



Save a Tree, Share a Copy

Boundary Peace Initiative meets on the 2nd & 4th Thursday @ 7 pm in the Slavonic Seniors Center on 72nd Ave. & 7th Street

To Do

B.C. Southern Interior Peace Coalition: April 27th, 9 to 4 @ Anglican Church. Pre-registration is requested to plan lunch. Cost is \$10 each to cover rent. Join Boundary, Kootenay, Okanagan and Lower Mainland delegates. For info call Laura at 442-0434 or email L4peace@telus.net.



Bill Dienst & Greta Berlin—March 10th

Freedom Sailors

By: Laura Savinkoff

Many have formed opinions about the occupation of Palestine (Gaza and the West Bank) by Israel and have seen the corporate media reports and some explored alternative sources. But how many have been to Palestine or Israel? I'd bet not many. We form our opinions based on other people's views and biases and no matter how vigilant we are or how open-minded, we, of need, must rely on these assessments. This is not to say that any of the information is false but we must analyze the motives and purposes of our sources. The more information we garner, from as many sources as possible, we are more able to get a clearer picture. We've heard of the expanding Jewish Settlements in the Occupied Territories (by the way, the settlements are illegal according to International Law and UN Resolutions calling on Israel to cease the expansion, the eviction of Palestinians from lands they've lived on for millennia as well as the house demolitions). The constant presence of the Israeli military means that today's Palestinian adults have spent all their lives in war or the threat of war in the largest open-air concentration camp in human history, with water shortages, electricity black-outs, lack of food and medicine, limited education, military check-points to get to work, a family visit, a hospital. But we also hear of the Israelis' fear of attacks by Palestinians, even though these attacks are mainly with stones or guns and inaccurate bombs and missiles. There are many aspects to the "occupation" to consider and evaluate. Add to this the fact that Western Governments, including Canada, support and aid the Israeli Government and military with funds and weapons, which enable the oppression. Remember also, that the West granted the original boundaries of Israel after WWII, without consultation with the Indigenous Palestinians, Christian, Jew and Muslim.

I hope most have heard about the first Freedom Flotilla and the Free Gaza Movement (<http://www.freegaza.org/>)

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Our Mission

The Boundary Peace Initiative represents a growing number of area residents of diverse backgrounds brought together over the Iraqi crisis.

We support multilateral action for non-violent conflict resolution, human rights, ecological integrity for the planet and international law, through education and dialogue locally and globally.

We encourage everyone's participation as we strive for peace and justice to build a better world for future generations.

BPI web site: www.boundarypeace.20m.com

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as well as two subsequent attempts to break the blockade for imports or exports on Gaza. I'm sure you heard about the flotilla where Israeli Commandos attacked, killed and injured passengers on the boats. And in 2011, the Canadian Boat to Gaza, the Tahir (<http://www.tahrir.ca/>), also attempted the journey.

In the fall of 2012 a book, 'The Freedom Sailors' (http://beitzatoun.org/cms/events/PastView/12-0928/Freedom_Sailors.aspx) was published by co-authors Dr. Bill Dienst of Omak, Washington and Greta Berlin of France. It gathers the stories of the first boat that reached the shores of Palestine to be greeted by over 40,000 cheering Palestinians, with the proceeds from book sales going to the next project, the Gaza Ark (<http://www.gazaark.org/>), a boat built in Gaza by the Gaza people, to export Palestinian goods. The BPI arranged with Dr. Dienst, a long time associate of the BPI, to share his insights and experiences as a medical volunteer. To our great fortune the date we chose coincided with Greta's visit to North America. . (Books can be purchased for \$20 either on line or from Laura at 250-442-0434 or email L4peace@telus.net).

