

# Jo Rotblat: A Pragmatic Dreamer

British Pugwash, 8 February 2012

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“Fellow traveler is a loaded term...But these are people who in the darkest days of the cold war were used shamelessly as vehicles for Soviet propaganda...You have to give them the benefit of the doubt and think they were simply dupes.”

Frank Gaffney, former  
Reagan Administration  
official, New York Times, 14  
October 1995

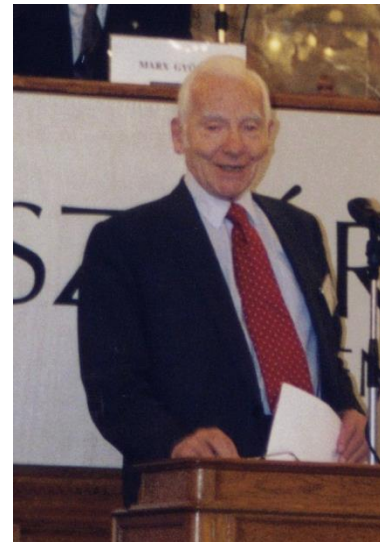
(The day after the Nobel  
Peace Prize award was  
announced)



# Rotblat pioneered/adapted

Various strategic approaches:

- “Track two meetings”
- New transnational movement (Evangelista “Unarmed Forces”)
- Went public at times (Atom Train, Lucky Dragon, Vanunu)
- Fostered student movement (Student/Young Pugwash, Pledge)
- Created and supported citizen involvement/educational movements (WMD Awareness Programme, PeaceJam UK)

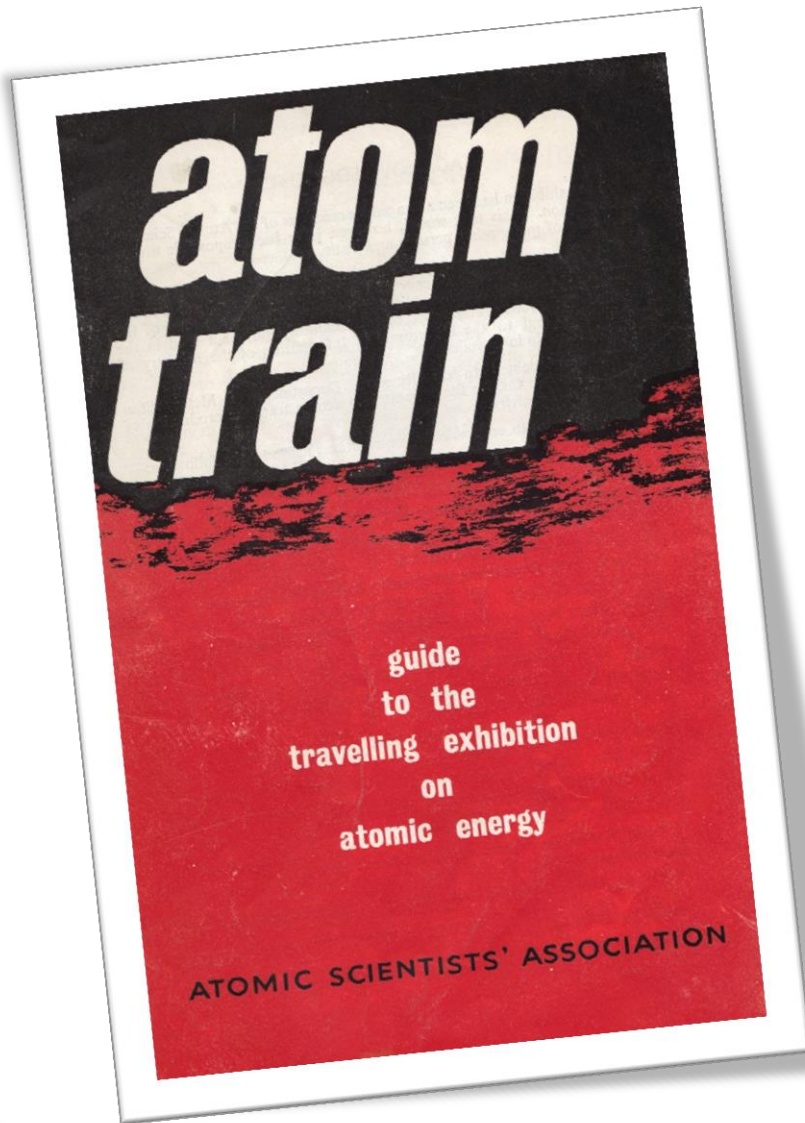


## After Los Alamos

“I devoted myself both to arousing the scientific community to the danger, and to educating the general public on these issues. “

He set up the Atomic Scientists Association in the UK, and through them, the Atom Train

To explain “the good and evil aspects of nuclear energy.”



# Track Two (when there were no tracks!)



# Independence – an example

- 1960 – Soviets planned world congress on disarmament & invited Pugwash
- Rotblat resisted
- “After the [Pugwash Continuing] committee meeting was over, Topchiev took me aside and thanked me warmly for opposing his own proposal.”
- Later, the West tried also to use Pugwash for own purposes.



