



Fall 2014

Building PEACE through Personal Experience

IT TAKES AN ENTIRE DELEGATION... Presbyterian Delegation & Divestment

On June 20, 2014, the Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA) voted in favor of divesting \$21 million from Caterpillar, Motorola Solutions, and Hewlett-Packard. The vote at the PCUSA General Assembly in Detroit followed a week of careful deliberation and a decade-long corporate engagement and discernment process.

There is no doubt this as an historic decision. The PCUSA voted in 1985 to divest from firms operating in South Africa and the action helped the South African anti-Apartheid movement build traction. We hope the gains won in South Africa can be replicated in Palestine/Israel.

The divestment vote also shows one way IFPB's work translates into concrete victories. More than 65 delegates are Presbyterian, including 29 who traveled in January with the IFPB and Presbyterian Peace Fellowship Delegation. Many worked around the clock to ensure that the PCUSA acted with conscience and with justice.

But don't just take our word for it! Our partners at the General Assembly told us so:



Delegate Jessie Light (middle) and others at the
2014 Presbyterian General Assembly

photo credit: New York Times

“Working with Interfaith Peace-Builders made a big difference in passing divestment by giving us firsthand experience as well as the stories we used to paint a picture of what was happening in Israel/Palestine. The experience helped us illustrate why divestment is so important.”

- Jessie Light, Seminarian at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary
and member of the IFPB/Presbyterian Peace Fellowship Delegation

“The crucial role played by the young Presbyterian Peace Fellowship delegates in supporting a positive vote for divestment at the Presbyterian Church USA General Assembly cannot be overestimated. The voices and on-the-ground experiences of PPF youth resonated deeply with the community and helped bring home the necessity of aligning the church's words with action for justice and peace.”

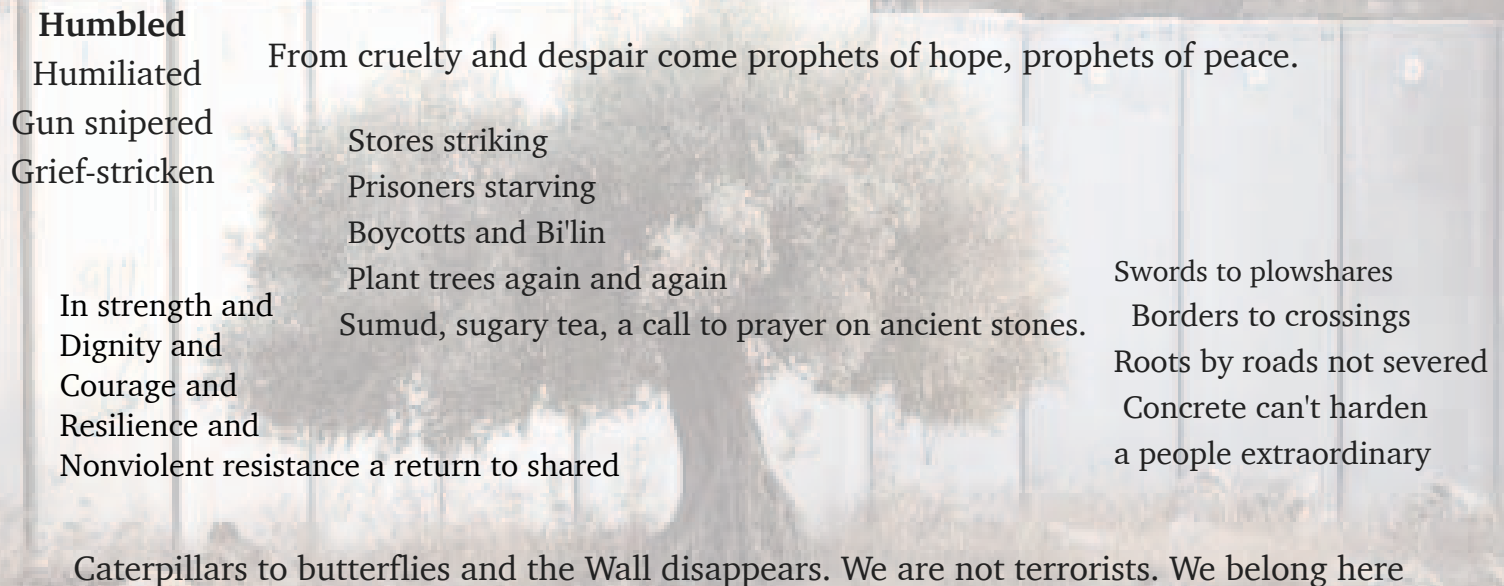
- Anna Baltzer, US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation

“The Presbyterian delegation that traveled to Israel/Palestine in January joined this crucial presence in and around the committee hearings and events, making witnessing for justice an important part of living out their faith. The picture of divestment supporters taken at the moment of victory by the NY Times, which went viral, included Christian, Jewish and Muslims sitting together in solidarity, and IFPB is in that picture and moment.”

- Noushin Framke, PCUSA Israel-Palestine Mission Network

“Humbled” by Interfaith Peace-BUILDER's 50th Delegation

IFPB delegates contributed to create a group poem of their collective experience and thoughts on their visit to Palestine/Israel



Humbled
Humiliated
Gun snipered
Grief-stricken
In strength and
Dignity and
Courage and
Resilience and
Nonviolent resistance a return to shared

From cruelty and despair come prophets of hope, prophets of peace.
Stores striking
Prisoners starving
Boycotts and Bi'lin
Plant trees again and again
Sumud, sugary tea, a call to prayer on ancient stones.