On March 10th, a diverse group, Christian, Jew, those of belonging to no faith group as well as some from secular society, gathered to hear and pose questions. The number was small but the interest and engagement in the discussion was large, impressing our guests with our welcoming, open, thoughtful and inquiring nature, which reflects our community. Greta and Bill presented a lively and informative synopsis of the formation of the Free Gaza Movement, the fundraising, and the sad need for clandestine approaches in order to sail and land on the shores of Gaza. Most is in the book but little tidbits of personal experiences, insights, and observations emerged. Greta raised her children in Gaza, making her intimate knowledge very valuable for she was a resident not a short-term visitor. (Continued page 2)

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Although she now lives in France her heart aches to see the erosion and outright violations of civil and human rights, the destruction and oppression of the people. She shares the pain of her children who, for no understandable reason, are not allowed to visit their Father. Bill, who consistently travels to Gaza and the West Bank, witnesses the suffering for lack of food, water, and medicines, things we take for granted. The emotion was evident as they spoke of their desire to alleviate the suffering and stop the support by the West, led by the U.S., Canada and the UK, of the 'occupier' as well as the outright contravention of International Laws and Standards. As well, the majority of the world, for a variety of reasons, ignores the contravention.

A question that garnered much discussion was, "Does the State of Israel have the right to exist?" Greta's response, "No, it doesn't", sparked an emotional reaction but she explained that in fact, no nation has *the right to exist* because the world needs to live in global community, in harmony, without oppressing, invading, occupying or exploiting one another. She added that what's going on in Palestine is not a new phenomenon since the same methods used by the US, Canada and many other nations of overpowering the Indigenous population for profit, power, prestigious and forming a nation. The occupation of Palestine has gone on for so long because Palestinians will not succumb to the 'occupier', they will not give up their lives or their right to exist as a people, as a culture, whether as a nation or not. Israel, within the original borders, exists and has the same 'right' as Palestine, as Canada. In actual human terms, no nation has the right to exist at the expense of others, on the basis of force, greed and fear and to continue by invasion and occupation.

I think what she was aiming at is that a nation created by oppression is not a natural nor sustainable but a domination model that does not respect and honor diversity and the inherent potential of humanity. Just witness the long running and it seems never ending racism, bigotry and discrimination of our Aboriginal/First Nations/Metis people in our part of the world. Are the original stewards of our lands truly honored, respected, valued or even consulted concerning 'development' or policies that impact their lives? Although they are no longer physically fenced off, as in Palestine, The Government of Canada, the provinces and municipalities condescendingly 'consult' and then only when it serves their purposes and only with those they can cow into submission. The only difference really, is that the violent, military, explicit, visible suppression slid into the backrooms because our Indigenous peoples became more isolated and decided not to continue the killing and destruction. Yet, we, the invader, the occupier, continue to destroy and slowly kill our environment and the people.

In the case of Palestine, they aren't isolated since they are part of a large Middle East population. As well, the times are different where global communication and travel is such that we learn of human rights violations, invasions, etc very quickly and are able to respond and support the oppressed, the disadvantaged just as quickly. Sharing information also gives the advantage of assessing and evaluating the actions of the 'powers of might is right' the 'profit and war mongers' and are then able to choose to stand up and say, I do not agree. By voicing our opposition,

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we are, therefore, not complicit in the abuse, violence, exploitation and destruction of Mother Earth and our global family. We, who understand true peace, know it will exist when domination using the weapons of fear, force and violence through economic or military means, are the anomaly not the norm. We, in the 'developed world', who greedily consume 2/3 of the worlds resources, have a responsibility to stand in solidarity with the victims of the bully and those who attack our global family for material or political profit. The methods we, the peace mongers, employ are diverse and non-violent because the use of force violates everyone's humanity. Our responsibility is to create the opportunity to inform and empower each other to act out of love, compassion and empathy, and through this we will achieve a paradigm shift to a world of peaceful living and the full physical and spiritual potential of humanity.

Thank you to all those who joined us on March 10th and continue to support the BPI as we work with you, our friends and neighbors, our sisters and brothers in unison with our global family to educate, inform and empower each other, to love each other and live Peace!

In Universal Kinship and Loving Peace,

Chief Sealth reply to President Franklin Pierce, Dec. 1854

From: http://www.childrenoftheearth.org/chief_seattle.htm - Excerpts

In 1854, the United States Government aggressively offered to buy 2 million acres of land occupied by native people in what is now the northwest United States. Below is a translation of excerpts from Chief Seattle's (Chief Sealth) reply to President Franklin Pierce in December of that year. His speech has been described as one of the most beautiful and prophetic statements ever made on the relationship of Indigenous peoples to their environment.

