



Canadian Friends Service Committee E-Newsletter

March, 2016

There's nothing clean about Site C

CFSC joined with partners in releasing an open letter to the Prime Minister expressing strong opposition to the proposed Site C dam in BC.

At an event in Toronto, co-hosted by CFSC, Helen Knott, Treaty 8 Stewards of the Land, spoke about the profound spiritual significance of the Peace Valley, and that her great great grandfather's intention and understanding as a signatory to Treaty 8 was never that the government might clear cut log and flood this land.



Rob Botterell, legal counsel to the Peace Valley Land Owners Association, added that the Site C dam doesn't even make economic sense, as many experts have testified it will produce energy BC does not need and will have to sell at a substantial loss. There are less expensive and more environmentally friendly ways to meet BC's future energy needs, which can also create more jobs than Site C. Read the open letter at: <http://quakerservice.ca/news/no-site-c/>

Rob Botterell and Helen Knott speak at CFSC co-sponsored event in Toronto, Feb 17, 2016.
Credit: Matthew Legge

Canada condemns boycott

The Globe and Mail states the goals of the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) campaign, "are not dissimilar from Canada's official positions on Israeli occupation, settlements and human rights, and are not, on the face of it, what most people would consider anti-Semitic." (<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/parliament-votes-to-reject-campaign-to-boycott-israel/article28863810/>)

Nonetheless, on February 22nd the federal government passed a motion condemning BDS, claiming it seeks to "demonize and delegitimize Israel". As far as we know, this motion has no legal implications. It is part of a larger international campaign to shut down the nonviolent BDS movement (for more background on this see the research paper *Canadian Friends and BDS* <http://quakerservice.ca/BDSPaper>)

CFSC issued a brief statement in advance of the vote and signed a joint letter calling on the government to respect the right to dissent: <http://quakerservice.ca/CanadaCondemnsBDS>. Friends corporately do not support a boycott of Israel, but do have a minute calling those who feel so led to boycott the products of illegal Israeli settlements.

COs prepare to go to court (again!)

Friends across Canada have been engaging newly appointed MPs on the issue of conscientious objection, especially as it pertains to conscientious objectors (COs) to the Iraq War. Four COs will be facing the Federal Court in the first week of April, 2016.

Unfortunately, these cases raise legal issues already addressed in past Federal Court cases. Despite the fact that the Court stated there is "ample evidence" that outspoken COs would be targeted for differential and severe punishment on return to the United States, they have yet to be granted a certain future in Canada, free of harm as a result of their moral commitments.

Quakers, among others, are urging their elected representatives to immediately settle these cases. The clock is ticking for these four COs - it is time to let them stay. More information, including a letter writing guide at: <http://resisters.ca/> and <http://www.quakerservice.ca/CO>

Education for Reconciliation

The ecumenical justice group KAIROS, of which Friends are members, has put together a number of online resources around the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's *Calls to Action*. One focus is on Call #62 - that governments, in consultation with Indigenous Peoples, survivors of residential schools, and educators, develop appropriate curriculums to teach about residential schools.

Learn more and take action to support this goal at: <http://www.kairoscanada.org/what-we-do/indigenous-rights/windsofchange-94calls2action> Read CFSC's TRC guide for Quakers: <http://quakerservice.ca/TRCGuide>

Friends support a world free of nuclear weapons

Friends and others in the United Kingdom are working to stop the renewal of the Trident nuclear weapons system. In 1970 the UK and the four other nuclear-weapons states made a commitment to the world community to disarm. Yet current plans are to replace the existing Trident system. CFSC has written to show our support to the No Trident Replacement campaign. Read the letter at <http://quakerservice.ca/news/friends-support-a-world-free-of-nuclear-weapons/>.

You can learn more about current nuclear disarmament efforts through the new book *Minutes to Midnight: Why more than 800 Order of Canada recipients call for nuclear disarmament* by Murray Thomson (Ottawa Meeting) <http://www.nuclearweaponsconvention.ca/>

Learning radical faithfulness

Pendle Hill Quaker study center in the US is offering a 6-Month Online/On-Campus Interfaith Program on Nonviolent Activism and Grassroots Organizing. Find out more at: <http://www.pendlehill.org/learn/radicalfaithfulness/>



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