

**PEACEQUEST MEETING NOTES
MONDAY DECEMBER 14 2015**

MANY THANKS

- Thanks for coming out to the meeting.
- As usual, a very special thanks to Bob for booking rooms for us for our meetings and events and to Knox Met for accommodating us.
- Thanks also to First Nations for honouring the Treaties. We are privileged to be gathering for this meeting on Treaty 4 territory.

A MINUTE FOR PEACE

Maureen brought a *Leader-Post* article about Marion Mutala's book: *The Time For Peace Is Now*. In Mutala's view, peace is something we all have to work at: "It begins with each one of us and how we treat each other...I believe most people in the world want peace. I ask myself 'What can I do today to promote peace.'" Each of the book's chapters begins with "The time for peace is now."

<http://www.pressreader.com/canada/leader-post/20151107/282544427184945/TextView>

Carl brought an article from *The Globe and Mail*, "The Cost of War?" It provides an economic argument for peace by demonstrating its economic value. According to the article, people can make more money in times of peace than in times of war. In other words, peace is a better business model than war.

Carl also recommended we watch the BBC 2015 documentary, *Why We Fight*, available online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o-X-PEjZhus>

Hilary read her poem "Comfort Woman."

**COMFORT WOMAN
By Hilary Craig**

Irene...
You were named after peace,
Moulded by war,
Thrust into motherhood,
Impelled to your death
By soldiers on the move.

When you passed through my life
I did not have the knowledge
That would prepare me
For the inevitability
The tragedy,
Of your life and death.

The first onslaught was the Scouts.
No doubt they impressed you
With their reputation and importance,
Leaving their calling card with you:
A child.

Next came the Security Forces,
Abel's – or Cain's? -- men,
Marauding "keepers of the peace".
You comforted them, too.
They, also, left their mark
On your body, in your body,
On your soul.

From time to time the "boys"
Swooped down from the hills,
Under cover of darkness,
Demanding their share of the solace
To which they were entitled.
They, too, left you holding a baby.

And then the war ended.
Or, so they said!
Elections, and a new government,
With different faces.

But for you, Irene,
The war never ended.

They no longer came at night
With AKs and boots.
Instead, they came
In the light of day,
Wearing suits and riding
In discrete Mercedes.

They looked like men of peace.
But they were men of war
As surely as the others were.

For you, Irene,
And for the millions like you,
The war continues.

There is no compensation
For the universal comfort women

Who, like you, have been sacrificed
To the gods of War, Empire and Independence.

NOTES

There is a story behind this poem. It comes from the time when I lived in Zimbabwe in the years immediately after Independence, from 1981 to 1984. Although the civil war was officially over, the consequences of it were far reaching...

The name "Irene" means "peace. And it really WAS the name of the woman in whose memory this poem is written. Irene, who worked for me, had three daughters, each with a different father from a different military group.

I never had official news of Irene's death, but given the HIV/AIDS epidemic at that time, I doubt that she would have survived.

For people who don't know Zimbabwe's history....

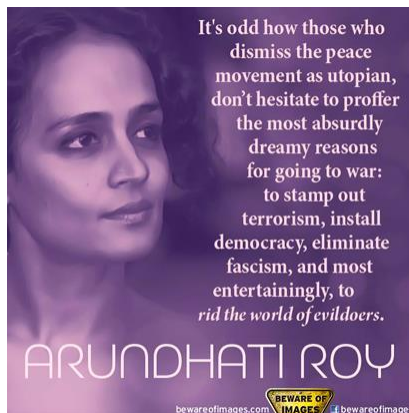
The Scouts were the "Selous Scouts, an elite black troop, loyal to the Smith regime.

Abel's men were forces of the interim Prime Minister (1979) Bishop Abel Muzorewa.

The "boys" were the guerrillas of ZANLA and ZIPRA who fought against Smith's government.

The term "comfort woman" comes from a term used to describe the Korean women who were forced to provide sexual services to the Japanese armed forces during World War II.

