

PARENTS OF THE FIELD PROJECT.

Interviewee: Dr Paul Rogers.

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Venue: Department of Peace Studies, University of Bradford.

Interviewer: Dr .Chris Mitchell.

Chris: It is 26th of May, 2005 and we're here in the Department of Peace Studies at the University of Bradford... interviewing our friend and colleague, Professor Paul Rogers, as part of the Parents of the Field project. Paul, thank you for giving us the time to talk to you - and it's nice to be back in Bradford

Paul Rogers: It is. And it's nice to see you again.

Chris: It is actually a very long time since I was up here. In fact, it was during Adam [Curle's] time.

Paul Rogers: I think it was - yes.

Chris: Going back to the beginnings or the early days of peace and conflict studies, people came into the field from all sorts of varied intellectual backgrounds and experiences... What was yours, and how did you actually get involved in this field?

Paul Rogers: I started off as a biologist. I did my first degree down in Imperial College and then stayed on, did a doctorate in plant pathology, and then lectured there for three years. It was an Overseas Development Ministry appointment, an appointment where they could send me anywhere in the world for 75 percent of the time. And I actually spent two of the three years in Uganda, working on a regional crop improvement program.

But I'd been very involved in development activism when I was a student, with my girlfriend at the time. [We eventually got married.] And I was already very interested in north/south issues, broad global issues, even though professionally I was on the science side.

And while I was in Uganda, I got even more interested in development studies and particularly conflict over resources. I moved back to Britain, and we took a bit of a risk. I took a job at one of the new polytechnics, where they were trying to develop a degree course in human ecology, bringing together political science, economics, and the biological sciences.

Chris: Where was that?

Paul Rogers: That was Huddersfield - just down the road from here. And, in fact, we moved back up north to my wife's home village, and then settled in a house which had been in the family for two or three generations.

And so I worked in Huddersfield for eight years, and I was taken on as a lecturer in biological sciences. But within five or six years, I was basically teaching international politics and development studies. You could get away with that in the 1970s: I don't think you could now.

Chris: No, I don't either! So what – I mean, besides from the opportunity - what attracted you to come into this field?

Paul Rogers: I suppose it's because I'd really been interested in global issues right from when I was in my teens. And I'd actually been working in the plant pathology area, contributing to agricultural development, as a really good way of doing it.

And... I'm still committed to that, in a sense. I still do some lectures on food policy. But I got very interested in environmental issues in the '70s, when it was becoming a major theme. And I got, personally, really interested in conflict over resources at the time of the first oil price hike in '73-'74, and started working on that at that time. But I was very lucky to be in the kind of environment where you could develop down an interdisciplinary track of coming from the pure sciences, really, into the social sciences.

Chris: As you say, it probably wouldn't happen today... But tell me a bit more about how you finished up here – how you finished up at Bradford...

Paul Rogers: Well, essentially, over that time – eight years I spent down in Huddersfield - I was with a couple of colleagues who worked very closely together. Towards the end of the '70s, partly through

bureaucracy, partly through the lack of any opportunity to do graduate work or research supervision, we tended to get rather itchy feet. And I think all three of us left and moved elsewhere.

And I was looking for the possibility of further developments, and I knew about the Peace Studies center. And I had followed its development over the first three or four years. And then, suddenly, a job came up here – a senior lectureship. I was lucky, in a way, that I wasn't quite in peace research then, but the course here was run as what was called a "sandwich course," with students spending a year out in their four years.

And I'd run the sandwich component at Huddersfield. I was one of the very few people around who'd run that kind of course in a related area. I think that's the real reason why they took me on, even though I was a biologist.

Chris: Well, Malcolm [Dando] was telling me a somewhat similar story about his background...

Paul Rogers: We were appointed on the same day, incidentally, yes.

Chris: Yes, he told us about that, and you were both going to the same job...

Paul Rogers: That's right... they gave **both** of us a job, yes. They must've been mad.

Chris: Probably something that, again, couldn't happen today. So there you both were, and you actually came to the Department of Peace Studies. And in those days, you probably remember - there was not exactly a war, but there was some kind of a difference between those who were working in "peace studies" on the one hand and "conflict studies" on the other.

Paul Rogers: Yes.

Chris: I'm always a bit dubious about that distinction but I think it was there. Did you – were you conscious at all about you were coming to the Peace Studies department or...?

Paul Rogers: Yes, I was. And I suppose, even from the start, I was coming to it from watching what you might call the "hard end" of peace research. I was interested in big issues of international conflict.

And Malcolm and I really took the view, very soon after we came here, that we needed to work on East/West arms control issues. There were so few independent places, and this was when the anti-nuclear campaigning of the 1980s was just starting to get going.

So we actually both moved our research fields quite deliberately to look at nuclear-related issues. And Malcolm's interest in bioweapons came very much from that time. So, yes, we were at that sort of "hard end," I suppose, of peace research. But because I've been involved in activism, I was very sympathetic to the idea that "scholarship is our activism," as James O'Connell would put it.

But there were very big tensions in the Department at that time and very big differences in opinion about the kind of Department it should be. It took two or three years for those to settle down – a particular Department who pursued a very strong academic line, but at the same time, I think, maintaining real particular independence.

