



APRIL 2020

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If you need to reach us, please leave a message with our office at 403 270 7366 or email us.

We will only be able to return calls with an Alberta area code.



### **A message to our Ploughshares community: COVID-19 update**

The health, safety, and security of our members and communities are of paramount importance to us. Due to the evolving situation, we are taking important precautions to practice social distancing and to follow the guidelines that Alberta Health has communicated. For now, we have cancelled any planned meetings and events. Specifically, we have delayed until further notice April 18th's presentation by Peggy Mason (president, Rideau Institute) entitled "What would a feminist foreign policy look like?" Additionally, the community conference "Fake News and the Future of Democracy" being sponsored by the Calgary Association of Lifelong Learners on May 9th is delayed until further notice, as well as our monthly public information meetings.

During this time, we welcome members to email us with their personal reflections. With social distancing, many of us are feeling the need more than ever to reach out and hear from others. Thus, we would welcome any thoughts, ponderings, or insights you might like to share with others on your perspective about life right now. We will choose some of these to publish in our next newsletter. We regret we are only able to accept email reflections at this time. Please email us at [office@ploughsharescalgary.ca](mailto:office@ploughsharescalgary.ca). We look forward to hearing from you.

Our office at Parkdale United Church is physically closed during this time; should you need to reach us, please send an email to [office@ploughsharescalgary.ca](mailto:office@ploughsharescalgary.ca) or phone 403 270 7366 and leave a message. Thank you for your ongoing support during this tumultuous time.

*The Ploughshares Calgary Society Board*



## Chair's message

Greetings to all. I hope you are keeping well and comfortable, despite our unusual and rather stressful situation. My husband and I returned from traveling on March 4 and were not directed to self-isolate, so we did not. But for the past week, as advice to the public shifted, we have minimized our contacts. The Ploughshares regular meeting, held March 11, featured speaker John Rose from the Royal Bank on the theme of divesting in nuclear weapons. I spoke briefly and our new staff person Danica Derksen also gave a short presentation. Though small, the meeting was dynamic and successful; this excellent presentation is described on page 3. Additionally, the Ploughshares board met by tele-conference on March 18.

As you will surely understand in the circumstances, various meetings planned for April and May have been cancelled or postponed, and we do not yet have an AGM planned for June. We hope and expect to keep in touch with our members through the newsletter and email. Danica continues to work, based in her home. Parkdale United Church has closed our office, so please email or phone if you need to contact us. The email is [office@ploughscalgary.ca](mailto:office@ploughscalgary.ca), or you may call 403 270 7366 and leave a message.



The present situation serves to remind us of something we have known for years: the importance of public health and education and the ways these concerns should overwhelm those of militarism, with its costly and highly dangerous developments. We will all adapt different strategies for managing in this unusual and difficult situation. I look forward to working with Danica on projects connected with peace education, nuclear disarmament initiatives, and the connections between militarism and climate change. I'm also resolved to sustain

and renew contacts with colleagues, friends, and family members. I'll continue do this by phone and email of course, to challenge the virus. Yesterday my husband and I were contacted by an old friend, with whom we talked for an hour. His call made for a meaningful distraction and a real treat in the day. It's a good time to maintain our contacts by keeping in touch even if we are 'socially distancing.'

The board and staff wish you health and comfort and look forward to warmer weather, green buds, and spring flowers. Arriving home from a short drive, my husband and I spotted a large rabbit sheltering by our front hedge. It was mainly winter white, but showed brown patches on the ears and on one side of its head. Signs of spring to come! When I looked later, the rabbit was gone, but there was a visible indentation in the snow where it had rested.



*Trudy Govier*

## Meeting with John Rose on March 11, 2020, at Ploughshares Calgary Society

By Trudy Govier



John Rose, a highly energetic and informed investment advisor with the Royal Bank of Canada, addressed our meeting on March 11, 2020. John described RBC Vision Funds, which restrict investments for socially responsible investors. They use criteria concerning alcohol, tobacco, gaming, adult entertainment, cannabis, environment, human rights, and weapons. The weapons considered in this context are small arms and delivery systems. Another RBC Vision Fund has a focus on Canadian companies that show a commitment to women's leadership.

Ethical investing has become a strong global trend; however, consideration of militarism within its concerns has not been prominent. John explained that a focus on nuclear weapons in particular has not been a feature of these criteria. He estimated that about 2% of the private capital market goes to funding the defense industry and of that spending, about 60 – 100 billion US dollars annually would be focused (globally) on nuclear weapons systems. Investors concerned to avoid nuclear weapons development, production, and support should check carefully. Managers to be wary of are Blackrock, Capital Group, Fidelity, and Sunlife Financial. Mutual funds to favorably consider are RBC Global Asset Management, Fidelity Sustainable World ETF Fund, and AGF Global Sustainable Growth Equity Fund. A company in which you will not wish to invest is Westinghouse.

