The Women of Pugwash[1]

Thank you all once again for the opportunity to be in this marvelous place. Pugwash President Jayantha Dhanapala and Pugwash Secretary General Cotta-Ramusino know I am here and send you their greetings. All of us in the International Pugwash community are very pleased and encouraged to know that Thinkers' Lodge is being restored, and we appreciate the time and energy and dedication that have gone into this worthy (if initially daunting) task by many people over many years. I'd like to thank John and Cathy Eaton and the other members of the Eaton family, Colin Dodds, Giovanni Brenciaglia of the Pugwash Park Commission, Bonnie Bond, the Leahys and other members of the Pugwash Peace Exchange, Vivian Godfree and the Pugwash historical society, and all the others who together give their time and energy to keep this history alive. If we ever do get rid of nuclear weapons, this will be one of the few physical places on the planet that we will be able to identify as a physical reminder of the courage and hard word that made a nuclear weapons free world possible. I also want to thank Alexa McDonough and her colleagues for organizing this conference.

When John Eaton first approached me about coming here today, he mentioned he was very interested in learning more about the women who were at the first Pugwash Conference, Ruth Adams and Anne Kinder Jones (later, Anne Eaton). As it is so often when I meet men who are more aware feminists than I am, I was in awe that he had spotted the need, and was eager to see what I could do to help begin to fill in this gap in the history. I suspect he might some of his grandfather's clear sightedness on how and what makes institutions and people move.

So we're here to explore the roles of these two women (there was another, Faye Ajzenberg, who was the wife of Walter Selove, herself a physicist, but she did not participate in the meeting).

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[1] Presentation by Sandra Ionno Butcher, Senior Program Coordinator, Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, and Director, Pugwash History Project, Thinkers' Lodge, Lobster Factory, Pugwash, Nova Scotia, 10 July 2010. Email: sibutcher@earthlink.net

You won't find Ruth and Anne on any participant lists. Anne was hostess, Ruth worked in the secretariat, terms which have almost sexist and dismissive connotations. But neither was a person to be easily dismissed, and both had profound impact. Through their lives, they broke the molds for how women should behave and helped pave the way for countless women to have voices in areas that affect the very nature of life on our planet. They became global leaders in fighting back against the nuclear madness, and in promoting a just society.

As one of my themes at the conference has been the need to break down intergenerational divides, I'd like to point out that Ruth was 34 in 1957, already befriended by Eugene Rabinowitch and Leo Szilard. Anne was 35, soon to marry the nearly 74 year old Cyrus Eaton. More than a decade younger than I am now, these women had already begun to carve their places in history when they met here in 1957.

Following the rallying call of the 1955 Russell-Einstein Manifesto, Cyrus Eaton offered this lovely setting for a great gathering that would become world famous. It was the result of years of hard work, tenacity and vision—a reactive yet proactive step in the shadow of the Hydrogen bomb. Exactly 53 years ago, twenty two famous scientists from around the world came to Pugwash to discuss ways to control the nuclear menace which was developing ever new and more grotesque dimensions. They sought to explore the responsibilities of scientists in defining and addressing this emerging threat to society. They crossed the chasms between their societies and their governments, at a time when the world was divided by ideological barriers that fueled some of the hottest days of what we have named perhaps incorrectly the "Cold War". They came with courage and with goodwill but success was far from certain. They risked their careers and their good names, to seek common ground.

We are lucky to have here today Ru Ling Susie Chou, who will speak to the courage of one of these participants, her father Chou Pei-Yuan, who made this leap of faith based on an urgency and a conviction. And as we listen to this fascinating story, we can

extrapolate his story to the others, all of whom must have faced challenging personal dilemmas about their attendance.

And yet, as on US participant, Paul Doty said, "there was more hope than expectation" for the meeting's success.