Chris: But not just in that department. I mean, there were very strong tensions within the field, ..

Paul Rogers: There were very strong tensions, yes.

Chris: ...I don't know whether you were at that famous confrontation between Walter Isard and some of the American peace researchers, and the Scandinavians who attacked them very much over Vietnam at one of the Peace Research Society's conferences...

Paul Rogers: I wasn't involved in that, and I wasn't too aware of that conflict at the time. I suppose coming into Bradford, where the Department – I mean, I was appointed in '79. Bradford University was hit tremendously by very big financial cuts in '81 imposed by the Government on the more technological universities - quite incredibly.

And we actually had a very hard job: to ensure the survival of the Department. So, in a sense, we were really quite inward-looking and trying to concentrate on developing this center, and were far less aware of the very big debate and catastrophes in peace research as a whole.

Chris: Of course, there was a major split in the field at this time. Particularly, I remember the huge [debates] there were between

some of the American peace researchers and some of the Scandinavians over Vietnam and over what American peace research was and wasn't saying about... Vietnam at the time.

Paul Rogers: I think one of the issues here was that we were so involved in trying to ensure the survival of the Department, we weren't particularly engaged in those debates. Bradford University took very serious financial cuts in 1981 – government cuts against the technology universities, extraordinarily. And we actually had a real battle to ensure the Department survived. It was still at a very early stage. So those debates, in many ways, rather passed us by... the extraordinary thing was that in the 1981 cuts, it wasn't actually done by the government. The government ordered the University Grants Committee to cut university spending. And this University Grants Committee, which is the great and the good of the old universities, cut back the newer universities, particularly city-based technology ones... And, I mean, this is 25 percent cut in main funding virtually overnight.

Chris: Yes, I was at the City University at more or less the time. And we'd been a Polytechnic – Northampton Poly -, and then at CAT, and then a university, and we were clobbered as well, in almost exactly the same way. I remember people were furious about Oxford's domination of the UGC and that they hadn't suffered at all. And they dumped it all on the rest of the newer universities..

Paul Rogers: But we survived that period. And, essentially, although the university lost several departments, it became rather leaner. I think we lost some very good people, though. But at least we survived.

Chris: Yes, that's true. They were quite desperate times because, of course, that was only the first of a series of cuts. However... going back to your coming to Bradford, and you and Malcolm starting to work on arms control disarmament, strategic defense, etc., etc., and coming from your end of the intellectual spectrum..., the field has always had this objective of being considered one of the social sciences, of being “scientific” and eventually becoming one of the social science disciplines. Do you think that this was something which Bradford deliberately tried to do - or tried to avoid or tried to mix the two ends of the spectrum from the humanities approaches to the more “scientific”...?

Paul Rogers: I'm not sure there's anything conscious about it. Essentially, we did mix them. We had some very tough times, particularly in the '83-'84 period, when the government targeted this department and

wanted it closed down, but couldn't directly do it because the University Grants Committee did have a degree of independence.

I think partly, the government saw us as a department of "appeasement studies" because the reality was [that] we were providing research and backup, which was used a lot by the anti-nuclear movement. We were pretty scrupulous. We were always doing studies of Soviet as well as American nukes and the rest.

But the very fact that we were publishing this stuff was very annoying to government. The curious thing is that we had quite a good relationship with civil servants in Ministry Defence. I started lecturing at defense staff colleges in '82 and have done it ever since. And they've always had us back. Malcolm's done much of the same.

I think one of the things that's really incurred the enmity of government was the fact that we tended to be independent analysts at the time of the Falklands/Malvinas War. And that was not the dumb thing. I mean, if you were expressing it – expressing any type of independent analysis... there's a little bit of graffiti, I remember, around the campus, which just said, "They used to hang traitors. Now they're given degrees in peace studies."

So you did get this feeling... but that had quite a unifying effect in the department. I think we were already working together pretty much as a team, whether we were historians, economists, social scientists, or coming from the natural sciences. And the key thing was that the effect of this sort of attack on the department had two really very good things. It made us better academics because everything you did – everything you publish - was subject other's scrutiny. You had to be high standard. Second thing was we had attracted some extremely good research students. They were coming – students coming in to do research – people like Malcolm [inaudible], who's now one of the senior professors here 25 years later.

And so, in a curious way, that period of intense opposition from government was partly the making of the department.

Chris:

How interesting that is. I had somewhat similar experience in the period '84-'85, when we were setting up some dialogues between British parliamentarians and the Argentinean parliamentarians. When we started out, almost nobody was willing to take on the

task of going and talking to the Argentinians. This was about a year after the [1982] war finished. Eventually, several people climbed on board, and talking to them was okay. But in those days, you talked to the Argentinians.. and

Paul Rogers: You're a traitor.

Chris: Yes. Could probably talk to them about football, but that was about all

Anyway, you must've made quite a switch from coming here interested in development, and then you and Malcolm deciding to focus on the arms control, nuclear defense issues.. can you think of anybody who very much influenced your thinking around about this time? ...There must've been...

