

If you are intrigued by this presentation please visit the art instillation at Last Word Books, 211 East Fourth Avenue:

Peace Talks on Broadway*

Starring Hillary Clinton

Comparing the “theater of the peace talks” with the actual peace process of non-violent resistance by Palestinians, Israelis and international peace activists, the display juxtaposes photo-ops of the peace talks with the reality of the peace process. The activists challenge the continued settlement expansion, building of the separation wall, unlawful imprisonment of Palestinian activists, and expropriation of Palestinian farm land.

Photographs featured in the display include the work of Olympian Kyle Merrit Ludowitz, who traveled to the West Bank to bear witness to the non-violent resistance to the continued settlement of indigenous Palestinian land.

***loosely based on the true tragedy.**

A short list of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions actions taken place around the world to end human rights abuse against Palestinians:

The Methodist Church of Great Britain recently voted to boycott Israeli settlement goods. The Swedish Dock Workers Union instituted a weeklong blockade of Israeli cargo from Sweden. The Evergreen State College student body voted overwhelmingly to call on the Evergreen Foundation to divest from companies that profit from the Israeli occupation. A similar call was passed at the University of Michigan—Dearborn. Hampshire College divested from companies that were engaged in human rights abuses with the Israeli military. (Incidentally, Hampshire was the first college to divest from apartheid South Africa.) The Northern Illinois Conference of the United Methodist Church also voted to divest from companies profiting from the occupation. Code Pink leads a campaign to boycott Ahava products, produced by an Israeli company from stolen Palestinian natural resources. Oxfam drops Sex and the City actor Kristen Davis as Goodwill Ambassador due to Davis’s role as a spokesperson for Ahava. Jewish Voice for Peace unveils its campaign to call on TIAA-CREF to institute its socially responsible investment policy and divest from companies profiting from the occupation. Britain’s largest union, Unite, votes to engage in boycott and divestment from Israel, “similar to the boycott of South African goods during the era of apartheid.” Italy’s largest supermarket chains, COOP and Nordericonad, announce a boycott of products exported by Israeli Carmel Agrexco. Germany’s largest bank, Deutsche Bank, along with the Norwegian State Pension Fund, the two largest Danish pension funds, Danske Bank and PKA Ltd, Sweden’s largest asset manager, Folksam, and ABP, a Dutch asset manager, have all divested their funds from Elbit Systems, an Israeli arms manufacturer. In Oakland, hundreds of labor and community activists enacted a 24-hour blockade of the port to prevent the unloading of an Israeli Zim Line ship on June 20, 2010 in protest of the Israeli siege on Gaza and the recent attacks on the Free Gaza flotilla. The June 20 blockade was honored by the Oakland ILWU. Echoing the apartheid-era calls to not play in Sun City, Gil Scott-Heron, Elvis Costello, the Klaxons, Gorillaz, Santana, the Pixies, and Devendra Banhart all cancel tour dates in Israel in response to the international call for BDS. Hollywood actors Meg Ryan and Dustin Hoffman cancel their appearances at the Jerusalem Film Festival in response to the Gaza flotilla massacre. Numerous filmmakers, authors, and artists, including Eve Ensler, Alice Walker, David Byrne, Danny Glover, Howard Zinn, John Pilger, and Harry Belafonte, sign the “Toronto Declaration,” protesting the use of the 2009 Toronto International Film Festival as part of the “Israeli propaganda machine.” John Berger, Arundhati Roy, Eduardo Galeano, Brian Eno, and several other artists and writers sign on to a separate declaration, calling for the cultural boycott of Israel. The South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU) declare efforts to make every South African municipality an “Apartheid Israel free zone.” The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (SATAWU) refuse to offload an Israeli ship in response to Israel’s invasion of Gaza. COSATU declares that it will strengthen BDS efforts on Israel.

To join the local movement for Boycott Divestment and Sanction visit www.olympiaBDS.org or email contact@olympiabds.org

The Hidden Diaspora Refugee Voices Come to Olympia

In our search for words to describe our solidarity when challenged by opponents of the Olympia Food Co-op’s boycott of Israeli goods, we discovered these poems. They express our attempt to give voice to the invisible identities of Palestinians who suffer under the occupation of their indigenous land and the real experiences of refugees living in the Palestinian Diaspora. In the Middle East alone there are 4.7 million registered Palestinian refugees who do not have a homeland. The items we carry represent their loss.