During their last visit to Thinkers' Lodge in 2003, I had the privilege of speaking with Joseph Rotblat, and Ruth Adams about the atmosphere at the first meeting:

> Rotblat: I came here with hope, but also prepared that it was going to be a complete fiasco.
> Adams: I think you even thought so after the first day, as I remember.
> Rotblat: Yes, oh yes.
> Adams: I remember that kind of tension, awkwardness and the stiffness.

The meeting, as it turns out, was a great success, despite an inauspicious start. The scientists broke through the tensions. The reason, in large part, was due to Anne Kinder Jones. (I'd like to say that I am humbled to attempt to capture her spirit, and there are Eaton family members here who knew her, and who I hope will jump in and help to answer questions.)

Joseph Rotblat was ever quick to acknowledge the role she played. He said, "A very important factor [for the meeting's success] … was the relaxed and congenial atmosphere of this place to which our hostess, Anne Jones, who later became Mrs. Cyrus Eaton, greatly contributed with her charm and enormous enthusiasm, undiminished by being confined to a wheelchair."[2]

I'd like to share the following exchange I had with Joseph Rotblat and Ruth Adams in 2003. I asked them what they thought was the most important thing I should know about the first meeting. They both referred instantly to the ambiance:

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[2] J. Rotblat, "Reunion in Pugwash, 2003," talk delivered on the Pugwash veranda, 20 July 2003.

Rotblat: Coming here you…feel the atmosphere of the place and you can see why we can achieve so much in these lovely surroundings. I'm saying the environment makes a great deal…going out into the air, the fresh air, the serene surrounding…the setting…and of course the people who looked after us, the Eatons, they really created the relaxed atmosphere, I think this all contributed to the success which we had, don't you think so?

Adams: I would think there's no question about that…the truth was that here…it was possible to walk off with almost anyone, that you may not have finished the discussion within the larger group, and so you would see for the days that we were here, people going off walking and continuing to talk and I think Jo that this is what contributed to the success of the meeting.

Rotblat: Very much so.

Adams: There's no question about it. It also is *very* nice to have good wine and good food.

Rotblat: And lobster.

Adams: Oh, lobster!

Rotblat: The lobster dinner was really…

Adams: Oh, I never have forgotten that.

Rotblat: A very great occasion….

Adams: The other reason for this place being so special in addition to its sunsets and sunrises its good beds and so on was Mrs. Eaton was very gracious. You couldn't have had a more intelligent and sensitive voice here in this house.

Rotblat: And she had a great influence on Cyrus.

Adams: That's right, and so I think she was as responsible as any one individual in bringing this together and making it such a wonderful experience…[3]

Anne's account of the first meeting, written in a letter to her father, is among my favorite summaries of the meeting, it shows her vibrance, her daring, and her slightly (if I dare say it) flirtatious way of easing people gently into a relaxed frame of mind, enabling the world problems to be tackled.

[I then played a clip of Anne Eaton reading the following excerpts of a letter to her father, written immediately after the first Pugwash Conference.]

July 12, 1957
Pugwash
Nova Scotia

Dear Judge:
We have met the Soviets and they are ours. Four of them invaded by air from Moscow via Montreal looking as tired as anyone would after an 18-hour trip with a 7-hourr time change.

Professor Dmitri Skobeltzyn is eldest, a tall, white-haired, distinguished looking man who has the only Homburg in Pugwash beside Cyrus's. They are the same size and shade of grey, hence are regularly claimed for the wrong ideology from hooks in the vestibule of an old Masonic Hall where meetings are held. Skobeltzyn, Director of the Lebedev Institute of Physics in Moscow, was,born in Leningrad (which he still calls St. Petersburg) where he attended the same high school as a U.S. participant, Eugene Rabinowitch, the editor of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* and professor at the University of Illinois. Skobeltzyn is not a Communist Party member. He is a pioneer in cosmic ray research and represented the Soviets on

[3] J. Rotblat and R. Adams, interview with the author, Pugwash, Nova Scotia, 20 July 2003.

the scientific advisory group during the U.N. atomic energy control negotiations from 1946 to 1948. He speaks a bit of English, more French.