Paul Rogers: Well, certainly people like E.P. Thompson.. was significant – also, some of the people of an earlier generation of physicists, like P.M.S. Blackett. Blackett had been a professor of physics at Imperial when I was a young undergraduate there, and I saw him around the campus two or three times. And he was a real figurehead because he moved away and was very, very much opposed to nuclear weapons. And there were a number of other people like him, so, yes, you had this very strong scientific thread of opposition to nuclear weapons. And I came from a science background as well. So, in other words, there was an affinity there.

In terms of wider influence on global issues, I would certainly say Barbara Ward is the key influence. And I come from a Roman Catholic background. I was involved in the Catholic justice and peace movement at that time in the '60s and '70s. And she was an iconic figure. And I met her once or twice and quite proud that I did. And, certainly, she was somebody who I thought was really worth following and learning from. And she also had this somewhat interdisciplinary tack. She wasn't working on – in any sense, on east/west issues. But her global vision, I thought, was very powerful.

Chris: Were there any Americans at all?

Paul Rogers: Not immediately, no. I think as – this is when I was still moving more into the peace research field. I mean, certainly, some of the people who may not be American but had worked on the

Manhattan Project were significant. I actually – curiously – I actually only went to the States for the first time in '81. So I hadn't been previously... I suppose I got more into the American field towards the mid- and late 1980s.

Chris: Yes. ... I'd been over there... ten years previously and shuttled backwards and forwards. So, oddly enough, I got to know a lot of the American peace researchers during that period. And got very much influenced by many psychologists such as Herb Kelman and Dean Pruitt - but also people like Karl Deutsch...

You mentioned a little earlier the multidisciplinary nature of peace research and conflict research. We said we're constantly borrowing from other people and other disciplines. Were there any major ideas, as you got more embedded into the peace research field, that you picked up on and ran with and thought were useful?

Paul Rogers: In a sense, yes. I mean, I suppose I was picking up particularly on developments in political economy... before I came to Bradford, I had actually worked fairly intensively on the interplay between environmental constraints and development – edited a couple of books on that.

One was on future resources and world development, which was really trying to look at the risk of international conflict and resources, particularly oil. And, in a sense, I was borrowing from development studies, which I'd read up on fairly well, and looking at global security with a much stronger interest in the resource base and the potential for control of major areas...

Chris: Twenty years too soon.

Paul Rogers: Twenty years too soon - and the curious thing is, I go back to that book, which was published, I think, almost 30 years ago. I'm actually quite proud that we were at least trying to work in that field at that time. And, in a sense, that's one of the things that brought me to peace studies. And, in a way, the ten years of the 1980s were a diversion from what I was interested in long term. They were a diversion quite distinct and definite into issues of arms control and disarmament.

I remember James O'Connell once said that, in a sense, you have to work on this because in the tensions of the second stage of the... Cold War, I think he used an Irish phrase: "It's the bond that's closest to your throat that you first cut loose."

The most immediate problem was the nuclear issue. And we basically devoted ten years of our career to that. And, since then, since the early '90s, Malcolm has gone through to biological weapons, which uniquely combines his international security work with his biological training. I've gone back to working on the interplay between socioeconomic divisions and environmental constraints. And, really, that's been the last 15 years.

Chris: Yes. I remember, I think the last thing of yours that I read was that nice book that you wrote in 2000 talking about this all-white development and gated community - in South Africa ?

Paul Rogers: The Heritage Park –

Chris: That's right, yes.

Paul Rogers: Yes, that's the one... I'm proud of – writing that book... But "Losing Control" [Pluto Press 2010]... took me back to something I've been interested in for 30 years. Yes.

Chris: Well...most of the stuff that I've read of yours ... tends to be the arms control and disarmament...

Paul Rogers: I had to become interested [in that]. I got very interested in it, and it's extraordinary stuff. And it's certainly true that... like with Malcolm, having a science background was really very helpful. I'd done chemistry to pass degree level. I wasn't that good on the physics side. But at least when you're dealing with weapons systems... Put it this way: if you're talking to military audiences, then they would give you rather more respect since you have some technical competence. And that was a help.

Chris: Again, going back to my own experience around that time, I remember the very fashionable thing to have read, particularly if you were in a systems science department, like I was, was the [Donald and Donella] Meadows' work. .. everybody was – in my place, anyway - was frantically developing dynamical models and things like that , investigating where things had gone wrong...

Paul Rogers: Yes... again, he was pretty early. The key thing that I was really interested in was the combination of the “limits to growth” idea with the north/south divisions because, essentially, if the southern countries were mainly the locus of the world's resources, most of

the world's physical resources that had been housed in the industrialized world had long been used up.

I mean, Britain had the world's largest copper mine 150 years ago. It's been closed for a hundred years. And, essentially, if you have the resources coming from the south, then this appears to give them actually a latent power. [even] when all the trade systems are against them.

Chris: If they ... get themselves organized, and ...

Paul Rogers: Well, this is why OPEC was so significant. And a lot of the work I did in the mid-'70s was on “producer power” and whether other producers would follow. So, to go back to your original point, yes, it's borrowing to some extent from political economy. But I was learning the whole time.

