

# **Tribute to Sir Joseph Rotblat**

**By Hon. Douglas Roche, O.C.**

**On behalf of the Canadian Pugwash Group**

## **Memorial Service**

**London, December 9, 2005**

The Canadian Pugwash Group felt so close to Jo Rotblat that we would like to claim him as one of our own. This would be only the slightest of stretches considering Jo's identity with the Thinkers' Lodge in Pugwash, Nova Scotia.

From his first visit there in July, 1957 to inaugurate the conferences sponsored by Cyrus Eaton, to his last in July 2003, Joseph Rotblat was a constant presence, if not always physically, certainly in spirit. To this day, I cannot go into the Thinkers' Lodge without absorbing the essence of the man: his clarity, his courage, his humility, his wisdom – and most of all his ceaseless determination to rid the world forever of nuclear weapons.

Jo became my mentor. He taught me the full implications of nuclear weapons as the ultimate evil. I learned from him that the abolition of

nuclear weapons is indeed feasible and more: that their elimination is a precondition to peace in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

And so we who are the beneficiaries of his legacy must go forward. In his beloved village of Pugwash, plans are under way to construct the Pugwash Peace Exchange on the site of the Thinkers' Lodge, which will itself be maintained in its pristine glory. The Pugwash Park Commission, which owns the Lodge, is donating the property to the Exchange. The new building will house Pugwash exhibits and inter-active displays to help educate visitors to the realities of war and the necessity of peace and nuclear disarmament in the context of history, science and humanism.

Jo was, in fact, the Honourary Patron of the new Pugwash Peace Exchange, and I am proud to inform you that he directed that his Nobel Peace Medal and associated documents will have a permanent home in the new building.

I remember Jo's last visit to the Thinkers' Lodge at the time of the Pugwash Conference in Halifax two-and-a-half years ago: how proud he was to show newcomers "where it all began." He gave a lecture on that occasion that all of us knew was both a hail and farewell. His criticism of the nuclear weapons states was biting, his prescription eminently feasible, his attitude ever hopeful.

“Remember your humanity!” he told his audience in words from the Russell-Einstein Manifesto that have become so familiar to all Pugwashites. He challenged us in life and he challenges us now. We in Canada proudly proclaim the Rotblat legacy. As long as I live, Sir Joseph Rotblat will continue to be my mentor.