For further information, you may wish to consult: '[Don't Bank on the Bomb](#)' by PAX and '[Controversial Weapons Radar](#)' by Sustainalytics.

## Two requests from World Beyond War

By Kathleen McWilliams

[World Beyond War](#) is asking concerned citizens to join others in signing one letter and one petition. The first—a letter—concerns the massive war rehearsals in Europe that the U.S. military has scaled back on, but not yet cancelled. You can sign a letter to the people of Russia about the military exercise currently taking place on the western border of Russia here: "[We Oppose the Defender 2020 NATO War Rehearsals on Russia's Border](#)." The second—a petition—concerns the COVID-19 pandemic and an upcoming defence conference still scheduled in Ottawa for May. World Beyond Borders notes that "Despite the growing coronavirus pandemic, the CANSEC 2020 weapons show is still scheduled to take place in Ottawa May 27 and 28. CANSEC is billed as 'North America's largest trilateral defence event' and is expected to attract 12,000 government and military officials and weapons industry representatives from 55 countries to Ottawa." [Click here to send a letter to Canadian government officials requesting that this show be cancelled to protect the health of the people of Ottawa.](#)

## **New York City looks to divest from nuclear weapons**

By Danica Derksen

In 2018, New York City (NYC) divested its public pension funds from companies involved in the production and marketing of fossil fuels. Divestment is the opposite of investment—it simply means removing from one’s investment portfolio stocks, bonds, or investment funds that are deemed to be unethical or morally ambiguous. This follows the trend of socially responsible investment that many investors have taken globally. In NYC in June 2019, city council member Daniel Dromm tabled resolutions calling for nuclear divestment, thanks to the advocacy work of ICAN and other peace groups.



NYC has had passive ties to nuclear bombs since the conception of the Manhattan Project, which was the code name for research and development during World War II that produced the first nuclear weapons. It continued until the formation of the United States Atomic Energy Commission in January 1947. The Manhattan Project produced the Little Boy and Fat Man bombs used in the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This development of divestment and formation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone is significant considering NYC’ ties to the Manhattan Project.

The first resolution calls on the city to divest from nuclear weapons manufacturers in public employees’ pension funds. The second would create a committee to officially designate New York as a city that does not produce or store nuclear weapons, also known as a nuclear-weapons-free zone. On January 28, 2020, NYC held public hearings. The two measures were one-vote short of a veto-proof majority. By the end of the hearings, council member Fernando Cabrera had affirmed his support, thus ensuring the required votes for adoption. As such, it looks fairly certain that the measures will be adopted, though there have been no further updates.

This move is connected to the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which was adopted by a United Nations conference on July 7, 2017, and opened for signature in September, 2017. It is the first legally binding international agreement to comprehensively prohibit nuclear weapons, with the goal of leading towards their total elimination. For the treaty to come into effect, 50 states must sign and ratify it; to date, only 35 countries have done so, while Canada remains a non-signatory. When municipalities, especially as one as large as NYC, create new laws to support this treaty, this puts pressure on countries and states to take action. Actions like this cannot be ignored; advocacy works, and NYC is leading the way for others to follow suit.

**We are very grateful for your loyal moral and financial support. over the years that has allowed us to continue working for and educating about peace. Please consider donating for 2020 soon if you haven't already done so. If you have already sent in your donation for 2020, we thank you.**

**Please make your cheque payable to Ploughshares Calgary Society.**

**If you write the cheque to the name of Project Ploughshares, the bank *will not* honour it for us, so please write it to "Ploughshares Calgary Society."**

Yes, I am interested in supporting the peace work of the Ploughshares Calgary Society.  
I'd like to make a donation in the following amount:

\$10 \_\_\_\_\_ \$25 \_\_\_\_\_ \$50 \_\_\_\_\_ \$100 \_\_\_\_\_ \$250 \_\_\_\_\_ or an amount of \_\_\_\_\_

or a monthly donation of \_\_\_\_\_ or I am interested in volunteering \_\_\_\_\_

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Make cheques payable to **Ploughshares Calgary Society** or go to [www.ploughsharescalgary.ca](http://www.ploughsharescalgary.ca) to make your payment via PayPal. Please mail completed form with donation to the Ploughshares Calgary Society, 2919 – 8 Ave. N.W., Calgary, AB, T2N 1C8.

Please note that we are unable to provide tax receipts at this time.



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