



Spinoff

This meeting was hybrid

In person at New Desi Zaiqa Restaurant at Carlingwood Mall

Program: Dr Jon Robson PhD; Past of and Outlook for Peace in the Middle East

In-person: 37 members 3 guests

Online: 18 members, 1 guest

Opening

President Marcia Armstrong opened the 37th meeting of the 121st Rotary year, with the acknowledgment that the meeting was held on the traditional and unceded territory of the Algonquin and Anishinaabe people. She recognized guests Erin and Sandy Ueffin.

O Canada video sung by Walk Off the Earth vocal group and we at meeting sang too.

Ron Doll introduced speaker, Dr. John Robson, an adjunct professor at Augustine College. He holds a BA, an MA, from the University of Toronto, and a Ph.D In American history from the University of Texas in Austin. He is executive director of the Climate Discussion Nexus. A documentary filmmaker, writes for the National Post, Epoch Times. Contributing editor to the Dorchester Review. He produced and hosted the documentary The Great War. Wrote books on the Magna Carta, fixing Canada's constitution and the environment.

Dr. Robson began his presentation with humor, stating that achieving peace in the Middle East makes world peace seem simple and added that his title for this talk is “Peace in the Middle East (This time for sure)”

He highlighted a key principle from Henry Kissinger: negotiations can only succeed if the minimum terms of each side can be made to coincide. To illustrate this, he referenced World War II where the Allied and Nazi objectives were irreconcilable.

Dr. Robson then provided a historical overview, emphasizing that the region's history is largely defined by conflict. Examples he used were the Old Testament's tales of warring tribes and one of the issues seems to have been that the Israelites were absolutely opposed to human sacrifice which was often a minimum tenet of the religions of their neighbors. He touched on other conflicts such as the Roman conquest, the Muslim conquest and the Crusades.

The speaker discussed the complexities from the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the Balfour Declaration, the re-founding of Israel, and the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Dr. Robson argued that a core issue is the fundamental disagreement on Israel's right to exist,

He addressed the decline of “polite” antisemitism in the 50s and 60s after the discovery of the Holocaust and the recent reappearance of antisemitism and the disturbing phenomenon of celebrations of violence.

He said you have to know the truth and you have to tell it: there’s strong historical, scriptural and archaeological evidence of a Jewish presence in the land going back thousands of years. Many in Israel and elsewhere accept that this and more recent events such as the UN decision of 1948 give Israel historical and currently legitimate claims to the land.

Dr Robson considered relevant to the discussion on peace his contention that

- Israel is a democracy that values free speech and toleration.
- Israel has demonstrated a willingness to pursue peace.

Dr. Robson quoted Golda Meir as saying “Peace will come when the Arabs love their children more than they hate us” and concluded that Israel must maintain the ability to defend its existence until its opponents come to realize that peace is in their interest

Q&A

David MacGregor raised a question about the terminology of "anti-Semitism" and "Islamophobia," which led to a discussion about language. Don Butler asked for an explanation Dr Robson’s reference to “Groves,” and was told of their significance in the Old Testament as sites of child sacrifice.

Editor’s note: The above omits other information that could also be considered relevant to this topic

Dr Robson’s Slides https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-SEXEcttbkW7Nfm8s_WBUvUunlyo0FBI/view?usp=sharing

Tokens of Appreciation

Ron Doll presented Dr. Robson with a pen and announced that the club would make a donation to Polio Plus in his honour.

Past President's Draw

Miriam Fraser announced **David MacGregor** as winner of the Past President's Draw:

Announcements

President Marcia announced the passing of past member Joe Parkinson and said a service for him would be on April 5 Saturday at All Saints Westboro

Final

President Marcia said the next meeting would be at the Happy Greek to give it another try Adjourn

Next Meeting - Hybrid

Tuesday, April 8 2025

In person at the Happy Greek, 1651 Merivale Rd,

Luncheon at noon.

Program starts 12:30

Program Club Assembly

Spinoff: **Gavin Schnobb**

Cash Calendar draw <https://rcwo.org/Stories/latest-calendar-draw-winners>

For log on info for Zoom meeting see invitation