

BOUNDARY PEACE INITIATIVE

The Canadian Peace Congress Conference a Success

First I thank everyone who donated funds, both the organizations and the individuals, so that I could attend on your behalf. I haven't yet written a full report of the two full days of meetings. This is a quick look into a very successful weekend that saw a good turnout and great speakers.

Opening the weekend at the Steelworkers Hall was Joan Phillip of the Penticton Indian Band. Sadly the Grand Chief was unable to come but Joan did B.C. and the Indigenous people proud. She delivered a land acknowledgement and then said that we all need to work together for Peace, Justice and Environmental sustainability. We need to stop the use of fossil fuels that are destroying our planet, she stated to loud applause.

The keynote address was delivered by Acting President Miguel Figueroa. He highlighted the need to identify the issues and then come up with a plan of action that involves not only the CPCCon but with whom we have common ground, even if only on one issue. Working together is what will bring change, he stated. We need to educate and support each other as we struggle non-violently to dismantle imperialism that uses capitalism to promote war and oppression.

Bringing greetings from the World Peace Council and the Coalition Against Foreign Military Bases was Bahman Azad. This well spoken man calmly urged us to diligently work with International activists to close all military bases, which continue to promote and intensify Imperialism and oppress people as they drain the economy and destroy the environment. The U.S.A. has 1000 foreign bases so the concentration of the global community is on the U.S.A. but we must not forget that other countries, Canada included, play a role in this domination that enforces the NATO regime.

An appeal for Unity was presented but will be voted on at Sunday's Convention. (It will be published in a future newsletter).

In honour a founding members of the CPCCon, John Hanley Morgan, who died earlier this year, a plaque was presented to his wife. She spoke of his dedication and work for a World of Peace and Justice and cited a phrase he often used, "Peace Is Not Won but Needs to Be Earned" and although we worked hard there is still much to do for the world has not changed much so as peace activists we cannot sit back and do nothing.

The next speaker was Christopher Black, a criminal lawyer who works to bring forward the violations of

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International Law by Canada and the USA through Foreign Policies that heighten tensions and can lead to more wars including nuclear war. He said that since the 1950s all wars are illegal because they circumvent International Law set forth in the 1890s, in Nuremburg and the UN Charter. The Non-Aligned Movement has been negated by the Responsibility to Protect Doctrine under the guise of Humanitarian Intervention. We need to identify the propaganda and illegality perpetrated by the USA, Canada and others through NATO. Sanctions are in fact economic warfare when not approved by the UN Security Council. Canada is not exempt from responsibility for the blood being spilled or the lives ruined so we must work to withdraw from NATO, Ballistic Missile Defence, and other imperialistic alliances. We must become more active and stop paying the taxes that fund U.S.A. wars and imperialism, he said.

As questions and comments arose a sense of despair emerged--many feel it's impossible to stop the spread of war, aggression and oppression. I took the opportunity to say that my people the Doukhobors are pacifists and burned our weapons in 1895. We continually worked for a world of peace and justice and are still here, still working for and living peace so don't give up--you are not alone, we are all in this together. The consensus reached at this juncture was that all forms of protest and activity must be employed from on-line and hard copy petitions, hand outs, leaflets, rallies, conferences, discussions, etc. All actions play a role to inform, educate, inspire and enlighten and build a movement to tip the scales to a peaceful world.

After a lunch prepared by the Toronto Peace Group, which was not free, we reconvened. I was first up to bring greetings from the BCSIPC, the Doukhobor Community and read the letter of support from the City of Grand Forks Mayor Brian Taylor. I shared that Grand Forks was one of the first to declare the city a Nuclear Free Zone, send a protest to the Iraq war to Chrétien, one of the first Canadian cities to become a member of the Mayors for Peace and has continually participated in actions for Peace and Justice.

Eva Bartlett was the first speaker. Eva is a young journalist with Russia Today TV. She spoke boldly and clearly about the situation as she explored in Syria and Gaza. Suffice it to say that her view counters much of Corporate Media accounts and is controversial to say the least.

