasted on deadly weapons of mass destruction. Its Charter has given us the direction for moving forward. "We the peoples of the United Nations," it states, are "determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war...and to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours." Its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, set for the next 14 years, provide specific areas and targets for addressing global issues including poverty and hunger, health, quality education, and gender equality. None of the 17 goals will be accomplished easily, but they will not be accomplished at all if the nuclear arms race is allowed to continue.

The Doomsday Clock reminds us that the fateful choice must be made. Are we prepared to make it?

Murray Thomson is a member of Ottawa Monthly Meeting and former Secretary of CFSC. Murray's concern for a nuclear-free world has led him to co-found groups including Canadians for a Nuclear Weapons Convention and Project Ploughshares. In 2016 CFSC supported the publishing of Murray's book Minutes to Midnight. The book shares insights and an urgent plea from some of a list of more than 900 members of the Order of Canada who've called for nuclear disarmament.

1. North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). (2010, November 19). *Active Engagement, Modern Defence, Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization*. http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_68580.htm

2. Quoted in Schlosse, Eric. (2016, December 23). *World War Three, by Mistake*. The New Yorker. <http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/world-war-three-by-mistake>.

FRIENDS ON THE MOVE

We are happy to welcome **Maggie Sager**, who will serve as CFSC's Summer Program Assistant from May to August. Maggie will not only support the smooth functioning of the office here at Friends House in Toronto, but will also provide direct assistance to the program committees as they do CFSC's service work. Maggie is pursuing her doctorate in Sexual Diversity Studies and Modern Middle Eastern History at the University of Toronto. Her past work experience includes interning for American Friends Service Committee and volunteering as a member of the UC Berkeley Students

for Justice in Palestine. You will be able to contact her this summer at maggie@quakerservice.ca CFSC staff **Jennifer Preston (Hamilton Meeting)** has been traveling and presenting regularly of late. She presented at a Truth and Reconciliation workshop hosted by St. James Westminster Church in London, ON. She worked with partners in the Coalition for the Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples to host a reception in Ottawa for expert members of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII) and the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights

of Indigenous Peoples. Jennifer and associate member **Paul Joffe** presented on Musqueam territory at the Union of BC Indian Chiefs' Council meeting on implementing the *UN Declaration*. Jennifer and Paul also presented on the *UN Declaration* and free, prior, and informed consent on Tsimshin territory (Prince Rupert, BC) at a Skeena leaders' gathering. As you are receiving this issue of *Quaker Concern*, Jennifer and CFSC member **Rachel Singleton-Polster (Victoria Friends Meeting)** are representing Friends at UN Headquarters in New York at the PFII.

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