"The Great Chief in Washington sends word that he wishes to buy our land. The Great Chief also sends us words of friendship and good will. This is kind of him, since we know he has little need of our friendship in return. But we will consider your offer.

How can you buy or sell the sky, the warmth of the land? The idea is strange to us. If we do not own the freshness of the air and sparkle of the water, how can you buy them."

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Chief Sealth reply to President Franklin Pierce, Dec. 1854

Every part of this earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every clearing, and every humming insect is holy in the memory and experience of my people. The sap, which courses through the trees, carries the memories of the red man. So, when the Great Chief in Washington sends word that he wishes to buy our land, he asks much of us..."

"This we know: All things are connected. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons and daughters of the earth. Man did not weave the web of life; he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself. But we will consider your offer to go to the reservation you have for my people. We will live apart, and in peace...."

"If we agree, it will be to secure the reservation you have promised. There, perhaps, we may live out our brief days as we wish. When the last red man has vanished from the earth, and his memory is only the shadow of a cloud moving across the prairie, these shores and forests will still hold the spirits of my people. For they love this earth as the newborn loves its mother's heartbeat. So, if we sell our land, love it as we've loved it. Care for it as we have cared for it. Hold in your mind the memory of the land, as it is when you take it. And preserve it for your children..."

Gaza Ark—Building Hope February 7, 2013

Dear friends and supporters of Gaza's Ark;

Gaza's Ark is a project, which will rebuild a boat in Gaza, with Palestinian hands, which will carry Palestinian products out to the world. The main goal of Gaza's Ark, with the support of people like you, is to challenge Israel's illegal and unjust blockade of Gaza.

The blockade is having tragic consequences on all aspects of life in Gaza. Those whose livelihood depends on manufacturing have seen their ability to produce decline as a result of lack of raw materials that cannot be easily imported. At the same time they cannot export whatever they produce. This creates a dependence on foreign aid.

Palestinians need trade not aid. This is their call.

Please watch this short video produced in Gaza by a local filmmaker, in which a Palestinian manufacturer tells the story: "[Embroidery Makers of Gaza](#)" and then circulate this message to your community, friends and relatives.

You can become a part of this project by **purchasing a symbolic Gaza's Ark share**, a Share in Hope, [here](http://www.gazaark.org/2013/01/15/buy-a-symbolic-share-of-gazas-ark-a-share-in-hope/) (<http://www.gazaark.org/2013/01/15/buy-a-symbolic-share-of-gazas-ark-a-share-in-hope/>).

Visit our [website](http://www.gazaark.org) (www.gazaark.org) to find out more and how you can help make Gaza's Ark a reality and/or simply make a **donation** [here](http://www.gazaark.org/donate) (<http://www.gazaark.org/donate>).

Thank you!

In solidarity, *Gaza's Ark Steering Committee*
(Laura Savinkoff now serves as regional rep)

Web-site recommendations: *We will continue adding to this list but check out past issues for more sites. If you have a site you find of interest and informative, please let us know at email;*

l4peace@telus.net

Gaza Ark—Building Hope

www.gazaark.org

Homes Not Bombs & Toronto Action for Social Change

www.homesnotbombs.ca

Hamilton Coalition to Stop War

www.hamiltoncoalitiontostopthewar.ca

Institute for Sustainable Development

www.iisd.ca

Book & Film Recommendations

Poor Bashing—The Politics of Exclusion

By: Jean Swanson

Published 2001 by Between the Lines with assistance from the Canada Council for the Arts, Ontario Arts Council, Government of Canada.

Swanson has worked as an anti-poverty activist for 25 years. A former board member and president of the National Anti-Poverty organization, she co-chaired the B.C. Action Canada Network in its fight against the free trade deals. For the past 15 years she has worked for the coalition End Legislated Poverty.

Poor bashing means ignoring facts and repeating stereotypes about people who are poor. Poor bashing means having your reality and perceptions denied by people with more money than you have. Poor bashing means living in terror that someone will take your children.

Poor bashing is a book designed for action. Through her direct and passionate writing, Jean Swanson shows how people with power and money attack the poor. They do it through poor-bashing. One of their favorite tools is "poornography". The special language and images of poor-bashing: disguise the real cause of poverty, hurt and exclude people who are poor, cheapen the labour of people who have jobs.