Following this passionate speech was a lady with whom I have worked for many years. Tamara Lorincz is on the Executive of the Canadian Voice of Women for Peace and a well respected researcher who works to connect the dots between the rising militarism and environmental catastrophe. Every time a CF18 flies it uses 400,000 pounds of fuel, emitting dangerous levels of toxins, she said. She shared charts that track the number of sorties flown and how much fuel is used--past and the present. The military is exempt from emission targets. Canada is the 14th highest military spender with NATO the 6th.

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Canada, as of March 2018, has budgeted for \$32 Billion for the military and the budget is to be raised every year for the foreseeable future. Schools, at all levels, continue to be militarized in many forms. Recruiters are now targeting women, minorities and First Nations. It is not possible to bring peace through military action, she stated, but we must be aware that any action we take must be non-violent. Labour must stop participating in arms manufacturing that Canada sells to the likes of Saudi Arabia. Tamara speaks her truth and takes a risk of not having a job. I ask how many of us are willing to take that kind of risk?

Adrien Welsh, from Montreal shared his thoughts. He speaks French and English and Russian. He said that the Responsibility to Protect Doctrine has helped undermined the Peace Movement and fuelled the drive for more military spending and wars. Sadly, it is the youth who are not well represented in the peace movement but they are the first in line to be destroyed by war. We collectively need to work hard to educate youth that only the elite profit from war. We cannot afford another World War and another lost generation as is being spoken of on the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I. We must be active participants to bring forward that Peace is the Answer not war, oppression, and imperialism. Through questions and comments it was evident that Mutually Assured Destruction does not prevent war. The absence of war is not true peace. Peace will exist when we learn to respect and honour each other and combine our energies to work for non-violent solutions. We also need to work for a world where there are no superpowers; one where all have equal status. We must ensure Canada joins the majority and signs the Treaty to Ban Nuclear Weapons.

After a short coffee break an engaging discussion brought out some campaigns that the CPCCon needs to address. We need to dispel the disenchantment and discouragement of the political system where people feel disempowered; therefore Proportional Representation can help build voter confidence and participation. To break the apathy we need to connect the dots of rising military spending and war mongering being the cause of much of the lack of employment, to the rise in poverty, to destructive climate change, etc. It was recommended we be involved with a broader range of peace groups as well as the 2020 World Without War conference in Ottawa. The reform of the UN needs to become more democratic rather than Security Council’s veto power overshadowing the General Assembly. Canadian mining companies need to be held accountable for the destruction they bring to developing nations. There are areas of the world, such as Western Sahara, in major ongoing conflicts that are ignored but the killing continues and leads to people fleeing to safety, so we need to bring this out into the open as well. With the 2019 Federal Election it is vital we work to bring all these issues forward and motivate youth to vote and get involved in the peace movement. We ended this session on the positive note that we must remain optimistic in order to encourage and motivate others.

Sunday morning began at the Greek Hall. I facilitated the morning session therefore my notes are minimal. Miguel shared a report from the convention committee on what is needed by the incoming executive. Nominations were opened with the reminder to keep in mind geographical and gender balance. We do need to limit the number of Directors. As we grow it will become unmanageable for every group to have a seat so we encourage regional representation, where each region will need to decide who they will put forward to run as Director

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But at convention each group has a voice through their delegates.

Miguel proceeded to deliver a report from the Outgoing executive highlighting what was accomplished and noted those items needing to be completed, upgraded and started. Some suggestions are being pro-active, raising funds to sustain our work and provide a stipend for our President and Executive, the need to temper our approach to appeal to a broader public without compromising our position, using all forms of media to bring forward our message, engaging with all levels of government, etc.