Chris: The whole field of peace research, conflict research, whatever we're going to call it, seems to become much, much more complex over the years. You have the whole business about... peacekeeping, peacemaking, peace-building, etc., etc., and conflict resolution, conflict management, conflict termination... There's a huge diversity in the field. How's that affected the work here? I mean, how – I'm terribly impressed simply walking around here with the number of people you've got here – number of students, resources, etc.

Paul Rogers: Well, as the Department has grown... we had about eight to ten staff the first ten years or so, including research fellows. We've now got over 30. We've got 120-odd master students from 40 countries. We've got 60 doctoral students. So, because of this wealth of people, while the field has grown more complex and more diversified, we still cover most of the areas because we have people from so many different disciplines who've come in... I think this is one of the reasons why the Department is very healthy at the present time.

We're not so big to have become disjointed or fragmented. And I think the other thing is that most of the staff who were with the Department in the very early days – Tom Woodhouse, Malcolm Dando, Sarah Perrigo, and others, are still here... basically, their careers are being focused on this Department. And we know how easy it is for a peace center to come apart through disagreements..
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we actually work very hard at maintaining a resiliency and a coherence among the staff. I think that's one of the key things that's held the Department together. We're very lucky. We've got some immensely talented younger people coming in as well.

Chris: Have there been any major themes that have held the place together because, as you say, there are other examples of centers that have “galloped off in all directions” and... fallen apart ?

Paul Rogers: I think once it held together through the difficult period [we went through] about 1985, the resilience by then was inbuilt. And, of course, by 1990, the idea of peace studies being something way out, in the margins was really starting to disappear.

I did a certain amount of journalism - a fair bit of radio, and telly work in the 1980s. I used to describe myself as “a defence analyst” at Bradford University because I was more likely to get printed or on-air than calling myself from the Department of Peace Studies.

The crucial thing is from the very early '90s, that was no longer necessary because with the post-Cold War world, with the work that Tom and others were doing on conflict resolution and peacekeeping, people suddenly realized that peace was actually a positive issue. And for the last 15 years, we've never used what's basically a device to get on-air – calling ourselves defense analysts. We're – and people know the department as being – if I can use the term – “a sound department.”.

I don't think we've changed in terms of being critical. I think in any way, we've become more acceptable because of the way the world has moved.

Chris: Well, that's interesting because I've missed all that... I remember, probably in the early 1980s, in my department, I tried to get a course on “conflict analysis and resolution” going. The only way I could get it through the Board of Studies was to call it "conflict management." "Management" they understood. But ... I wouldn't have dared use the word "peace."

Paul Rogers: Well, we were under pressure a number of times in the '80s to change it to the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies. But we resisted, and mainly because... after all, this Department was a

Quaker initiative originally. It was the Society of Friends who wanted the university to do it. We knew the Quakers would be horrified if we had this name change. And also, I think many of the staff were disgusted. We didn't see why we had to change because outside people wanted us to. And we're delighted that we never did – that it remained the Department of Peace Studies. So, yes, in that sense... I think ... we came through, and we... had a very strong degree of unity, which has been maintained.

Chris: That's certainly the impression you make from the other side, [of the Atlantic] anyway. Going back a little bit to the early days, it's nice to think about the '90s producing some successes there. Who do you think, for your point of view, were some of the.. seminal figures in the development of the field of peace studies? Adam [Curle] obviously, but who else?

Paul Rogers: Well, Adam, obviously, Elise and Kenneth Boulding, certainly very significant. Going back to people like [Anatol] Rappaport and going back, although in a sense, it was the work after his death - Lewis Fry Richardson.

Chris: We were trying to decide the other evening ... whether, in fact, he was the person who did the study of casualties by looking at and counting ambulances [on the Western Front]... I know about the arms race work that he did and the statistics of deadly quarrels, both of which, of course, were published posthumously.

Paul Rogers: Yes, that's right.. So I think those people were very significant. And, obviously, some of the European peace researchers – Bert Roling – people like that, I think, were very significant. But, in a sense, we were almost trying to develop a department which used all that thinking, but also systematically brought in other disciplines at the same time. And so quite a lot of the teaching that was going on here was not conventional Political Science or development studies, but pretty close to it, and applying those disciplinary areas to the peace or the conflict problematic.

Chris: Well, I think they did... something similar at George Mason when the Center for Conflict Analysis started back in the '80s. And I think it started up with a director, deputy director, and one lecturer, and everything else was taught by professors who were from other disciplines and other departments...

Paul Rogers: Well, our difference here was that almost from the start, most of the teaching was done by our own staff. And the staff were actually – you have an integrated department of people with very different disciplines. And, basically, people tended to forget what discipline they came from, and worked together in a pretty cooperative way. Other staff from other departments were sympathetic and taught in the department. And one of our great allies, actually, was the current university librarian, John Horton, who was involved, really from the start – right at the start of the Department. John is also a very well recognized expert on Yugoslavia – on the Balkans. But he's long been a very consistent and hugely welcome supporter to the department. We tend to forget about the role he's played, but it's been significant. And having the Commonweal Collection – his private collection – an incredible collection of peace books in the University has been a huge asset from the start. That was a 12,000-book collection. Certainly, on the question of other Europeans...obviously, in my sort of area on the arms control and disarmament side, I would actually point to the work of SIPRI, because I think SIPRI actually was very significant in the 1980s as being an international center for work on arms and disarmament. Under other successive directors, I think it... had an important role. If anything, it was a role which tended to complement, or perhaps even counter, the strategic studies centers presenting rather different views.