Films donated by the No Boundaries Film Club to the Grand Forks Public Library

New films recommended will be purchased and will be listed here.

Ed. Note: If you have read a book or seen a film that you feel would be of interest or informative please let us know and we will include them in this section. Email the name of the book, the author and the publisher with a brief explanation of the book, and for the film the name, the producer and a brief explanation of the contents to Laura at l4peace@telus.net. Thank you.

Federal Budget 2013: The Leaky Department of National Defence--March 21, 2013

Press Release from the Canadian Peace Alliance

For the third year in a row, a document has been "leaked" to the press warning of cuts to military spending just as the federal budget is due to be released.

The reality is the Conservatives have overseen billions in additional spending on the Canadian forces. When they came into office in 2006, spending on the military was \$15 billion. Even with the proposed reductions, they are due to spend roughly \$19 billion each year.

That extra \$4 billion is enough to provide free post-secondary tuition for all Canadian students. It would also be enough to provide adequate housing for all Canadians living on the streets or to hire almost 40,000 nurses. Harper wants to fund war instead.

For a Conservative government that is known to have a tight leash on all federal departments, these continued leaks must be disconcerting. In 2012, a [leaked letter](#) from the Prime Minister to Peter Mackay called for more cuts to the DND budget. In 2011, [another leak](#) – this time of a report by Lieutenant-General Andrew Leslie – caused a stir by calling for \$1 billion in cuts.

Ironically, it seems the Department of National Defence has a serious security problem.

That may be the case, but the consistency of the leaks does make one wonder if there is another motive for the Harper government. Given that a [huge majority of Canadians believe that we should cut money from the military](#) before cutting social and environmental programs, it seems more likely that the Conservatives are using these leaks to try and soften the blow of other cuts to come. Evidently they want to highlight the fact that everyone is tightening their belts – before they ask us to tighten them again.

We all know how gung-ho this Prime Minister is. He has re-branded the Canadian forces as the Canadian *Armed* forces so we don't forget that they are there to, "kill detestable

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murderers and scumbags" in the words of Former Defence Chief Rick Hillier, even if its main victims in Afghanistan turned out to be unarmed civilian men, women and children. They have worked hard to make Canadians proud of our military, spending millions on the War of 1812 events and have even re-written the new Citizens handbook to highlight Canada's military history.

Harper is also the most vocal cheerleader for an attack on Iran and has never shied away from deploying the Canadian forces whether in Libya, Afghanistan or now Mali. This government has also called for Canada to open up 8 new military bases abroad and had earmarked almost a half trillion dollars in military spending in the Canada First Defence Strategy (CFDS). In the first 5 years as Prime Minister, Harper increased the military budget by \$1 billion each year. Just recently, Harper announced that Canada intends to spend another \$1 billion on an armed drone program.

The cuts as outlined will reduce the total amount earmarked for the military but it hardly suggests a department that is in trouble financially. The military is still the largest discretionary item in the budget. If we add up all the reductions as outlined in the myriad of leaked reports we are looking at a total allotment for the time frame outlined by the CFDS of approximately \$450 billion by 2025.

No matter how you cut it, this is still a war budget.

Wars based on principle are far more destructive...the attacker will not destroy that which he is after. Alan Watts

You cannot negotiate with nature. While we are quarrelling, nature will just march on.
Hans Joachim Schellnhuber from the Postdam Institute for Climate Impact Research

The Boundary Peace Initiative (BPI) welcomes articles, which are the sole responsibility of the authors and may not be common consensus. To contribute please contact **Laura** at **250-442-0434** or **l4peace@telus.net**. The BPI is a member of: Southern Interior Peace Coalition, Canadian Peace Alliance, Abolition 2000, Lawyers Against the War, Canadian Voice of Women for Peace and an affiliate of the Fellowship of Reconciliation as well as other local and global groups.

Exercise your democratic rights:
Voice your opinion to the Prime Minister
Free postage: Prime Minister, Steven Harper, Parliament Buildings, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6
Phone: 613-992-4211 Fax: 613-941-6900
Email: pm@pm.gc.ca