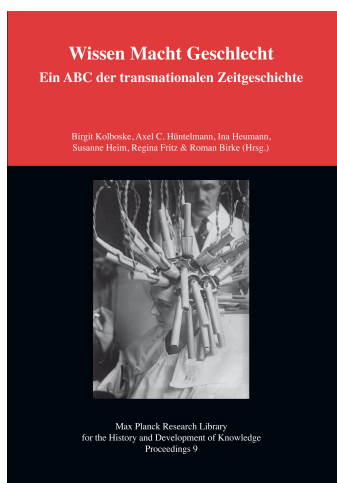


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Alison Kraft:

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P Pugwash

Alison Kraft

In 2014, Carola Sachse was vacationing with friends in Nova Scotia, Canada, motoring along the coast taking in the stunning landscapes, swirling seascapes, and the occasional golf course. During the trip she also travelled to the small fishing village of Pugwash. In the mid-1950s, this was the summer home of American industrialist Cyrus Eaton. In July 1957, at Eaton's invitation, his estate was the venue for a meeting between senior scientists from east and west who came together to discuss the dangers posed by nuclear weapons. This was the inaugural meeting of the *Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs* (Pugwash). It was this history that brought Carola Sachse to this place. In 2011 she had initiated a new historical engagement with Pugwash. This began with a workshop, *Writing Pugwash Histories*, held in Vienna at the Institut für Zeitgeschichte in May 2012, co-organised with Silke Fengler, Holger Nehring and me. The workshop brought together some twenty scholars from around the world, both junior and senior, from the history of science, political science, and international relations. Following on from this, Sachse has been instrumental in bringing together selected papers from the 2012 Vienna Workshop for a Special Issue (*Pugwash and the Global Cold War*), forthcoming in the *Journal of Cold War Studies* (JCWS). Most recently, she has been centrally involved in a Pugwash-themed panel for the 2016 European Society for the History of Science conference in Prague, from which future publications are planned for 2017. All of this activity arose from Sachse's recognition of Pugwash as an important and under-explored dimension of Cold War science and politics.

Writing Pugwash Histories was organised around national case studies. Sachse was keen for this approach because it acknowledged the multiplicity of Pugwash histories and encouraged examination of its development within different political regimes and polities. Pugwash sought also to transcend national borders, with its activities at an international level co-ordinated by an executive Committee (the 'Continuing Committee'). But it was the nation state that was envisaged as a starting point for comparative perspectives that could cast light on the role of Pugwash as both a national and transnational actor with global reach. In addition to being of interest to historians of science and of the Cold War, Pugwash also constitutes a point of connection to diplomatic history, international relations and peace studies. These connections and the

broader import of Pugwash for Cold War history are rendered apparent in the contributions to the JCWS volume that cast new light on the development and work of Pugwash in Austria, China, Czechoslovakia, Japan, the UK and West Germany. These studies reveal the tension within Pugwash between the national and the transnational, and show the ways in which national allegiances fed into and shaped the transnational encounter around the Pugwash table. They highlight too how individual Pugwashites were differently positioned in relation to political power in the different national settings, how scientists were viewed by national governments variously as politically reliable or unreliable, and bring to light the different political roles open to/played by scientists within and beyond the nation state.

Arising from the Russell-Einstein manifesto of July 1955, the Pugwash conferences were a response to the new dangers of the hydrogen bomb and sought to bring senior scientists from east and west together to find new ways to halt the arms race. Conceived by Bertrand Russell and Frédéric Joliot-Curie, and signed by eleven leading scientists from around the world including Albert Einstein, the Manifesto conjured up the sense of a world newly imperilled by the new thermonuclear weapon. Seeing itself as a “strong force for peace”, the founding aims of Pugwash were: to influence governments, to form a channel of communication between scientists, and to educate public opinion, and its highest priority was disarmament. The Pugwash movement marked a new and bold commitment to the principle of scientific social responsibility. In September 1958 at the third Pugwash meeting held in Austria, the Pugwash agenda was elaborated more fully in a statement known as the *Vienna Declaration* that became the central tenet of the Movement. The Declaration was organised into seven sections each of which outlined an area of Pugwash activity: (1) the necessity to end wars, (2) requirements for ending the arms race, (3) what world war would mean, (4) the hazards of bomb tests, (5) science and international cooperation, (6) technology in the service of peace, and (7) the responsibilities of scientists. In Vienna it was also agreed that Pugwash would be organised around national groups as a means to foster participation between Conferences and to gain a strong foothold in different countries. By 1967 twenty-two such groups had been formed, from across the east-west divide, and the non-aligned countries. Although dominated by the Superpower dynamic, each national group had its own agenda, and sought within and through Pugwash to discuss and advance their respective viewpoints and interests. Each operated in its own particular way, and enjoyed a degree of autonomy, but all reported to and were in regular contact with the Continuing Committee, which coordinated Pugwash activities at the supra-national level. The possibility for transnational flows and exchanges was embedded within and realised through this novel network-like infrastructure.

