

## Preface

Professor Sir Joseph Rotblat died at the age of 96 on August 31, 2005. This is a book about his life and work. In it friends and colleagues write about his life as a human being, as a scientist and a peace activist, and about his efforts to build a more peaceful and fair-minded world.

He was the last living signatory of the visionary Russell–Einstein Manifesto, which he and Bertrand Russell presented to the world at a press conference on July 9, 1955.

In the spirit of this Manifesto he became the founder and long-term guiding light of the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs. With his expertise as a natural scientist he opposed the nuclear arms race, and during the Cold War Pugwash made a substantial contribution to the treaties that helped prevent the use of nuclear weapons. In 1995 he received, jointly with the Pugwash Conferences, the Nobel Peace Prize.

His tireless engagement with peace and nuclear disarmament, continuing until he died, remains legendary. For decades his courage and optimism inspired the actions of scientists and citizens working to prevent nuclear catastrophe.

His optimism was contagious. His name was, and still is, synonymous with moral courage and ethically responsible action, both as a person and as a scientist. A modest man, he provides us with a shining example of how to live one's life. We hope that this book will help to perpetuate his example.

In one of the last papers he wrote, he portrayed his peace philosophy in the following way:

In the course of many thousands of years, the human species has established a great civilization; it has developed a rich and multifarious culture; it has accumulated enormous treasures in arts and literature;

and it has created the magnificent edifice of science. It is indeed the supreme irony that the very intellectual achievements of humankind have provided the tools of self-destruction, in a social system ready to contemplate such destruction.

Surely, we must not allow this to happen. As human beings it is our paramount duty to preserve human life, to ensure the continuity of the human race.

A nuclear holocaust does not appear imminent. Having come close to it on several occasions during the Cold War, we are now somewhat more cautious. But war is still a recognized social institution, and every war carries with it the potential of escalation with fatal consequences for our species. In a world armed with weapons of mass destruction, the use of which might bring the whole civilization to an end, we cannot afford a polarized community, with its inherent threat of military confrontations. In this scientific era, a global equitable community, to which we all belong as world citizens, has become a vital necessity.

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