

The White Poppy

*Excerpts from the Peace Pledge Union website
(<https://www.ppu.org.uk/>)*

White poppies are worn in the run-up to Remembrance Day every year by thousands of people across the UK and beyond. They have been worn in this way since 1933.

The white poppy stands for **remembrance** of all victims of war, **challenging militarism** and a **commitment to peace**.

Remembering all victims of war

White poppies stand for remembrance of all victims of all wars. This includes wars still being fought. It includes people of all nationalities. It includes both civilians and members of armed forces.

In wearing white poppies, we remember all those killed in war, all those wounded in body or mind, the millions who have been made sick or homeless by war and the families and communities torn apart. We also remember those killed or imprisoned for refusing to fight and for resisting war.

Remembrance of all victims of war, including both civilians and members of the armed forces.

We remember people of all nationalities. We remember those killed in wars happening now, as well as in the past. We also remember those who are often excluded from the mainstream, such as refugees and victims of colonial conflicts. We also remember the many civilians who have died or suffered in war, both in the past and today, in Ukraine, Yemen and many other places around the world. Suffering does not stop at national borders, and nor should remembrance.

Standing up for peace

White poppies symbolise a commitment to peace and to finding non-violent solutions to conflicts. In this way they reassert the original message of remembrance, 'never again'.

Through economic reliance on arms sales, sky rocketing military spending, investment in nuclear weapons and support for ongoing wars, the UK government {Ed. Note: Canada as well}

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contributes significantly to war and militarism around the world. The outcome of recent military adventures highlights their ineffectiveness and devastating consequences.

The best way to respect the victims of war is to work to prevent war in the present and future. We need to tackle the underlying causes of warfare, such as poverty, inequality and competition over resources. A temporary absence of violence is not enough. Peace is much deeper and broader than that, requiring major social changes to allow us to live more co-operatively.

Challenging militarism

The white poppy challenges attempts to glorify or celebrate war. It encourages us to stand up for peace and resist the causes of war and militarism today.

Many of the activities around Remembrance Day are detached from any meaningful attempt to learn the lessons of war. Politicians who plough billions into weapons lay wreaths at the cenotaph. Remembrance events are framed by military language and values. Nationalist narratives, which focus only on military victims on one side, ignore the wider consequences of war.

White poppies challenge the promotion of military values at remembrance time. By drawing attention to the human cost of war, they highlight the urgency of our struggle for peace. They remind us that resistance to war and militarism must continue the year round.

A commitment to peace and to seeking nonviolent solutions to conflict

By drawing attention to the devastating human cost of war, white poppies highlight the urgency of our ongoing struggle for peace.



White Poppies are available for \$2 at New West Trading Company and Jogga's. Proceeds go to the Boundary Peace Initiative to cover the cost of purchasing the poppies from the Peace Pledge Union.

2022 International Day of Peace

By: Laura Savinkoff on behalf of the BPI

September 24th and the sun shines bright warming the B.C. Interior. The temperature is way above what we expect at this time of year but nothing has been usual in climate or human relations over the last few years. With all the restrictions during Covid and finally the lifting of them, the Boundary Peace Initiative is once again able to host events. And we have been busy since June with many events.

And so we move into autumn with International Day of Peace. We began at 1 pm in the Grand Forks and District Public Library with the sun streaming in through the windows. The coffee, tea, homemade juice and cookies welcomed those interested in the theme designated by the United Nations: End Racism! Build Peace! At the beginning we had 17 people and then a few had to leave but a few more arrived; so I'd say we had about 20 in all. This seems like low numbers, and in the larger scheme of things it is, but after so long a hiatus, given the warmth of the day, and other events, I think this was a pretty good turnout.

But numbers do not always define a successful event. We had a lively and interactive 2 ½ hour discussion. Much information was shared along with suggested actions.

I must here thank Maxine Ruziicka for taking notes so this report won't only rely on my memory---thank you for such great notes Maxine.

Joan Holmes offered a Land Acknowledgment and Blessing on behalf of the Boundary All Nations Council (BANC). Thank you our dear sister in spirit for your loving words of wisdom.