Academician (I should say instead of Professor) Alexander Topchiev is a very different type: short.and so stocky that in the current style of wide trouser legs for Soviets. He gives the impression of an upright rectangular block. His eyeglasses slip a bit, as' though only one ear at a time ca'n 'be hooked onto, and he has a deceptively severe look, rather beetle-browed. He is Secretary General of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, an organic chemist. He attended a London conference two years ago (when all this began) just Professor Dmitri Skobeltzyn is eldest, a tall, before the Geneva Conferences on Peacetime Uses of Atomic Energy. Bertrand Russell was responsible for pushing that London meeting with the Parliamentary Association for World Government. It was the first attempt at international cooperation of scientists after Hiroshima and was small, not representative, it's said, with more non-scientists than scientjsts. Nothing much came of it until now but it, like this, resulted in the Russell-Einstein Appeal *to* scientists *to* consider the hazards of nuclear war.

The third Soviet, Academician Aleksandr Kuzin, went to London, too. He is a biophysicist, a fairly perilous discipline in the USSR, I'm told, where genes are expected to follow certain rather bizarre rules of dialectic materialism. Kuzin sports a small, well-tended moustache, wears a black beret and manages to look a bit stylish, floppy trouser cuffs notwithstanding.

The interpreter's name is Vladimir Pavlichenko. He is young, plump and he smiles, particularly as he shows snapshots of his pretty wife and two small children. He is Topchiev's secretary.
On arrival they joined the rest of us-I'll give the whole cast in due course-in the big living room of this white frame house built in 1800 by Cyrus's clipper-builder great uncle. It overlooks the Northumberland Strait. I'll describe placid Pugwash later. What a spot for a conference, there's nothing *to* do but think. ("Think or Swim" is a motto I've offered. It's been marvelously well received by the English speaking but suffers in translation.)

The Soviets drank a cautious ginger ale before we went down a grass slope *to* dinner in the dining room, an all-white converted lobster factory on a wharf. It can seat 50 at an arresting collection of black,antique tables and chairs. White uniformed local ladies act as waitresses, drilled in the niceties of service by an *Admirable Crichton* of a French Nova Scotian, Raymond (pronounced Ramon) Bourque. He is loaned to Cyrus *to* be major domo of these affairs. by the

> Canadian National R.R. which also permits three private cars *to* park alongside the Victorian red brick station in town: extra-and palatial-accommodations. By gloriously incongruous chance the Soviets are in the one Fi Fi Widener owned.
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> Academician Topchiev seized my wheel-chair and pushed me down the fairly rough terrain at a speed I can truthfully call breathtaking. Pavlichenko ran alongside, smiling. After dinner Topchiev asked if Cyrus and I would play croquet with him and Kuzin. Of course we would, so Topchiev seized me again and we went back up the hill at the speed described above. Since Pavlichenko stayed behind to interpret, the Academician and I were on our own, mute but smiling. He indicated that he and 1 were partners. We chose-and taught each 'other the words for-mallets and balls.
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> Soviet croquet rules are the same as ours, except they hadn't heard of sending the opponents ball anywhere, once you've hit it. It's that business of putting your ball cheek by jowl with the enemy's and then, with foot on your own ball to hold it, smacking as hard as possible. When my partner hit Cyrus's ball I explained this Anglo Saxon move and urged sending Cyrus into the apple trees along the court. Lots of roots and rough grass. Topchiev wondered if this would be proper since it was his host's ball. I said that if he didn't snatch this chance for victory I would never forgive him. …[4]

I am struck by this letter, written immediately after the meeting. In this letter, she so clearly demonstrates an advanced ease with the issue areas, as she writes about the nuanced interactions. She was no ordinary 35 year old. She later said, "I was naïve, no question." The thought that people might not trust their own governments was new to her. Yet, as one journalist wrote, "From that beginning, grew a sophisticated grasp of the arguments and hypocrisies involved in curbing nuclear arms and war."[5]