Let us all be aware that those of us who are non-native are standing on indigenous land occupied by settlers and work to raise awareness of the resilience and struggles of the Nisqually and Squaxin Island tribes whose land we occupy. The participants in this performance all have the privilege of living in homes. There are those in our community who are houseless and deserve the attention and support of our community.

Featured Poets and Writers:

Taha Muhammad Ali was born in 1931 in a village in Galilee. At seventeen he fled to Lebanon with his family after the village came under heavy bombardment during the Nakba of 1948. **The Nakba** means tragedy in Arabic and used to describe the ethnic cleansing of Palestine when Israel was created in 1948. A year later his family slipped back across the border and settled in Nazareth, where he has lived ever since.

Suheir Hammad was born in Amman, Jordan to Palestinian refugee parents who were expelled during the Nakba of 1948. Her family immigrated to Brooklyn when she was five years old. Suheir represents a new generation of Palestinian artists using slam poetry and hip-hop to express their identity and resistance.

Mahmoud Darwish was born in 1941 in a village called Barweh, Palestine. After the war of 1948, the Israelis occupied the village, and Darwish, with his family, became refugees. When a new Jewish settlement was built on Barweh's ruins, the family settled to another Arab village, where Darwish grew up.

Naomi Shihad Nye was born in St. Louis, Missouri. Her father was a noted journalist in Palestine before his family lost their home in 1948 during the Nakba. Growing up, Naomi lived in Ramallah, Jordan, Jerusalem (before the land was occupied by Israel in 1967), and San Antonio, Texas.

Emily Weisberg traveled to Israel with Birthright, a fully funded trip for every American Jew between the ages of 18-26 to encourage their immigration to Israel. She took this opportunity to travel to the Israel kibbutz founded by her grandparents in 1948 (the location of the kibbutz was on an ethnically-cleansed Palestinian village) and to witness the occupied Palestinian territories.

Rachel Corrie was born in Olympia and killed in Rafah, Gaza Strip in 2003 when she was run over by a Caterpillar bulldozer while protecting a Palestinian home from demolition. Her parents, Cindy and Craig Corrie, are pursuing a wrongful death lawsuit against the Israeli government. Last year in a student-wide ballot Evergreen students voted 72% in favor of boycotting caterpillar equipment use on campus and 80% in favor of divestment. Evergreen was Rachel's alma mater.

Why are we here?

On July 15, 2010, the Olympia Food Co-op became the first US grocery store to publicly join the international grassroots movement for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) on Israel for its human rights abuses against Palestinians. Praise for the bold move by the Co-op was received from Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Rabbi Lynn Gottlieb, Capt. Yonatan Shapira (founder of Combatants for Peace), Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, Pink Floyd musician Roger Waters, and many others

Since the boycott was enacted, controversy has been created in order to distract from why the boycott was put in place. Rarely is it mentioned what the Palestinians endure on a daily basis. Israel receives unconditional support by the United States in \$3 billion in military aid annually. Our government will not hold Israel accountable when they kill civilians, deny aid or build settlements on Palestinian land.

According to B'Tselem, an Israeli human rights organization, the Israeli army demolished 4,170 Palestinian homes since 2000. In this year alone 198 structures were demolished in the West Bank. Amnesty International reported that more than 300 people, half of them children, have lost their homes in 2010.

The Gaza Strip has been under siege since 2006. Food, humanitarian aid, and building supplies are controlled and limited by Israel. According to the World Health Organization, in Gaza 74% of children aged 9-12 months are anemic, up from 65% in 2009. The international community attempted to break the siege on Gaza. On May 31, 2010, nine people, including one American, were killed for attempting to bring humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip. They were shot a total of 30 times, some in the head at point blank range. In the last ten years Israeli forces killed 6,371 Palestinians, including 1,317 minors. During the month-long Israeli military operation Cast Lead nearly 1400 Palestinians were killed and 14 Israelis were killed by rocket fire from the Gaza Strip.

The situation for the Palestinians continues to worsen while our governments refuses to act. This is why we support Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions in order to hold Israel accountable so that one day both Israelis and Palestinians can experience human rights and freedom.