

Doug Roche Adds Some Hope in the Fight Against War, Nukes and Poverty

By Jim Creskey

It might seem like a stretch to consider that a man who is a four-time elected Conservative member of Parliament, a former ambassador and senator, has become a self-admitted counter-cultural figure. But that's where Doug Roche is today. What makes Mr. Roche counter-cultural is not his appearance or his demeanor. Outwardly he is the buttoned-down former member for Edmonton-Strathcona. He doesn't rage. He is, in fact, one of the gentlest people one can meet on Parliament Hill. Yet his uncompromising view of war, nuclear weapons and poverty make him a man apart.

But he is looking toward the time when the ideals he holds dear will begin to move forward.

"By moving forward, I mean reaching the day when it becomes cultural, not counter-cultural, to stand in the public square and demand an end to war, an end to nuclear weapons and an end to massive poverty, and demand that the full weight of government policies and finances be directed to building the conditions for peace," he writes in his new book, *Global Conscience*.

In this, his 18th book, Mr. Roche sets out to prove that his hope is far from groundless optimism. He says the world is full of millions of people who share these aims and, he says, the proof is in the numbers of NGOs—from Amnesty International to Pax Christi to the Women In Black Movement—that are working all over the world to bring about these changes, even if their governments are not.

In fact, his book contains a breakout description of dozens of NGOs and other organizations to prove his point that the world is full of people who consider an end to war, nuclear disarmament and a sharing of global resources to end poverty to be a primary goal. His hope is that it is a rising ground swell.

Mr. Roche's book bears some resemblance to Bill Clinton's recent book, *Giving*, in that it is a catalogue of NGOs. But he goes further than the former U.S. president by outlining the tough issues of the day and explaining how and why civil society is beginning to step up to them.

Last week on Parliament Hill, another contemporary fighter against war, nuclear weapons and poverty celebrated Mr. Roche's *Global Conscience*: Liberal Senator Roméo Dallaire.

Mr. Dallaire told an audience of MPs and friends gathered in the Speaker's lounge that Mr. Roche's book was "sort of like 'Stephen Hawking for Dummies'" on the issues of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

"We have a system [the world's 3,000 active nuclear weapons] that will destroy us no matter how much we invest in the environment and human rights," said Mr. Dallaire.

In the introduction to Mr. Roche's book, Mr. Dallaire, a retired general, points to "the leaky boat" shared by all humanity.

"What will save us, if it can only be harnessed, is the will of the people, which historically surpasses that of their leaders in generosity, vision and willingness to change," he said.

But Mr. Roche is convinced his hope is justified.

"There's a reason to hope for a better kind of world because it's actually happening," he said.

His encouraging little book is an invitation to join the fight. Readers—who would like to become part of "the rising tide of



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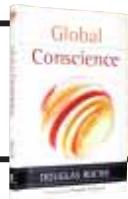
The new book by Doug Roche (above) bears some resemblances to Bill Clinton's latest, *Giving*.

commonality and hope," as the *Globe and Mail's* Lawrence Martin puts it in a blurb for *Global*—may want to look further into some of the NGOs and organizations which get a mention. They include:

- Human Rights Watch
- International Criminal Court
- Amnesty International
- Search For Common Ground
- Global Security Institute
- Middle Powers Initiative
- Peace Boat
- Global Action to Prevent War
- Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy
- Global Youth Action Network
- International Campaign to Ban Landmines
- Grameen Bank
- Pro Mujer
- Project Ploughshares
- Human Development Report
- World Hunger Year
- Parliamentarians for Global
- Parliamentary Network for Nuclear Disarmament
- Peacejam
- Building Resources Across Communities
- United Nations Peacekeeping
- World Federation of UN Associations
- Abolition 2000
- Inter-Faith Action for Peace in Africa
- Faithful Security
- Pax Christi
- Transparency International
- Burma Watch International
- Women in Black
- Witness

All of these organizations are only a Google away and some readers will want to add their own favourites to the list. But for Mr. Roche, the important thing is that more people join the promising venture. There may be some alternative to this kind of common action, but it doesn't really exist within the confines of hope.

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Global Conscience
By Doug Roche
Novalis
216 pp. \$22.95



Half empty? Half full?

Fresh water is the world's most important natural resource.

No one can live without it, and it is in increasingly short supply. Consider the facts:

More than a billion people on the planet are trying to live with little or no access to fresh water. More than two billion live without proper sanitation¹. Over 2 million people die each year from diseases associated with poor water and sanitary conditions². 5,400 children a day are among that toll³.

Fresh water shortages are not restricted to developing nations. Parts of North America suffer continued drought conditions.

Even in water-rich Canada, many areas are under serious water stress, and shortages are becoming alarmingly common in municipalities across the country. Many aboriginal reserves in Canada are under boil-water advisories.

That's the half empty part.

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The RBC Blue Water Project will supply grants to local and global organizations to help improve access to fresh water, to support watershed preservation, to fund advocacy and research, and to support conservation projects.

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