Laura gave a brief background on the International Day of Peace; this came about from the dream of **one** man. His vision and hard work led to the United Nations not only accepting the day but officially designating it as September 21st, the start of the fall session of the UN. At this time the delegates, ambassadors, staff all gather to focus on the intent to encourage all warring factions, in all conflict zones, to lay down their arms for one day as a beginning to peace on Earth. Sadly, that peace is still very elusive. And that is why we are here today to discover non-violent solutions to the ills of our world and put war and violence and abuse behind us, said Laura.

Laura introduced the panel; Victoria Runge and Martin Huhn. Each speaker had 20 minutes to share their story. Following the speakers the plan was to discuss what racism is, our experiences with it and suggestions on how to end racism on a personal level and as a community.

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Victoria was born in the USA to an Irish Father and a Cree Mother. She grew up on a Saskatchewan Reserve where she did not experience discrimination at home or in school. She heard nothing of race or bigotry, or prejudice. In high school she learnt what it was to be treated as lesser than her white classmates but still her main interactions remained on Reserve. It was only as a young adult that the full impact of Racism hit. Her Mother was a survivor of Residential School and that trauma affected the whole family; her alcoholism was a symptom of colonialism's racist policies. In most places where Victoria lived in Alberta, Saskatchewan, the Okanagan going into stores or restaurants or government offices she was followed around and eyed with suspicion; the only place this has not happen has been in Grand Forks.

Victoria stated she is proud of the colour of her skin and of her culture, traditions and spiritual practices. She stated that personally, and others agree, she prefers to be called First Nations or Indian because terms such as Indigenous and Aboriginal are Government labels.

Remember that 'Reconciliation' is about moving forward and 'Truth' is learning about our culture and addressing systemic racism. There are so many myths, misconceptions and outright lies that have and continue to set the stage for racist policy, attitudes, behaviours that traumatize and victimize those on the receiving end. It is not true that Indian women do not feel pain. And it is certainly not true that all Indians are uneducated and stupid and cannot learn. Victoria explained that she does get a stipend from the 'oil funds' on her Reserve but we paid for that with blood and tears and the loss of land. On her part, Victoria said, I have a few degrees under my belts. For 15 years she was the Business Manager for the Osoyoos Indian Band and now is a Councillor for the Boundary Woman's Coalition. I know many, many other Indians that are wise, well educated, skilled, hard workers.

Victoria stated she does not hold grudges for the past and is grateful for the warmth and acceptance in this community. Building a relationship on respect and mutual appreciation with the Métis, the general population and the Doukhobor people in the Boundary has been refreshing and encouraging. Thank you for asking me to share my story and for listening. (Continued page 3)

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

For info contact Laura at (250) 444-0524 or (250) 442-0434 or email: L4peace@telus.net.

UN International Days

- Nov. 2: International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists.
- Nov. 6: International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict.
- Nov. 9-15: International Week of Science and Peace
- Nov. 10: World Science Day for Peace and Development
- Nov. 16: International Day for Tolerance (UNESCO)
- Nov. 19: World Toilet Day (needed still in many nations to ensure safety and sanitation)
- Nov. 20: Africa Industrialization Day
World Children's Day
- Nov. 25: International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women
- Nov. 29: International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People
- Nov. 30: Day of Remembrance for all Victims of Chemical Warfare

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Laura thanked Victoria. Laura added that the Doukhobors have a special relationship with the First Nations because they helped us adjust to life on the prairie when we arrived in 1899 by helping identify eatable and medicinal plants and general help and support.

Laura then gave Martin Huhn the floor. Martin concentrated on his time as a journalist in Turkey. A job prospect was offered to him in Turkey was offered, so with his Turkish wife they moved. It was interesting and a great learning experience, he said, among the 20 million people of Istanbul. Being raised in a family that valued and welcomed everyone into our home it was eye-opening to live and work as a foreigner among the people.