Joan commented that there are 203 Bands that belong to the B.C. Union of Indian Chiefs. We prefer to be referred to as bands rather than *the 1st Nations*. Keeping the work and communication straight forward will go a long way to success. But remember, the Indigenous people have many dire issues to deal with such as a rising death rate from drug abuse and suicide, extreme poverty, lack of jobs; so if our response is slow, please remember we have lives in the balance to deal with immediately so some things are put to the side. But we do need peace, justice and environmental sustainability and we do need to work collectively to get there.

Miguel provided a financial report. Suffice it to say that the CPCCon is not in debt but is in desperate need of funds but membership dues alone will not sustain us. This conference will pay for itself but we are not able to offer a travel subsidy. A young lady offered to help work on an online initiative to raise funds.

Now began the discussion on the amendments to the Constitution. Larry Waslen explained that the changes are not major. He went through each proposal of the Executive. All amendments were adopted.

The two Resolutions that the BCSIPC provided were discussed, amended to make them more explicit and adopted: one on closing all Foreign Military Bases and one to Divert Military Spending to Social/Human Needs.

After lunch Kirin Fatima and Miguel Figueroa reported on their trips to International conferences. Kirin attended a conference in China that was paid for by the organizers. It was a great learning experience and will help build international engagement for peace, she said. Miguel went to Venezuela and Syria as well as to the Tri-Lateral meeting in the Dominican Republic. Miguel has consented to serve as the coordinator on the Tri-Lateral Committee that is a member of the World Peace Council.

Now we got into future plans with the presentation and discussion of the Peace Program and Plan of Action. The documents presented were adopted as amended. It was agreed that the plan is ambitious and understanding is called for if some issues take a bit longer to address by the Incoming Executive. The main points are that we must strive to connect the dots between imperialism, military spending and war with the economic and social issues plaguing our nation and the world—poverty, homelessness, climate change.....The Unity Appeal was also adopted as amended



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The Freedom Flotilla Coalition will sail until Palestine is free

Rivas, Vaciamadrid, Spain, November 11, 2018.

The Freedom Flotilla Coalition (FFC) remains deeply concerned about the dire humanitarian crisis in Gaza, the brutal killings of over 200 Palestinians and serious injuries of over 16,000 Palestinians by the Israeli Occupation Forces during the Great March of Return, and the ongoing illegal blockade of Gaza. The United Nations has declared that Gaza is growing dangerously close to being totally uninhabitable. We demand the full freedom of movement for all Palestinians, full access to maritime resources for Palestinians and unconditional and permanent lifting of the blockade of Gaza. The Freedom Flotilla Coalition will sail until Palestine is free.

The Coalition, with participants from 10 campaigns, met in Rivas, Spain, November 9-11, 2018 to begin planning its next mission to break the illegal blockade of Gaza. This was the first face-to-face meeting of the Coalition since our Just Future for Palestine mission of May-August 2018. We continue to urge supporters to demand that Israel release the 114 boxes of medical supplies to our partner organization in Gaza.

Participating in the meeting were representatives from Rumbo a Gaza (Spain), Ship to Gaza Norway, Ship to Gaza Sweden, US Boat to Gaza, Canadian Boat to Gaza, IHH (Turkey), International Committee for Breaking the Siege of Gaza, Kia Ora Gaza (New Zealand / Aotearoa), MyCARE (Malaysia), as well as from South Africa, and a delegation from Portugal.

The FFC has adopted the following strategic plan focussing on children and youth in Gaza:

1. The Freedom Flotilla Coalition will sail again to break the illegal blockade of Gaza, for which the planning has already begun.
2. The FFC will hold an International Week of activities for Gaza in October 2019.
3. FFC supporters will be invited to participate in many regional educational and awareness raising activities to get on board the Flotilla, beginning very soon.

You can donate online (canadaboatgaza.org/donate) or by postal mail. Make out cheque or money order to Turtle Island Humanitarian Aid and mail it to:

Canadian Boat to Gaza
PO Box 1950, London Stn. B
London, Ontario N6A 5J4
CANADA

(Note: like many of our sister organizations, we would prefer to move away from PayPal for online donations. At this point, we are pleased to accept e-Interac transfers from Canadian bank accounts, and we hope to announce other electronic payment methods soon. Please e-mail us if you have questions about this).