Chris: Yes, it was Frank Barnaby who was the first Director [?].

Paul Rogers: Frank, yes, who I still work with now. And, I mean, he's long since retired, but he's security consultant to a very interesting little nongovernment organization in the Oxford Research Group. But I worked for him as well on about a fifth of my time. And so he is still active, and people both before and after him as well – Frank Blackaby was after him. And Frank was very much involved in the Alternative Defense Commission in Britain.

On the business of disciplines, if you look at the Department of that time, we talked about that, the late 1980s. Obviously, there would've been Malcolm and myself; James O'Connell, who would've been a mixed resource of philosophy and government; Tom Woodhouse, essentially a social historian; Sarah Perrigo, really primarily a political scientist; Tom Gallagher as well; Peter Van Den Dungen, economist by original training, moving into international relations.

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- Chris: Nobody from political economy ?
- Paul Rogers: Originally, yes... A little bit later ... development economist who had done his Ph.D. here. Shaun Gregory, who joined the department as a lecturer rather later on, but had been a research fellow, now the Head of the Department, is actually also a biologist by original training. And then Owen Green, joining us from a physics background. So a mixture of the social sciences and the sciences. Then later on, in the '90s, Donna Pankhurst from anthropology, Jenny Pearce from political science, many others from across the social sciences.
- Chris: Certainly, an interesting mix... I don't think we at George Mason can actually boast the same inclusion of the hard sciences I mean, I think the "hardest" we get is Dan Druckman, who's been a quantitative psychologist. But we have lawyers and political scientists and international relations specialists. But you certainly seem to have gone broader than us.
- Paul Rogers: We're actually a bit weak on international law because Oliver Ramsbotham, who was the head of department immediately after me, was basically a philosophy graduate who'd also done a math degree. So, again, an eclectic group, I would have to say.
- Chris: Yes, indeed. You've painted this picture of the Department as being – and I don't mean this in a negative sense – rather inward-looking over the years from a purely defensive point of view. But you must've sought to break out of that at some particular point and joined the field.
- You, obviously pioneered it with the arms control work... But how did you, as a department, become aware of, and linked in to other places, other institutions and other people? And did that occur gradually, or ...
- Paul Rogers: I think it occurred gradually. I point to two developments towards the end of the '80s, early '90s. One, without question, was Tom Woodhouse and his colleagues establishing the Centre for Conflict Resolution... well ahead of its time as much as most European centers were concerned. This was the, what, late '80s. And that broadens out a lot and borders into the whole conflict resolution field in a rather more formal way.
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The other thing was that we actually began to be under rather less pressure internally. So we literally had more time to be active in traveling, to be involved going to International Peace Research Association conferences, which we hadn't really done before. And the Department was very much concerned with building itself up, getting more students in – students coming from all over the place.

So, by the end of the '80s, the department had branched out a great deal. We also got a curious and unexpected boost in terms of our status in Britain by the 1991 Gulf War. Rather like the 1982 Falklands/Malvinas War, staff here were – several of us were very active in doing analysis and doing media work.

Now, the problem for us was that we tended to take a very critical view of the very heavy use of military force, and did analyses which suggested it wasn't going quite as expected. Now, that war ended apparently very quickly, and so some of us who'd been saying this could go on for a long time were immediately castigated in the national media. But within two or three months, with the disasters in the Kurdish area, with the Shiites ... when the conventional media was saying Saddam Hussein won't last six weeks, when by the middle of 1991 it was proving to be a very different situation, again, there tended to be a kind of feeling that that weird crowd at Bradford,... maybe there was something in what they were saying.

After that, I think we got a certain amount of respect, in a sense, for being rather independent. Now, that is not the same as ... “breaking out”, but it gave the Department a boost, and it brought in a lot more students who were interested in what we were doing.

Chris: Certainly, just looking around at the students who are here at the moment, you've got a very diverse lot, don't you ?

Paul Rogers: Quite incredible. I mean, we do get some ex-military; we get some who want to go into the military. We get well-known peace activists. I mean, probably the two leading peace activists in Britain at present would be Lindis Percy, who is involved with the Campaign for the Accountability of American Bases, and who's in her late 50s; Angie Zelter, who has been involved with Trident Plowshares. Both of them are former students from the Department.

And we still keep links, some of us... myself in particular, regularly have to give character witnesses for former students in court cases where they've been invading bases. And most interestingly, we are often involved when the activists are trying to get the issue of the ethics of nuclear use into open court. And so you end up as an expert witness, trying to explain in open court what British nuclear targeting policy is now. The fact we still have a first-use policy and that... can be quite tough, but it certainly is interesting work for an academic.

Chris: Well... there's always in the field as a whole... this... tension – I guess it's a tension - between “academia”, academic respectability, and traditional research, and on the other hand, practice, involvement, activism, etc... I'm not sure the field has balanced it very well. But you certainly seem to have confronted that and dealt with it rather effectively.

