

Hope for Palestine Interactive Forum

By: Boundary Peace Initiative (Laura Savinkoff)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

March has arrived and I hope you've marked your calendars with an important date. This date is an opportunity to learn from people with a wide range of lived experience as Christians, Jews and Muslims connected to Palestine and Israel.

On March 23rd, the United Nations Week of Solidarity with the Peoples Struggling against Racism and Racial Discrimination, the Boundary Peace Initiative (BPI) is hosting an Interactive Forum. Come to **Holy Trinity Anglican Church on 7th Street** in Grand Forks, B.C. for **9 am**. Admission is by donation, but remember, a donation is not an obligation—if you can donate that is awesome but if you can't you are welcome because it is important that you come whether you donate or not.

We have five very interesting and knowledgeable people on the panel: Jewish/Quaker activist and author Maxine Kaufman-Lacusta who is a member of Independent Jewish Voices--Canada; Sid Sniad a Jew who worked with labour, on anti-racist, peace and social justice actions, founder of Stop War Vancouver and a member of the Independent Jewish Voices--Canada; Rahai Ghattas a Palestinian Christian from Vernon; Susan Ghattas a representative of the Canadian Boat to Gaza from Vernon; Adam Hamdan a Muslim Palestinian from Christina Lake.

Join us so that we can all work together to create a world free of racism, bigotry, discrimination and all forms of violence. Let's work together to bring peaceful living in harmony with all Creation. We can and we will, if we work as one global family honouring and treating each other with dignity and love.

The BPI thanks all for your ongoing support and look forward to seeing you on March 23rd and at all the other events we are planning in 2024.

In Universal Kinship and Loving Peace,
Laura Savinkoff
Coordinator--Boundary Peace Initiative

Canada-Wide Peace and Justice Network & Victoria Peace Coalition: *speech by Bobby Arbess, in Victoria BC, Lekwungen Territory, at the 18th consecutive Solidarity Rally and March for Palestine on February 11, 2024.*

My name is Bobby Arbess. I am a descendant of diasporic Jewish refugees who fled violent pogroms in Eastern Europe. My identity as a Jew like many Jews is centred around the struggle for collective liberation. My paternal family name has origins in the Levant, Lebanon to be specific. It speaks to the deep ancestral origins of my Jewish people in the part of the world, where due to historic circumstances post - holocaust, Jewish State happens to rule in Palestine today-- with an iron fist. That is why I am here today: to share grief, horror and solidarity with Palestinians under brutal genocidal siege in Gaza, with Palestinians facing ethnic cleansing at this very moment in besieged Rafah and by Ben Gvir's ultranationalist religious settler lunatics in the West Bank and with the community of Palestinian Diaspora here on Lekwungen territory who have been displaced over 75 years of Zionist colonization on Palestinian lands. I respect the strength, resiliency and steadfastness of the local Palestinian community to keep these rallies going for 18 consecutive weeks as you endure the losses of your beloved family members and an entire society in Gaza.

As a Jewish person, witnessing the unrelenting atrocities being perpetrated in the name of Jewish safety over the last 18 weeks, has buried my heart in pain, rage and shame. The remorseless State violence unleashed without end, on your lands and people, on your women and children, on your schools, universities and hospitals, on your homes and neighbourhoods, on your professors and doctors, your poets and journalists, on your dignity and safety and survival and land, in the false pretext of keeping Israelis safe and defeating terrorism, has laid bare not only the terrifying agenda of the fascist religious - nationalist settler - annexationist ruling forces in Israel, but the inherent racism of a society that is it both educated and predicated on Jewish supremacy and which treats Palestinians in their own land as existential enemies better dead than alive.