He continued, Anne "deliberately shunned a conventional life…she has been vilified as a Communist and also praised in saint-like terms, but not often recognized simply as a

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[4] Anne Eaton (then Anne Kinder Jones), in a letter to her father, reprinted in Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, April 1978, pp. 37-40.
[5] Al Burt, "A Disarming Woman," Miami Herald, 2 May 1982.

woman who insists on describing the world as she sees it, no matter how different that view may be."[6]

She was a friend of Eaton's daughter. Her father was friends with Eaton. When she married Cyrus, in December 1957, he was nearly 74 with 7 children. She was divorced, 35, with a daughter. This is not a conventional woman. As an interesting postscript to the conference, Eaton had contacted Rotblat to help to arrange their marriage in London following the conference, though the initial plans changed and they married instead in the States. Rotlbat's near role as a wedding planner clearly tickled him, even decades after the fact. After Cyrus died in 1979, Anne continued her concerns and involvement in these issues.

Anne once said, "If you think you're right, the fight's kind of fun."[7] One former colleague of Anne's in Women Strike for Peace, Cora Weiss, wrote to me, "I remember Anne as a caring, loving, generous woman who had a big vision of a nuclear free world."[8] Anne helped to shape women's involvement in nuclear disarmament, she was involved in the Freeze movement, she went to Geneva with Coretta Scott King to lobby for nuclear disarmament, she and Cyrus were friends with Khrushchev, met Castro. Cora told me a great story about flying into Hanoi with Anne and Cyrus in 1960, and how the bombing from above and surface to air missiles from below were stopped so their plane could land, they were rushed into a fall out shelter at the airport, toured Hanoi (often having to stop at bomb shelters) all in the name of trying to stop a war that today we realize was a folly. Undoubtedly Anne was an intrepid woman.

"What we were saying," Anne recalled, "is that it is possible to coexist with these people, that they were human beings who laughed and cried just as we did, that they had suffered terribly." ""Demonstrating, marching, carrying a
picket sign - that wasn't done, it just wasn't done when I was growing up,"

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[6] Al Burt, "A Disarming Woman," Miami Herald, 2 May 1982.
[7] Quoted in Burt.
[8] Cora Weiss, private correspondence, 30 June 2010.

she said. "But I didn't care. One does what seems to be required."[9]

Now, a few words about Ruth.

Ruth wrote about her experience at the first conference and said: "[T]he birth of Pugwash in that tiny little fishing village was a time of affirmation. I never will forget my first sense of being part of this group, sitting in the little red schoolhouse around a wooden table, marred and scarred through many generations of children, and looking at the faces. We are all pretty ordinary…Jo and everybody were a little bit worried about what they were going to say and what they were going to do. One thing carried them through more than anything else—they all had a sense of humor. Despite the perils they felt around them, despite the unique responsibility they felt they had, they still were able to smile and to joke and to reflect upon the joys of being there."[10] Ruth once said, "It was a mind boggling experience…as a younger person, sitting in discussions…that commitment and passion for international humanity cut across all those fears, constraints, and even the Iron Curtain. It made it possible for me to enter a life of concern for these issues."[11]

Ruth was born in Los Angeles in 1923, the eldest of two children. She grew up in mining camps in Nevada, and her father abandoned the family at a young age. She recalled to me a childhood living on furniture made of wooden crates, a mom who struggled to make ends meet. She was fired for organizing an interracial dance in the 1940s when we was a recreation director at an Oregon shipyard. She married, had two daughters, divorced in 1951 (she later remarried and had a third daughter). She worked in various positions at the University of Chicago where she met many of the original nuclear scientists. Ruth once said, "As a young woman finding her way in the post-World War II period, my path of convergence with the concerns that led to Pugwash focused on human rights that were

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[10] Ruth Adams, "Recalling Eugene," Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, Nov/Dec 1997, p 45.