# Transnational organization

- Evangelista (Unarmed Forces) - Pugwash and IPPNW were among the first, pioneering transnational organizations
- Engaging scientists in decision making was imperative at the time – they were the ones who understood the dangers
- (Scene is more complex today, which may be why former practitioners – people who had their fingers on or near ‘the button’ - are having more of a public role)
- In a sense the challenges the organization faced in 80s-90s was the result of this success – other organizations followed in footsteps.

# Student/Young Pugwash

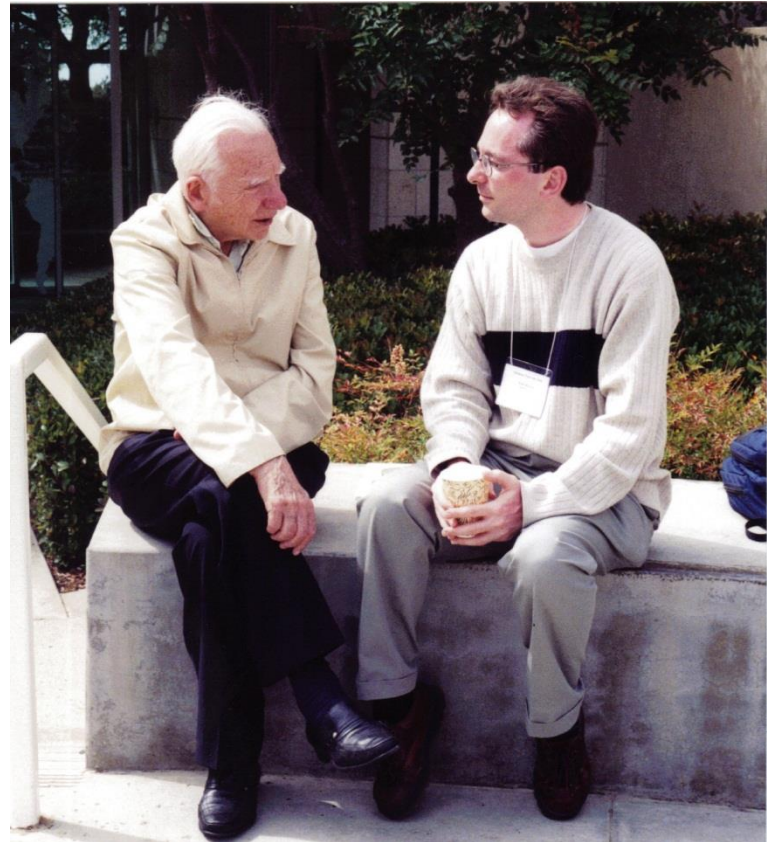
- Rotblat made speaking to young people a priority
- He urged them to spend 10% of their time learning about something outside their field of study
- He acknowledged ethical challenges they will face include challenges to the environment, biotechnology, computers, etc.





# The Pledge

“The time has thus come for some sort of Hippocratic Oath to be formulated for scientists. A solemn oath, or a pledge, taken when receiving the degree in science, would, at the least, have an important symbolic value, but it might also generate awareness and stimulate thoughts about the wider issues among young scientists.” (1999)



# WMD Awareness Programme Launch 2004 (with Gorbachev)



“I believe...that in this nuclear age, in this world in which we more and more rely on each other, in the interdependent world in which we can no longer afford to go to war, we must learn to seek to solve our disputes by negotiations, by peaceful means. We have got to establish a culture of peace. If we want peace, we have to prepare for peace, and this needs education - education at every level – and it is about this that our campaign is concerned, and I hope it will be successful.”

[www.wmdawareness.org.uk/](http://www.wmdawareness.org.uk/)

# Naive “Dupes”?

- “Reassertion of the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons and practical measures toward achieving that goal would be, and would be perceived as, a bold initiative consistent with America's moral heritage. The effort could have a profoundly positive impact on the security of future generations. “ (Nunn, Schultz, Kissinger, Perry – Wall St Journal, Jan 2007)



# Prague 2009 - Obama

- “I state clearly and with conviction America's commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons. I'm not naive. This goal will not be reached quickly -- perhaps not in my lifetime. It will take patience and persistence. But now we, too, must ignore the voices who tell us that the world cannot change. We have to insist, "Yes, we can.”



# UK

- “Substantial progress towards a dramatic reduction in the world's nuclear weapons is possible. The ultimate aspiration should be to have a world free of nuclear weapons. It will take time, but...the goal is achievable. We must act before it is too late” Hurd, Rifkind, Owen, Robertson (The Times, 30 June 2008)
- Oct 2009 - Formation of Top Level Group of UK Parliamentarians for Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation
- Formation of European Leadership Network



Members of European Leadership Network at Pugwash meeting in Moscow

# Pugwash Today - Dialogue across divides



...especially in areas of nuclear risk



Rotblat's approach continues....

# A pragmatist with ideals

“The quest for a war-free world has a basic purpose: survival. But if in the process we learn how to achieve it by love rather than by fear, by kindness rather than by compulsion; if in the process we learn to combine the essential with the enjoyable, the expedient with the benevolent, the practical with the beautiful, this will be an extra incentive to embark on this great task. Above all, remember your humanity.” (Nobel Lecture)







“I strongly believe in the value of human life. Human life is of importance, and therefore I feel that whatever we do, we must make sure that life goes on.”

**Pugwash meeting, Gaza, Feb 2012**



**THANK YOU**