Welcomed by the Soviet Union, which saw in Pugwash opportunities to further its claims to leadership in peace initiatives, it was however viewed with intense suspicion in Washington and London where it was perceived as a Communist 'front' organization. Throughout its first decade, the future of Pugwash remained uncertain as it battled against the perception of it in the west as left-leaning, struggled to assert its political neutrality, grappled with internal tensions and remained short of funds. Political crises, such as that of the Berlin Wall in 1961, or the more protracted turbulence caused by the Vietnam War, exposed the fragility of Pugwash to the extent that its continued existence was placed in doubt. Yet, gradually, Pugwash was able to move beyond its tentative beginnings and establish itself as a credible actor within the institutional landscape of nuclear diplomacy, where it was increasingly valued as a site for the informal exchanges of second track diplomacy. Although the nature of its work makes for difficulties in assessing its contributions to the easing of Cold War tensions, the award in 1995 of the Nobel Peace Prize jointly to Pugwash and its long-serving secretary general, Sir Joseph Rotblat, points to it being valued and respected for its work. The Pugwash Conferences continue into the present, tackling nuclear issues but also addressing other societal and political issues associated with contemporary science and technology.

What Sachse has brought to the history of Pugwash draws on her long-standing interest in the relationship between science and politics in Germany before and during the Second World War, and in West Germany afterwards. Focusing on Pugwash in the Federal Republic in the early Cold War, her work casts new light on the ways in which the Max Planck Gesellschaft (MPG) and Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker powerfully shaped its development in this particular national setting. As she emphasizes, Pugwash posed a problem for both the MPG and for senior MPG scientists such as Weizsäcker. Although Pugwash was a movement of elite scientists, the doors of the MPG, whilst never fully closed, were never fully open to it: as Sachse emphasizes, this was always an uneasy relationship. As she argues, the MPG response to Pugwash took the form of a subtle and sustained ambivalence that placed distance between institution and movement. An early indication of a wariness at the MPG towards Pugwash was the polite refusal in 1956 by serving MPG President Otto Hahn of Bertrand Russell's invitation to attend the meeting that took place in Nova Scotia in summer 1957. A year previously, Hahn had also refused Russell's invitation to sign the Russell-Einstein Manifesto. As Sachse has shown, ambivalence within the MPG towards Pugwash took the form of engagement at a distance even as the movement was garnering respect in the realm of nuclear diplomacy and which continued into the 1970s under Hahn's successors Adolf Butenandt and Reimar Lüst. West German participation in Pugwash fell instead to those somewhat removed from the higher echelons of

the MPG, initially Gerd Burkhardt, Werner Kliefoth and Helmut Hönl, and later Klaus Gottstein. All worked under the auspices of the *Vereinigung Deutscher Wissenschaftler* (VDW) which, from its formation in 1959, provided an institutional home for Pugwash in West Germany.

Sachse's analysis manifests a hallmark characteristic of her work as she links patterns of behaviour at the MPG to the wider political context within West Germany and beyond as, under Willy Brandt, the new *Ostpolitik* and the climate of détente repositioned the Federal Republic as an increasingly powerful player on the international political stage. For Sachse, the key figure to understanding Pugwash in West Germany was Weizsäcker, who carefully positioned himself as a pivotal link between the MPG, the VDW and Pugwash. Although personally shying away from involvement with Pugwash, for example, attending just two of the first fifteen Pugwash conferences, West German Pugwashites at the VDW worked under Weizsäcker's watchful eye: this rendered him privy to the activities of all three organizations and made him uniquely placed to shape the dynamics between them. For Sachse, Weizsäcker strategically positioned himself within and between different scientific, political and policy networks – a vantage point that goes some way to explaining his enduring influence within West German science. As she emphasizes, via his preferred approach of the *unsichtbarer Weg* (unseen path), Weizsäcker steadily built political influence that was crucial for advancing his own professional interests, smoothing his switch from physics to philosophy, and his forging of a new career oriented to science policy at the MPI for the Research of Living Conditions in the Modern World at Starnberg, an institute created for him by the MPG. Increasingly fashioning a role as science policy advisor to Willy Brandt and bolstering his reputation in the *Bonner Republik* during the 1960s, Weizsäcker employed Pugwash for his own ends. Here too, Sachse teases out the subtleties of these complex relationships, casting Weizsäcker as a 'master of ambivalence' that allowed him to operate between science and politics in ways that enabled him to garner power within different organizations and amongst different political and scientific constituencies, which served his own professional interests. At the same time, as a mode of operating, ambivalence was also important in helping him personally to move beyond the shadow cast by his wartime involvement in the *Uranverein* and unresolved questions about his entanglement with the National Socialist regime.