[11] Ruth Adams, talk delivered on the Pugwash veranda, 20 July 2003. Author's personal notes.

then, as [they] now are still, under attack. The stifling of discourse and diversity represented by the McCarthy hearings was very much with us then."[12]

Ruth had begun working for the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists as an editorial assistant in 1953. She worked closely with Eugene Rabinowitch, and she helped in the behind the scenes planning of the first conference (Rabinowitch and Rotblat had dreamed up the idea for this conference as early as 1951, and used basically the same agenda they had made at that earlier date). While Ruth was technically at the conference in a support capacity, one reporter later wrote, "her brilliance, ebullience, and understanding of the issues impressed nearly everyone and made her instrumental in future conferences."[13] Or, as the LA Times said, she "held her own in that daunting group."[14]

Ruth was there as a "professional staff member." Three people were in that capacity: Ruth, Eric Burhop who, as a leader in the World Federation of Scientific Workers and a vocal communist, was not listed on the participant list because Russell was worried it would weight the UK participants with too many perceived Communists (Powell was also a leader in the WFSW), and Vladimir Pavlichenko, the man all quickly recognized as the KGB guy under the not so subtle guise of "interpreter." (He was caught out quickly by a non-Soviet native Russian speaker in the room when he tried some funny stuff in the translations).

Ruth talked about the way in which the initial fears of breaking across barriers were quickly overcome, in part because these men were part of the international scientific community, and they shared more common bonds than might have been obvious. For example, she told a story about seeing a chair on the edge of the veranda, next to Prof. Chou Pei-Yuan from China (whose daughter, Susie, is here today). She thought to herself, "Do I dare?" She knew a little Chinese (Ruth also was no ordinary woman), and she greeted him. "This tall man looked down at me, 'Ruth Adams! You are from

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[12] Ruth Adams, "Reflections 1957-2003," 53rd Pugwash Conference, Halifax and Pugwash, Nova Scotia, 17-21 July 2003.
[13] Mike Moore, "Ruth Salzman Adams" Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, May/June 2005, p. 13.
[14] Elaine Woo, "Ruth Adams, 81: International Peace, Arms Control Activist," LA Times, 3 March 2005.

Chicago, is that restaurant still on 63rd Street…?"[15] Knowing Ruth, I have no doubt that her end of that conversation was charming, engaging, and put him at ease as well. I am sure she was actively engaged throughout the time here.

Ruth went on to become editor (twice) of the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists—at a time when that was one of the main publications shedding light for the wider world on the scientific and technical aspects of arms control and disarmament. She worked with Leo Szilard to found the Council for a Livable World. (She once told me that when she asked him why, of all the brilliant people he knew, he would ask her to be in this inner circle, he replied something to the effect of, because you laugh and I like to surround myself with people who laugh.) She helped to establish one of the world's most influential funding programs in Peace and International Cooperation at the MacArthur Foundation (strategically dispensing some $133 million). Her work on the boards of other groups helped to change the landscape of the ways in which peace and security are defined and explored. She later was a driving force, along with Victor Rabinowitch (Eugene's son) to found the International Center for Insect Physiology and Ecology in Nairobi, Kenya – a research organization devoted to cutting edge research on controlling tropical insects that kill livestock, destroy crops and spread disease. Ruth stayed active in Pugwash, often pushing them on other issues related to security, eager to point out that arms control was not necessarily disarmament. She was an ardent supporter of the Student/Young Pugwash network, and some of my favorite days ever were spent with her, planning a big international reunion conference in La Jolla on the 20th anniversary of the Student Pugwash network. She opened her home, her heart, and her rolodex to young people who came into her orbit.