Twitter: @CanadaBoatGaza @GazaFFlotilla
www.facebook.com/CanadaBoatGaza
www.facebook.com/BateauCanadienGaza
www.facebook.com/FreedomFlotillaCoalition

Together, we can help end the blockade!

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Nominations for the Executive were now closed and the counting process begun. In the meantime we listed Resolutions the new Executive will work on. (I will share those as they come forward).

There was no rival for President so Miguel takes that seat. The first Director elected unanimously was Joan Phillip as representative of the Indigenous People but too qualify, as the current Constitution states, she must be a member of an existing CPCon member; therefore the BCSIPC is her member organization for now. An actual election was needed to fill the other 9 seats. After each candidate spoke to why they think they should be elected the votes counted.

Here is the new Executive of the Canadian Peace Congress for a term of 3 years: Kirin, Doug, Ed, Larry, Christopher, Oscar, Joan, Nysha, Laura, and Malena with Miguel as President.

It was an interesting and exciting conference. I look forward to working with the new Executive and as the representative of the BC Southern Interior Peace Coalition.



In Universal Kinship and Loving Peace,
Laura Savinkoff

If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other."

Mother Teresa

I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality... I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Our Mission

The Boundary Peace Initiative represents people of diverse backgrounds officially brought together in 2002 because of our mutual concern for the rise in world conflict. Our mandate is to participate in multilateral non-violent conflict resolution in support of global human rights, ecological and environmental sustainability and international law through education, sharing of information, dialogue and activism locally and globally. We encourage and seek your participation in our mutual work for true peace based on social justice, equality, accountability, integrity, honour, respect, etc in order to build a better world today and future generations.

BPI web site: www.boundarypeaceinitiative.org

BPI meetings are suspended until at least 3 people commit to meet monthly. To commit call (250) 444-0524 or (250) 442-0434 or email L4peace@telus.net.

What's Up?

December 10th is the 70th Anniversary of the signing of the UN Declaration of Human Rights. Take a time to honour the right to live in peace and harmony, the right to food, shelter and good health care, the right to be safe and secure wherever you may live. This right is for all humanity—our global family.

The BPI shares heartfelt wishes for a safe and joyful Christmas season for all our family, friends and supporters. We look forward to working with you in the New Year to build a community, locally and globally, where living with dignity, respect and integrity, love and honour, justice and equality guide us every forward to a world where non-violent peaceful living is the norm not the exception. May you have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



Photo Courtesy of Iskra Magazine.

The Peace Award from the BCSIPC presented to Harold Funk, 92 Years old, for a lifetime of actively working for Peace on Nov. 16th. In photo: standing Laura Savinkoff and JJ Verigin.; seated Harold Funk. A group of family and friends gathered to honour and reminisce with our valuable elder who has and does support the work of the BCSIPC, the BPI and the Canadian Peace Congress.

The BPI welcomes your input. Articles are the author's responsibility and may not be common consensus of members. To submit articles contact Laura at **250-444-0524** or **250-442-0434** or email L4peace@telus.net.

The BPI is a member of: BC Southern Interior Peace Coalition, Canadian Peace Congress, Abolition 2000, Lawyers Against the War and an affiliate of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. We work with a wide range of local and global peace, social justice and environmental groups.

Voice your opinion to the Prime Minister and all MPs. Free postage: {Name of MP}, Parliament Buildings, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6
Go to the Government of Canada website for MP contact information at <http://www.canada.gc.ca>



Hard at work making posters and discussing the need to uphold the UN Declaration of Human Rights at the Grand Forks Public Library as part of the project they undertook at the 2018 International Day of Peace event, organized by Linda Wilkinson. Forrest Semenoff-Miles, Aleena Laramie, Cole Hoodikoff.