That is what needs to change. Yes, we need a ceasefire. Yes, we need an end to Jewish military rule and occupation over Palestinian lands and lives and yes the entire structure

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of proprietary Zionism, that posits and normalizes violent exclusive Jewish domination over every inch of Palestine must be dismantled in favour of a bi-national coexistence that upholds equal rights for the 7 million Palestinians and the 7 million Israelis who are not going away and the people in the Palestinian Diaspora who chose to return home to ancestral lands where they are currently banned from because they are Palestinian. You cannot fight terror with terror. You cannot keep some people safe, by holding an entire people captive and starving, as bombs rain down on them day and night-and where no one is safe! The racist calculus of holding one people up while knocking another people down is the problem. Never before have I been so thoroughly disillusioned with the Zionist dream of a Jewish ethno-state on Palestinian lands. The only just outcome I can see from the new Nakba in Gaza, is the dissolution of a Jewish state that ruthlessly dominates over every inch of Palestine and where instead of occupation and apartheid, that holds millions of Palestinian people prisoners in their own land, without the most basic human rights-- Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs can coexist side by side in one shared land in mutual freedom, equality and true democracy, from river to sea! There can be no lasting peace without it! It may seem like a fantasy, but everything else has been a nightmare!

As an environmental and climate justice activist, I bear witness to the harmful legacy of environmental racism and destruction that results from violent manifestations of settler colonialism from Coast Salish territories to Palestine. I bear witness to how land theft and the war the State and capitalism wages on land-based people worldwide, is inextricably tied to the degradation of both human and nonhuman habitats, biological diversity, water and the very global ecological balances that Indigenous peoples have stewarded sustainably for millennia and which sustain us all.

The US/Israel bombardment and ground war in Gaza has wrought unprecedented human suffering, colossal infrastructure damage and environmental catastrophe that has rendered Gaza increasingly uninhabitable, as promised in the genocidal threats of several Israeli officials, used as evidence of crimes of genocide against Israel in the International Court of Justice. If the ICJ ruling on provisional measures fell short of calling for a ceasefire, millions of citizens world-wide, who know that nothing else can stop the genocide, will not make this mistake!

It has always upset me how war, militarism and the arms industry are all exempt from the accounting of the world's collective carbon footprint, which the consensus of global climate scientists are telling us must be reduced by half within just a few more years or humanity cannot survive. Runaway climate change is defined by the UN as the greatest existential threat facing humanity and in Gaza, the US and Israel, had released more lethal carbon dioxide in

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in the first 60 days of the so-called war alone, than the total annual carbon emissions of 20 of the world's countries most vulnerable to climate instability. Almost half of the total CO2 emissions were from US cargo planes flying military supplies to Israel. In addition to the immediate human suffering in Gaza, this war is exacerbating the global climate emergency! It is estimated that the carbon cost of rebuilding Gaza's 150,000 damaged buildings with contemporary construction techniques will generate at least 30 million metric tonnes of greenhouse gases or the equivalent of the total CO2 emissions of New Zealand in a year and the higher annual emissions of more than 135 countries.

As such, this war is not only a genocidal assault on the people and the innocents of Gaza, an affront to international humanitarian law, but like all wars, is fuelling the war on the whole planet and our collective future. The climate costs of war and militarism can no longer be hidden and ignored. It is estimated that humanity's true carbon footprint would be 5-8 times higher if emissions from the entire war supply chain were accounted for. The annual UN climate negotiations need to include the massive carbon pollution from war, in their climate action plans and to put an end to the environmental exceptionalism that allows militaries like IOF to not only kill, but to pollute with impunity, as if carbon emissions spewing from their tanks and fighter jets don't count. Better still, arms embargoes on countries like Israel that routinely violate international law with impunity, must become the regular route of diplomacy. As it is all over the world, Indigenous people's struggles to liberate their lands and traditional cultures from colonization are also at the forefront of protecting the planet's life support systems that benefit us all. Supporting indigenous self-determination is what climate justice looks like.

The climate consequences of rising sea levels, extreme and prolonged drought and heat have already been threatening water supplies and food security in Palestine. The environmental situation in Gaza is now dire as carpet bombing has ravaged farmland, energy and water infrastructure, with devastating health implications for decades to come as military detritus will continue to live in the soils, the marine environment and the bodies of the people who are able to stay.