Ruth smoked a pipe. Vic Rabinowitch said "She was a feminist before it was proper to be a feminist. I don't think she ever recognized the idea that women were somehow secondary to men in anything."[16] She once told me she never experienced sexism in Pugwash, that excellence was always recognized, no matter one's gender. But when I

[15] Ruth Adams, talk delivered on the Pugwash veranda, 20 July 2003. Author's personal notes.
[16] Elaine Woo, op.cit.

pushed a bit, and asked what it was like to be there in a support capacity when she knew as much about the subject as the men, she sighed, gave me a direct look, and said, "Sandy, in those days, that's they way women got into the rooms." She then would mention how she used to brush off the unwanted touches of her knee under the tables—not just in Pugwash meetings, but throughout those decades while women were forging their way into men's boardrooms and meetings.

Gloria Duffy, whom some of you know, summarized Ruth's impact on her life, and in doing so we can see the trends that were already in place in 1957: "Ruth left me an example, a best practice of life, about how to connect, foster and befriend people. Ruth's life is a reminder to me to slow down, to take time to get to know other people in depth, to listen to them and to understand their lives, and to help people, especially younger people, along the way."[17] Ruth was described as a "steadfast globalist."[18] We can see that the strands of her future career were all present here in 1957, and must have been nurtured undoubtedly by her early experience in Pugwash.

Ruth died of lung cancer in 2005 at the age of 81, maybe as a result of that pipe smoking, before I could fulfill the promise I made to her on her 80th birthday that I would write her story for publication. It's an honor to be able to begin to fill that promise here today and I hope together we can begin to fill in the missing gaps.

Some day histories will be not only the stories of those who created wars, but also those who created peace. Those new histories—or 'herstories' as some say—will mention the women who not only joined in the meetings in whatever capacity—like Anne and Ruth—but also those who provided the food with great care and pride, who got out the best bedding, who trimmed the gardens and cleaned the toilets—because those were concrete ways to show respect and welcome in a world where neither was a given.

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[17] Gloria Duffy, "Remarks in Celebration of the Life of Ruth Adams," Chicago, IL, 22 May 2005.
[18] Mike Moore, "Ruth Salzman Adams" Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, May/June 2005, p. 13.

It is undeniable that these "support" roles were as crucial and defining as the discussions themselves, especially during that groundbreaking meeting here in July 1957.

Anyone who organizes these sorts of meetings knows that if people are not comfortable in their surroundings, if their basic needs are unmet, they cannot participate in an open and easy way in difficult discussions. If there had been a defensiveness inspired by perceived suspicion on the part of hosts, if they felt as if they were imposing on the town, rather than welcomed, my job would have been much easier because this might have been a much, much shorter history. The meeting might have failed.

The women of Pugwash, and here I mean them all—those who knew and interacted with scientific geniuses, those who befriended and perhaps prodded millionaires toward greater involvement in these critical issues, and those who walked the streets of Pugwash everyday and called it home—together these women created an atmosphere of hope and community that burned through the Iron Curtain. Not bad, for a few days' work. I salute them all.

I bet they were multitasking at the time.

I'd like to leave you with one final quote from Anne, who said in 1982 words that are still true and challenging today. She said that nuclear disarmament "is an urgent problem, more urgent now than it was then. The hazards that horrified me in 1957 are kindergarten stuff now with the sophistication of the new weaponry, the proliferation of nuclear weapons to so many countries. It seems like everybody has the bomb, or has the ability to build it. The urgency of these physicists, these chemists was sufficient to make both Mr. Eaton and me feel this was something that should be publicized. The man on the street has got a right to know what the results might be of a war. And according to the scientists, another war using nuclear bombs would be disastrous for mankind." "Maybe we'll muddle through. I hope so because I have grandchildren. I hope so for everybody's grandchildren."[19]

[19] Joe Frolik, "Anne Eaton: Rebel with a Cause," (Cleveland) Plain Dealer, October 2, 1983.

People often ask how then can get involved in Pugwash. This is how you can get involved in the work of Pugwash. Help get the word out there about the need to get rid of these weapons and war.

We all have work to do, to keep up with this prescient and I suspect sassy lady.

Thank you.