Florence brought a statement by Arundhati Roy that she had found on the PeaceQuest Regina facebook page:



REPORTS

1. Thank you card for Knox-Met

Our thank you card has been delivered to Bob Kitchen. The message read: "Thank you for supporting our work for peace and justice."

Thanks to Evelyn for providing the card and getting us to sign it.

2. PeaceQuest Regina Peace Greeting Cards

The cards feature a photo taken in front of City Hall, with the peace flag flying and the Peace Fountain in the background. The I LOVE REGINA sign has been altered to read I LOVE PEACE. (Thanks Emilie!) See attachment.

We had 100 copies of the card printed up, at a cost of \$97.36, including envelopes. We decided to sell the cards to ourselves for a dollar a card.

The cards sold like hotcakes at the meeting and there are only 30 left. Please let Florence know if you would like some.

3. Restoration of Funding for Katimavik

Ed reported the following:

- There is a good chance that Katimavik will be reinstated as it was originally a Liberal Party project; PM Trudeau promised, during the election campaign to put money into youth training; and he devoted a page to Katimavik in his 2014 memoir *Common Ground* (see attachment).
- There is an online petition calling for the restoration of funding. It now has over 10,000 signatures. To sign this petition, go to: https://www.change.org/p/justin-trudeau-m%C3%A9lanie-joly-reinstate-katimavik-in-canada-by-sept-2016?source_location=petition_footer&algorithm=recommended_share&grid_position=2
- At our *Write For Peace! Peace Is Right!* social, we wrote letters to PM Trudeau, asking for Katimavik funding to be restored. Please write a letter, if you haven't done so already. You might present Katimavik as an alternative to military training.
- Ed will write organizations and individuals asking for their support in the campaign to get funding restored to Katimavik.

4. PeaceQuest Regina Facebook Page

Emilie established and takes care of our facebook page. Please visit it if you haven't done so recently. There is lots of fabulous material posted there:

<https://www.facebook.com/PeaceQuestRegina>

One particularly delightful post is "Give Peas A Chance." It's an image of three little green peas smiling away, one with a peace symbol around its neck.



It reminded some of us Cam Fraser's conversation with the children during the service when the Peace Garden was dedicated. He played around with the words PEACE and PEAS and then asked the children: "How can we make peace grow?"

If you have any material for our PeaceQuest Regina facebook page, please send it to Emilie: 2394909@gmail.com

5. Mayors for Peace—Letter to Mayor Fougere

Discussion postponed to the next meeting.

6. Marking the 100th Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme—July 1 – November 18, 1916

Bill reported that he is making plans for a panel discussion on the Battle of the Somme in June, and will be approaching people after the first of the year, when their spring schedules are better known.

We might also call for the Peace Fountain to be dedicated.

7. Military Training Program in Regina High Schools

Florence reported that, on November 19, she had talked to Darren Boldt, Deputy Director of Student Achievement at Regina Public, asking him about enrollment in the military training program for 2016:

20 students have registered out of a possible 40.

That figure includes students from both the Public and Catholic school systems.

There are probably more students registered from the Catholic system.

More may still register.

When asked what will happen if enrollment stays at 20, which is only half the desired number--might it be cancelled because of low enrollment, as other programs have been—he said didn't know.

Actions to take in light of this update:

- Making the military training program in Regina high schools an election issue. The NDP has an email address where they collect ideas folks really care about: ideas@saskndp.ca Let's flood this address with our idea that military training in Regina high schools is a very bad idea. (Last fall, the NDP voted with the Sask Party for the program.)
- Proposing a Peace Program for inclusion in the high school curriculum. Carl volunteered to head this up. Please send him any peace syllabuses you know about: carlcherland@hotmail.com

8. Peace Symbol Contest

a) Goal or purpose of the contest

Its goal is identical to that of PeaceQuest Regina: to promote a culture of peace.

It is also to encourage people to make peace signs in their yards or on sidewalks, or in the snow, and thus promote a culture of peace themselves.