For years now precious water resources from the Palestinian aquifer in the West Bank has been diverted from Palestinian subsistence farmers to swimming pools, lush landscaping and industrial uses in the illegal settlements. The once thriving Palestinian economy which supplied an abundance of oranges, lemons, dates, pistachios and almonds in the great fertile crescent has been supplanted by settler colonialism that has displaced and reduced traditional subsistence farmers and Bedouin herders to a cheap and easily exploited pool of day

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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

March 1: Zero Discrimination Day

UNAIDS Day

March 3: World Wildlife Day

March 5: International Day for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Awareness

March 8: International Women's Day

March 15: International Day to Combat Islamophobia

March 20: International Day of Happiness

March 21-27: Week of Solidarity with the Peoples Struggling against Racism and Racial Discrimination

March 21: International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

International Day of Forests

March 22: World Water Day

March 24: International Day for the Right to the Truth concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims

March 25: International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade

International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing UN Staff Members

March 30: International Day of Zero Waste

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labourers working for Israeli businesses. The clearing of the beautiful ancient olive groves of Palestine lovingly tended for generations and generations, for real estate development otherwise known as illegal settlements, is itself a crime against humanity as well!

There is a better way forward from the dystopian nightmare we find ourselves in. The collective liberation of both Palestinian and Jewish Israelis depends on the joint struggle to overcome and permanently dismantle the structures of racial apartheid and military occupation that view Palestinians as a threat by very virtue of their existence in their own land and deny them the same freedom, sovereignty and power that Israel has monopolized with an iron fist for far too long.

Only true equality, mutual self-determination and the fulfillment of the national aspirations of two people's, in one shared land can bring the peace and the security that has eluded both peoples for so long.

From the river to the sea, freedom and equality!

2024 must be a year for rebuilding trust and restoring hope

"Humanity is strongest when we stand together", says the Secretary-General of the United Nations in his message to the world for 2024. Acknowledging that "2023 has been a year of enormous suffering, violence, and climate chaos", António Guterres encourages us to "come together across divides for shared solutions". He pledges that "the United Nations will keep rallying the world for peace, sustainable development and human rights", and urges us to "resolve to make 2024 a year of building trust and hope in all that we can accomplish together".

Buddha was asked, "What did you gain from meditation?"

He replied, "Nothing, however let me tell you what I lost: Anger, depression, anxiety, insecurity, fear of old age and death."

Love will change this person." But this is not true. Your love will not change anybody. If others change, it's because they want to change, not because you can change them. Real love is accepting other people the way they are without trying to change them. If we try to change them, this means we don't really like them.

Don Miguel Ruiz

Never blame your neighbour until you have been in his place.

The Talmud

WHAT'S UP?

March 23rd @ Holy Trinity Anglican Church 7th Street Grand Forks, B.C. from **9 am – 4pm** **Hope for Palestine Interactive Forum** hosted by the Boundary Peace Initiative. Info page 1 and 4

April 20th third in a series of **peace gatherings** hosted by a Grand Forks collective of concerned groups. Watch for details.

A New Petition calling for an Immediate and Permanent Ceasefire in Palestine/Israel at Coyote Books and may be in other businesses.

A Podcast endorsed by the BPI on YouTube on current issues:
https://youtu.be/25rDHO5Se80?si=mhY_aJITtTTtQdf

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 email and phone contact 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, Abolition 2000, CNANW and works with various local and global peace, social justice and environmental groups such as Jewish Voices for Peace.

Hope for Palestine



Interactive Forum

March 23, 2024 @ 9 am to 4 pm
Holy Trinity Anglican Church on
7th Street, Grand Forks

Includes all day snacks & a Borscht lunch
Admission by donation

Panel: Sid Sniad, Maxine Kaufman-Lacusta, Rajai Ghattas, Susan Ghattas, Adam Hamdan

Ask questions, share thoughts, what next



Hosted by: Boundary Peace Initiative

Info: Laura at L4peace@telus.net or call 250-444-0524 or 250-442-0434