Martin explained that racism is perpetrated to a large extent by the media. For example, when reporting on a conflict or alleged human rights violations we are shown the old bent over woman walking down the street with a donkey or some squalid sector of a city with hungry looking and unclean children; rarely do they show what is working in a nation or a city or the beauty of the country or its successes. Istanbul, for example, does have poor neighbourhoods, just as Vancouver or any city does, but it also has the mansions and everything in between. But, when reports go out with the intent to either demonize or discredit a people or a nation, the rich, the powerful, the stable middle class will not be on your screen. This stereotyping is what continues to fuel racism on all sides and implants a perception that these people are lesser than, are less educated, are more poor and unable to be successful. Or the opposite can also be true when the nations are portrayed as being more successful or rich or better than others and this or that country just does not measure up.

My first 'faux pas' in Turkey was at a funeral wake, related Martin. Without inquiring and not thinking I went up to the Mother and gave her a hug. I had committed a major blunder because the acceptable behaviour was to touch your forehead to the grieving person; especially an unrelated, western man hugging a woman was totally unacceptable and considered rude and disrespectful. That certainly did not earn any points for me in this land where immigrants, especially from the west, are viewed with suspicion from the outset.

What we should be doing prior to traveling to foreign lands is to learn about customs and traditions, but if we run into unplanned situations we should ask or watch the process and not assume customs are the same.

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The true terrorists of our world do not meet at the docks at midnight, or scream "Allahu Akbar" before some violent action.

The true terrorists of our world wear \$5,000 suits and work in the highest positions of finance, government and business.

Peter Joseph

WHAT'S UP?

The BPI at this time has no events planned.

Hardcopy of the Newsletter is out in many businesses in Grand Forks and Christina Lake and one in Rock Creek. If we have missed anyone in our survey or you have decided to help us share the free Newsletter, please contact Laura at L4peace@telus.net or call at 250-444-0524 or 250-442-0434.

If you have an event that is associated with the BPI mission statement please do contact us and we will circulate your information in the Newsletter and on our website.

Pick up your White Poppy at Jogga's or New West Trading Company in Grand Forks.

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>

The BPI welcomes your input. Articles 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 an affiliate of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, Peace Pledge Union, Stop Ecocide Canada, Abolition 2000 & CNANW and works with local and global peace, social justice and environmental groups.

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The response from men at that funeral and other later interactions was not pleasant. I was told to 'f—off', go back to where you came from, we don't need you here, we can take care of ourselves and do everything for ourselves. I observed food and other staples delivered or served to foreigners were of lesser quality than to Turkish citizens and treatment in stores, restaurants and other services was rude.

I was there long enough to learn many of the customs and traditions but unless I was with my wife I was still treated as a second class citizen. This brought home to me how it feels to be on the receiving end of racism and prejudice. Much of this was subtle, just as much of racism is.

Martin shared the situation as the war in Syria heated up in 2011. In a very short time about 800,000 Syrian refugees arrived in Istanbul alone. This caused major issues for the Turkish people and the refugees. The refugees were taken advantage of by unscrupulous landlords and employers with lower wages and higher rents, while Turks lost their homes and work to Syrians. And this created another level of mistrust on both sides that reinforces racism. The Syrians fled to save their lives only to be fleeced by greedy people and the Turkish people displaced by this greed were angry with the Syrians without actually understanding that the refugees were not to blame for the situation.

Martin talked about why he was forced to leave in 2016. His employer said that he could choose anyone he wanted to interview for his news show. He approached a group that was organizing an event called 'Interdependence Day' whose focus was to promote 'working together with hope, respect and love for all'. The fallout from that show was bad! His access to food delivery was cancelled, access to transportation was cancelled, the prejudice and racism was raised to a higher level and I was unable to do the work I was hired to do. So I came home alone to Canada, my wife stayed behind with her family.

Martin finished by suggesting we all take a good look at what racism is and how it affects people and do what we can to stop this behaviour in our midst.

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Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.
Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.
It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us.
Your playing small does not serve the world.
There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you.
We are all meant to shine as children do.
It's not just in some of us; it is in everyone.
And as we let our own lights shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.
As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.

Marianne Williamson