

Report on the March 19th 2014 – 50th Anniversary Program - #3: “Halifax Quakers Helped End the War in Vietnam”

A capacity crowd of 36 people attended this 3rd session of our series celebrating Halifax Monthly Meeting's 50th Anniversary. We had advertised this program with a paid ad in the Chronicle Herald, as well as free notices in the Coast and in the Dalhousie University Events webpage, and we had distributed print flyers to a number of church and university bulletin boards. Those attending were of all ages, from college youth to elderly, and included those who were conscientious objectors, draft avoiders, deserters from the military, and those who helped them, and those who worked for peace in many ways.

Maida Follini summarized the history of the Quaker Peace Testimony.

Dick Cotterill gave the background of resistance to war in Vietnam through draft resistance, and through those resisters already in the military finding refuge in Canada.

Richard Lind described his work counselling war resisters at the Quaker House residence on Seymour St. in Halifax.

Margot Overington recounted her change of view, after volunteering for the U.S. Army and coming to realize the lack of any rational basis for the war in Vietnam.

Roger Davies discussed the tragic loss of so many young men who had their lives cut short in this futile war, and the sadness and destruction brought about by the war.

Dick Cotterill recounted his personal story of leaving the military and finding refuge in Canada, with help from Richard Lind and the Quakers.

Several in the audience were also war resisters, or among those who had helped war resister refugees cross the border. Many questions were raised, and a serious discussion ensued, on causes of war, and attempts to support peace.

Following the formal program, conversations continued amongst those attending, who were clearly deeply engaged with the questions about war and peace raised in the evening. The question was posed, "What can we do to prevent war?" The search for practical actions can be frustrating and difficult. More discussions on this topic are needed.

A CBC Radio One reporter attended the session, and recorded interviews with the presenters. Parts of the interviews were broadcast in the following week. A Youtube copy of the broadcast was made (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ELj-rBElyM>)



Maida Follini