Paul Rogers: Yes. I think what we did – I mean, I was actually on the National Council of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament for one year, in 1980. And I thought, "What on Earth am I doing on this? There are lots of very good, competent activists. I should be using my time to do background research." And James [O'Connell] uses this phrase, "Scholarship is our activism." And, in a sense, if you look across this Department, the staff are incredibly busy, much busier than the average academic.

Of course, many of them are involved in all kinds of nongovernment organizations, but doing policy work for them, not on the streets campaigning, but doing the background work, and doing it alongside conventional academic research, which is why they tend to be under a certain degree of strain.

We took a decision very early on that the Department as a Department would never, ever take a stand on any issue because that was not our job. The staff and students are completely free to take their own positions, but not try to represent the Department. And we are – we're basically an academic department - we hope, - doing critical independent work.

Chris: We've taken a somewhat similar decision, that the Institute does not take a position on anything at all. And sometime... some of my colleagues get very annoyed with it, and the students as well. They.. say, "You must have a position on what's going on in Colombia," And we said, "No, I can take a position. My

colleagues can take a position, and you can take a position if you want. But you don't do it on behalf of the Institute." And we have a colleague... Nadim Rouhanna who's...Palestinian who was born in Israel, who says that academic freedom implies that... the Institute cannot take a position because taking a position on behalf of the [entire] Institute might commit him to something he doesn't want to take a position on. So, yes....we've had this debate also...

Paul Rogers: That's our view. And, in fact... the Department almost came apart in the very early 1980s because of one or two staff who determined that you should take positions on particular issues. And we basically agreed, in some pretty fractured discussions, that we would take the line we would not do so, that... people would have the individual freedom from the Department. It was a waste of time to spend all your time to try and get the Department to take a line on something. It didn't mean very much in the final analysis.

Chris: Going back to something that we were talking about a little earlier, - about connections to the rest of the world - in my memory... the difficulty of doing this was quite simply a financial one...At City [University], we wanted to become part of the... broader systems movement at the time. And our travel budget was somewhere like 1,000 pounds [to divide] between 15 of us. - and that really] didn't give you much of an opportunity to go anywhere.

But you talked about eventually getting into the [academic mainstream]. Was there anything else – Malcolm talked about BISA...]?

Paul Rogers: Yes. BISA, British International Studies Association – we started to go to BISA conferences about 15 years ago to present papers. The wider International Relations community in Britain is basically pretty conservative, pretty ivory-towerish, and not policy-orientated. There are exceptions. There are many very good exceptions, who... tend to be rather isolated. They're usually individuals, and one of the nicest things that was ever said to me was by one such individual about five years ago, who said that for people like him, peace studies was a beacon in the 1980s because we withstood pressures to close us down. And we showed you how the department, which was taking a much more policy-orientated view, [survived].

And things have changed a little bit in Britain, but not very much. There are some other departments, some of the more conventional IR departments, that do more policy work. But it's essentially – it's

not particularly strong. I think we are rather different. But we saw BISA as... a very important part of the national scene in Britain.

And Owen Green, I think, was on the BISA Exec for a while, and I spent the last four years as vice chair and chair. And I suppose, really, when I was asked if I would take that on - apart from this, in a sense, the honor of doing it - it seemed to make sense to do because it helped to establish that peace studies was part of this wider community. And I think we've become more active in it. And perhaps we should've done it earlier. But it was a question of time constraints. We had BISA here in the year 2000. It was their 25th anniversary conference. It was the millennium conference. That was hard work, but it was very worthwhile doing it, actually.

Chris: We tend to send a lot of our students and make presentations at the ISA for the peace studies section there. But it tends to be drowned out by that enormous circus that is ISA... you must've been there ?

Paul Rogers: I've been to ISA a few times. I actually find ISA quite useful because you get many of these... gatherings of the intelligence and ex-intelligence community. You get the military there. I have to admit, I tend to go to those sessions rather than peace studies sessions because you're finding out much more about how things are really working.

Chris: One of the things that we've used – and I don't know whether you or anybody else has ever been involved in it – is the whole series of conferences in the '80s and the '90s of the National Conference on Peace and Conflict Research, NCPCR. But that, together with a lot of the networks that were established in the States in the '80s and '90s, tend to be in very bad [financial trouble]. There isn't very much that's lively at the moment in the States, I'm afraid.

Paul Rogers: No, I came over to one or two of the Peace Studies Association meetings of members. There was one in Boston and one or two others. But, again... as you say, it's pretty low at present.

One of the things that's happened in Britain within BISA is that a group called NASPIR, the Network of Activists, Scholars, and Politics in International Relations – bit of a handful – bit of a mouthful, but NASPIR for short. This has been developed by a couple of people at Bristol University, Eric Herring in particular. And they just get together people who actually are both scholars

and interested in activism. Now, NASPIR only started two years ago. It's already got a membership of over 400.

Chris: Really?

Paul Rogers: And BISA – the total BISA membership is only 1,000. And NASPIR's actually serving a purpose of bringing together people who otherwise might be a little bit isolated in their own departments. And that is really filling a gap, and a really important one.

Chris: Looking back over the last – I guess almost 30 years, really, 40 years in my case – do you think that the field of peace and conflict studies as a whole...my memory is it started out with all sorts of hopes and dreams and ambitions... what do you think about – has it actually fallen short of some of the things that it was trying to do when you entered it, or do you think we've done pretty well... what sorts of original ideas and ambitions haven't we managed to develop successfully?