For Sachse, the explanation for the ambivalence towards Pugwash within both the MPG and on the part of Weizsäcker rested, in large part, on the unique position of West Germany within Cold War geopolitics. It reflected in particular the position of German science and scientists within this context, and the role of both in the interlinked processes of rebuilding German science and nation building, and the projects of reintegrating both within the international political and

scientific communities. Pugwash could not be rejected outright: to do so would send the wrong signal about the MPG stance on the principle of scientific social responsibility. Rather, within MPG circles, it was handled in a carefully calibrated and pragmatic way that did not jeopardise the institutional integrity and agenda of the MPG, within and beyond Germany, politically or scientifically. At stake for the MPG was its relationship with Bonn, its role as the flagship of West German science and its standing within the international scientific community. For Sachse, it was both the core commitments of Pugwash and its transnational agenda that were so deeply troubling for the MPG and in Bonn. Its opposition to nuclear weapons and the arms race, its commitment to east-west dialogue across the ideological divide, its recognition of the DDR – at odds with the West German Hallstein doctrine – and the suspicions of it in Washington and London were all discomfiting to the Adenauer government. This was at a time when West German society was infused with a particularly virulent anti-communism and as Bonn was seeking to anchor West Germany in the western alliance and pursuing a policy of ‘peace through strength’, which included the siting of NATO nuclear weapons on West German soil.

The latter point resonated strongly in the late 1950s. In April 1957, three months before the first Pugwash meeting in Nova Scotia, eighteen leading West German scientists had issued a public statement highly critical of Konrad Adenauer’s decision to allow NATO atomic weapons on German soil. Known subsequently as the *Göttingen Manifesto*, this is recalled as a landmark moment in the tradition of ‘responsible science’ even as the signatories incurred the wrath of Bonn. The MPG is a publicly funded institution (fifty-fifty from Länder and Bund) and, as Sachse’s earlier work has emphasized, the immediate priority following its creation in 1948 was to maintain its unity and institutional autonomy within the emerging West German state. The experience of the Göttingen 18 scientists underlined the reality that putting scientific social responsibility into practice could mean crossing the line between science and politics, and was not something to be undertaken lightly. Nor can West German engagement with Pugwash be understood in isolation from the complex entanglement between German science, especially the MPG predecessor, the Kaiser Wilhelm Society, and senior scientists, including Weizsäcker, and the country’s recent past, specifically unresolved questions about the role(s) of both in the war effort and their relations with the Nazi power system. Amid the processes of denazification and of rebuilding (West) German science, the principle of scientific social responsibility posed challenges for the MPG as it sought both to position itself in the new Cold War world and reposition itself relative to its predecessor, the KWG. Here there are perhaps connections to *Vergangenheitspolitik* and the *Persilscheinkultur* of the post-war period where, in relation to the science-politics nexus, Sachse has made

incisive contributions to the literature. In short, in its aims, ethos and activities, Pugwash ran against the grain of the dominant political considerations and forces at work in the Federal Republic. More specifically, it forced the MPG and its senior members to confront the unpalatable realities of the many difficulties arising from the country's past, and to consider the role that the MPG saw for itself in its future. As Sachse's work shows, between 1948 and the mid-1970s, the institutional interests of the MPG were protected and advanced by its presidents Hahn, Butenandt, and Lüst, all of whom, for different strategic reasons, adopted a stance of ambivalence towards Pugwash.

Paying attention to ambivalence opens up a way to analyse the power relations and the political calculations, at both the institutional level and for individual scientists, at work in the science-politics relationship. In Sachse's hands, this reveals the subtleties of this finely balanced and always shifting process, which is best understood as reflecting an on-going negotiation of competing interests and demands. Her work both reveals and explains why Pugwash was a complicated question for West German scientists and casts new light on another way in which the country's National Socialist past echoed within post-war science and shaped the struggle for its future. Her work adds new understanding of the tensions, contradictions and paradoxes at work in the project of rebuilding and rehabilitating German science in the early Cold War. At the same time, she reveals the interconnectedness between the political and scientific spheres, and the dynamics pertaining between the individual scientist, national scientific institutions, national and international politics.

In the course of setting a new agenda for studies of Pugwash, Sachse has found a new context in which to follow her enduring interest in the way scientists operate in the realm of the political. As she has said, science is inherently a supra-national activity, and Pugwash affords a case study of transnational dynamics in the sense that it was a site of exchange – of ideas, people, practices and knowledge – across national borders and ideological differences. At the same time, the forthcoming JCWS volume testifies to the way in which the particularities of the nation state are fundamental to understanding this dynamic. The new engagement with Pugwash histories begun by Sachse in Vienna has built the empirical and theoretical foundations on which future scholarship on Pugwash histories can build.