Constant reminders of the possibility of peace, will make war less likely.

b) Photo collection/contest entries

We have a growing collection of photos, taken around the city, of peace-related items.

We might consider the items photographed entries into our contest.

Three photos have been added since our last meeting:

Two were taken at the Mackenzie Art Gallery. They are from a December 2015 exhibition called *Making Art To Make A Difference* which is made up of paintings created by students at Kitchener Community School. They make quite a powerful anti-war statement.

The third is a photo of a peace sign Florence made in chalk along the west creek bank between Retallack Street and Angus Boulevard.

Emilie will help Florence get all the photos into a file that can be circulated to the group.

We will also try to find locations, both physical and virtual, to display all the photos.

c) Name of contest

Here are a few possibilities:

Peace Symbol Contest

Peace Contest

Creating Peace: A Contest

The Peace Challenge

Peace Making: A Contest

Please add to the list or state your preference.

d) Promotion of contest

Launch with the peace sign in the snow action on New Year's day (see "New Initiatives")

e) Possible Prizes

A metal peace sign on a stake, like the one in the Knox-Met lily garden.

f) Take Action

- We will all keep our eyes open for peace signs in our city and take photos of them when we come across them.
- Some of us may ourselves make stone, chalk, or snow peace signs in various locations in our city.

9. Write For Peace! Peace Is Right!

It was a very successful event:

- 17 people gathered at the Artful Dodger to write letters.
- Gord Barnes of Amnesty Regina attended and provided helpful hints on letter writing.
- There were 6 subjects on which letters could be written: Prime Minister for Peace, Abolish Nuclear Weapons, Katimavik, Rededicate the Peace Tower, Establish a Department of Peace, Refugees Welcome.
- 22 letters for peace written.
- We had a lot of fun.
- Carol, the owner of the Artful Dodger, said she was going to name one her drinks "The Peace Latté." Kelly is following up on this.

We might make Write For Peace! a bi-annual event!

If you were unable to attend and would like to write a few letters for peace, please let Florence know and she'll send along the writing points, plus the PM's address. No stamp needed.

NEW INITIATIVES

1. Christmas/Birthday Message to PM Justin Trudeau

Ed passed around a card for us to sign. The message in the card extends Christmas and birthday greetings to PM Trudeau. It also says that we are pleased Canada is ending its bombing flights over Syria and Iraq; that we are bringing into Canada a significant number of Syrian refugees; and that Canada is again stressing diplomatic solutions to global problems.

In addition, it urges the government:

- 1) To produce a green paper on defence and public security issues and hold public hearings across the country on it, providing an opportunity for groups like PeaceQuest to make presentations; and
- 2) To restore funding to Katimavik.

The message concluded with: "Together, let us make 2016 the year Canada did its part to lessen global tensions and build a world without nuclear weapons."

2. New Year's Day Peace Sign in the Snow

Last year a number of folks from Regina's peace community got together on New Year's Day and made a peace sign in the snow along the west side of Broad Street near the Broadway Avenue junction. Some of these crazy folks want to do it again this year. Mark your calendar: **JANUARY 1, 2 pm**. Meeting location to be announced. Bob and I are going to scope out the best location, but it will be near where we made the peace sign last year. Dress warmly and **bring a camera** if you have one.

3. Provincial Election

We will make the military training program in Regina high schools an issue in the election. We can ask some of the churches to join us in this campaign.

NEXT PQ REGINA MEETING: MONDAY JANUARY 25, 7 pm, KNOX-MET

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FRIDAY DECEMBER 18, 7 pm: SONGS OF PEACE--A SISTERS OF MERCY CHRISTMAS, KNOX-MET, 2340 VICTORIA AVENUE

Bring light to the darkness with Sisters of Mercy Women's Vocal Ensemble featuring traditional songs of peace and joy with a unique flare. Join us in singing a few Christmas Carols, too! Admission by donation for Regina Open Door Society. Call 306-537-1189 for more details.