Paul Rogers: I think in many areas, it does have a lot to be quite proud of. I think in the peace research area, some of the other developments got a better look in early on, like gender studies. I think trying to combine an appreciation of socioeconomic difference and environmental constraints has been a threat over really very many years, which we haven't seen so much in other disciplinary areas.

At the same time, peace research has been almost inevitably reactive to major events. So you had all the controversies in the 1970s over Vietnam. You had the – in my view, fully necessary - response to the dangers of the Cold War in the 1980s. I think if anything, although many departments and units were established in response to the dangers of the 1980s, and they since have receded, what we see very strongly is an intense interest in peace and conflict issues in the global South – quite extraordinary.

We get students from a huge range of countries. If you want to look at where much more work is being done on conflict resolution, on conflict management, you have to look to Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, Southeast Asia. And there's an awful lot happening there.

I think the redevelopment - after 20 years of being defunct - of the UN University of Peace in Costa Rica is a very interesting sign. I

was there just last week, and they now have the best part of 100 graduate students. And they're developing a whole series of programs that can be fed to upper universities that may not have their own facilities.

The interest is intense on global issues, and that is where I think maybe peace studies may be coming into its own now, in a way which we hadn't predicted.

And I think ever since 9/11 and the War on Terror, you're starting to get very good groups, both academic and NGOs, who are saying, "We've got to take an alternative view." It's manifestly evident that the "War" on Terror has been counterproductive. It's not working as intended. It is failing. It may be very difficult to get an alternative view put forward in the current political climate, but it's going to have to be done. And I think this is an area of huge potential and promise now.

Chris: You've anticipated my next question, which was, so where do we go from here? It sounds to me as though your idea is that a lot of the activism is going to shift southwards...

Paul Rogers: A lot of the interest, the training the education – but... I've got to be careful. I very quickly get into preaching mode on this. But, essentially, I think the next 20, 30 years are going to be dominated by two big issues: socioeconomic divisions. One and a quarter billion people are doing very well. Most of the rest aren't. The division is widening steadily, and it's not generally recognized. The majority of those doing less well are far better educated and knowledgeable about their own modernization. That is a recipe for radical social movements. And in one small way, Al Qaeda may be another symptom of that.

That's one thing. The second thing, inevitably, is environmental constraints – location of almost, what, two thirds of all the world's oil in one narrow area in the Persian Gulf, but even more important, climate change.

My wife and I have a smallholding in the East Pennines, in the north of England, I planted a vineyard five years ago. It's doing quite well. Couldn't have done that 25 years ago.

Chris: No, I know it. .. whenever we go and see my aunt, who lives in Oldham [in Lancashire] and the weather is fine, I keep telling Lois

that, "This isn't the [Oldham] I remember when I was a kid." It was gray and grim, and it was raining like hell, and it was usually very cold.

Paul Rogers: That's right. Things are changing. Climate change is going to have a much bigger effect on the tropics. There's going to be a progressive drying out if we don't stop it. And that's going to be massive. And it seems to me that integrating these ideas of the dangers of new conflicts coming from the margins in a constrained world is going to be an immense task. And I think peace research and the attitude of peace studies are very well-equipped. So that's 20, 30 years ahead. I hope I'm still around to see some of it.

But in the immediate future, what we have is a very early response to the danger, which I call a "liddite" response. "Liddism" is keeping the lid on things – not addressing the underlying problems. And the War on Terror is a classic example of that, and it's going very badly wrong.

Chris: Well, that's – even beginning to penetrate through in the United States, though not to some of the outer reaches of the Washington establishment.

Paul Rogers: No, the neocons still see the new American century going full tilt

Chris: You know, the other meaning of "liddite" ?.

Paul Rogers: What's that?

Chris: It was the kind of explosive that they put in shells in the First World War.

Paul Rogers: Okay. I'll stick to liddism rather than liddite, then.

Chris: What would you like to see as future lines of development for this place in the next ten years?

Paul Rogers: Well, I think this place will probably grow still a little. I don't think we want to grow very much bigger. It's a big department. We have nearly 400 students, including the undergraduates... we have, what, nearly 200 postgraduate students and about 170, 180 undergraduate students. So it's quite a big department by British standards. We've been phenomenally successful in bringing research money in, and our new centers and participation studies,

the Sub-Saharan African Conflict Centre, with a very big endowment. And I think the department will grow, not grow hugely. I just hope it will continue to do what it's [been] doing better and more effectively.

Chris: And are there any new "strands" that you'd like to see come in here?

Paul Rogers: Not so much – not that haven't already been developed in the last two or three years. There's been a real flowering of new activities. Jenny Pearce's and her colleagues – their work in Latin America and on... participation I think is crucial.

We've filled one gap. We were never very good at relating to our local community. And given that Bradford is an intensely multicultural city, that's been transformed in the last five years. And people in the department are thoroughly involved in developments in the city, which I think is very good.

Chris: How interesting because I think... back to the time when people were thinking about setting up a peace department, one of the reasons... they thought about Bradford was because Adam[Curle] said, "Well, we will do...peace, but it is peace for Bradford as well." And that never seemed to take off.

Paul Rogers: No. That's taken off, and we've gone back to that. We should've done it years ago. We've gone back to it with many other people in the University, in the city and the mosques and churches. It started five years ago with what we call the Programme for the Peaceful City. And the University has been one partner in that. So that's one area which was a huge gap. We were not doing well, but and I think the police are involved now.

Chris: You mentioned several times... James O'Connell's idea about... "our scholarship is our activism." And there's always the question of... melding scholarship with what you do. And how successful do you think you've been in researching particular things and then getting your message out to people at part of your activism?

Paul Rogers: If you take it first to the Department, then the wider level, I think the department has been pretty good by the standards of most university departments, in fact, very strong. We could've done very much more.

One of the threats that's developed has been a number of us have done a lot of radio and television work. In total, the staff here probably do about 300 interviews a year. So it's at a very heavy level. And that gets the message wider.

In all kinds of ways, I think we and our current and former students back up nongovernment organizations. Many NGOs actually recruit from among our student pool. So I think it's been pretty good but, of course, could be hugely better compared with the need for this kind of work.

Internationally, I would cite some of the major peace research institutes – in Oslo, in Stockholm, in particular – that had a very strong effect in almost helping activists with sources of information, the kind of backup which I think they absolutely needed, also from the United States as well.

If you look at the way the Freeze Movement was supported by some of the independent defense think tanks – Center for Defense Information, Randy Forsberg's group in Boston, and others - you had people who were either in universities or in big NGOs who were providing high-grade alternative analysis.

Yes, it could be much better, but I think that... they have quite a lot to think well of themselves for, even though much more could be done. A more recent example, I think, would be Michael Clare's work on oil geopolitics... he is doing very interesting work and it – is absolutely right for the time because this is going to be a very big issue over the next five to ten years.

Chris:

Just going back to one other thing, Paul, if I may, and that's this whole idea of the balance between peace and conflict – peace studies, conflict studies, research, practice. You gave us some very interesting answers as far as the Department was concerned.

But if we were to broaden that out and say, "Look at the overall field - not just here but in Europe and North America," how well do you think those two things have been balanced and melded together and not come into conflict... Years ago, there was this big debate in the field about; "Are you a peace researcher, are you a conflict researcher - and does it matter?" What do you think about those issues as far as a wider perspective is concerned?

Paul Rogers: My immediate reaction is it's not something which is with me night and day. I don't think it matters very much. You see different strengths and weaknesses across the peace studies community in Europe and the United States.

I think there is a tendency – and this may be a very harsh criticism – in any developing interdisciplinary area for people to get away with relatively low-quality work because they [feel] – we're involved in this, this is new, these are new things. And they let their academic competencies maybe slip up a bit. I think there's been a certain amount of that in the peace studies area. And I think if the one thing we've learned the hard way is that you have to be very strong academic. This is why, academically, I would say the extent to which the Department came under pressure in the early 1980s was hugely significant in its development because at that stage we had to be very competent academics. And where you have peace studies units where people are perhaps not under that pressure, I think there could be slippage. I wouldn't put it stronger than that.

Chris: One of the things that Malcolm [Dando] was talking about when we were [interviewing] him the other day was – and we asked him this question about the disappointments and things that he thought that the field had not done. He said something which chimed with me. That his big disappointment was that there hadn't been another two or three other departments like Bradford established in the UK and put on a firm foundation so that you didn't seem to be “the only guy in town.”

And I don't know... how you feel about that, but I feel it personally because of the fact that the University College London had this program at C.A.C and got rid of it – closed it down.

Paul Rogers: I'd agree with Malcolm... there have been persistent efforts to get some sort of peace studies department established at Oxford, and I think it failed on two major occasions. There's too much resistance to it. I think we would – that peace studies in Britain would've been in a much stronger position if there were three or four centers of our size.

And there've been several attempts, and the Lancaster Centre [The Richardson Institute] is small but very good. But we have a couple of small centers in Northern Ireland as well. But there haven't been the same departments established. And there've been several

recent attempts, which have not really developed in any major way. I think that is a loss. We, I'm afraid, may be partly responsible for it, because Bradford has been very much a growing department. It's been something of a national focus.

Chris: It's sucked in people ?

Paul Rogers: It has rather, yes.

Chris: Well, I'm personally associated with the Richardson Institute and it keeps promising so much, but then something seems to keep it small or keep it struggling...

Paul Rogers: I think one of the things that happened with Bradford is, you got half a dozen very determined people coming together at the end of the '70s, early '80s, who basically saw this as where they were going to stay for a long time, and they were going to do it. And then other people joined them. We had some incredibly good students. And I think it's been very much a cooperative effort. The one thing that I worry a little bit about this place is people outside may see three or four well-known people at Bradford. What they don't see is a much wider range of extremely high-quality staff. And it's a very collective thing here.

Chris: [Paul, lastly]...if you'd been on this side of the camera, what would've been the question you asked that we didn't?

Paul Rogers: Wow. Oh, gosh. I. don't have an immediate answer to that, I must admit.

[End of Audio]

Duration: 72 minutes