Swords to plowshares
Borders to crossings
Roots by roads not severed
Concrete can't harden
a people extraordinary

Caterpillars to butterflies and the Wall disappears. We are not terrorists. We belong here

IFPB's 50th delegation returned to the US days before the Israeli government began a collective punishment of the West Bank and Gaza Strip under pretense of responding to the kidnapping of three Israeli settlers. Several returned delegates were shocked that the incredible community leaders and activists they had just met were being targeted in the July raids in the West Bank and sprung into action to show solidarity from the US.

Many of our 50th delegation participants, as well as IFPB's 950+ delegates, also organized in response to the assault on Gaza. To name just a few of our delegates' efforts:

- Nancy Hernandez, an Oakland organizer and delegate on the IFPB/Third World Coalition delegation, worked with 11 artists to create a mural in solidarity with Palestine.
- Cathy Sultan, current IFPB board member initiated an effort to fundraise amongst IFPB delegates to support the Middle East Childrens Alliance and the family of Dr. Mona al-Farra who lost 9 members of her family to Israeli shelling.
- Naomi Dann, who joined IFPB's 50th delegation and is a current fellow at Jewish Voice for Peace, was arrested for joining an #IfNotNow protest in the lobby of the New York offices of the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations.
- Kristian Bailey, writer for Ebony and delegate on our 47th delegation, initiated a vital statement- Black Progressive Call for Action on Palestine.
- Sharif Zakout, Youth Program Coordinator for AROC, has been organizing youth in the Bay Area and played an integral part in the Block the Boat actions which stopped an Israeli container ship from unloading at the Port of Oakland.

Overall, more than 70 delegates reported 194 activities they have contributed to in at least 26 states in the last six weeks. That includes at least 15 online media articles, 38 print media hits, and 23 radio or TV interviews. There were at least 65 organizing initiatives (local protests, BDS actions, etc.) that former delegates played a key role in, and too many mentions of participating in local demonstrations to count. Imagine how much more work has been done by our other 920+ former delegates.

In August, IFPB sent our first ever delegate newsletter - focusing on the Gaza Strip. Delegates and supporters alike have asked us for better ways to stay connected with each other, with advocacy work, and with resources for continued learning. A newsletter is just one more way that we can foster a strong network and recognize our many incredible delegates. **You can find the Gaza Newsletter here - <http://bit.ly/IFPBGazaNews>.**

Moving Beyond Making Parallels to Fostering Connections

2014 African Heritage Delegation

“What we see [in Ferguson] is nothing less than an occupation. I have not felt the way that I feel since I was in Palestine in 2012. . . Our young people are in a tremendous amount of pain. And an officer who should have been indicted has not been indicted. And let us be sure and be clear in the reality that these young people are engaging in a rich tradition of nonviolent civil disobedience. ”

- Reverend Osagyefo Uhuru Sekou on Democracy Now!

In 2012, Reverend Sekou traveled to Palestine/Israel with Interfaith Peace-Builders and the Dorothy Cotton Institute. From Ferguson to Palestine, communities of color are facing the same tear gas and Israeli trained armed forces. Now is the time to move beyond drawing parallels, to facilitating connections.



In this moment, the importance of IFPB's *third* African Heritage Delegation to Palestine/Israel is evident. This year's applicants comprise a cohort of 26 people from across the US and possess a range of political experience within the Civil Rights movement tradition, the Black Power movement and the most recent movement against mass incarceration. This diverse group includes youth and elders, media-makers, writers, artists and community organizers. It is truly a group of exceptional individuals, poised to make a difference.

Past African Heritage delegates have made a tremendous impact both within their local communities and with their contributions to the US Palestine solidarity movement. The 30+ delegates from the 2011 and 2012 delegations have given interviews or written articles and have issued or signed timely statements in support of Palestinian rights.

Many have brought the delegation experience and eyewitness to their communities through presentations and local organizing; further inspiring future efforts to connect with Palestinian communities and groups and create campaigns that affect communities of color in the US and in Palestine/Israel.

It's not too late to join one of the upcoming Fall delegations!
Visit www.ifpb.org/delegations

Nov. 9 - Nov. 21, 2014 | IFPB's first Alumni Delegation w/ Emily Siegel & local leaders
Oct. 25 - Nov. 7, 2014 | Olive Harvest Delegation w/ Anna Baltzer & Colleen Kelley
Oct. 25 - Nov. 7, 2014 | African Heritage Delegation w/ Lucas Johnson & Zaynah Hindi



IFPB's Work is a Testament to the Power of Ordinary People, Magnified

We are pleased to welcome two new members of Interfaith Peace-Builders Board of Directors, bringing our Board to the capacity of 14 extraordinary individuals. Each new Board Member brings unique strengths, abilities, and experience to IFPB's work:



Reverend Joi Orr first came to Interfaith Peace-Builders as a delegate on our 2012 African Heritage delegation. Joi is a graduate of the University of Maryland College Park and Howard University School of Divinity where she served as the Student Government Association President and Co-Chair/Founder of Seminarians for Justice. Joi is a consultant for faith based nonprofits, who crafts outreach materials for faith communities in a way that is creative and effective. She is a skilled writer, speaker, trainer, and strategist who has successfully managed c3 educational campaigns, organized clergy conferences, and advocacy events.

Mark W. Harrison serves as the Director of the Peace with Justice Program of the United Methodist Church's General Board of Church and Society. His major responsibilities are war and peace and global poverty and hunger. He also administers the agency's Peace with Justice Grant Program. His lifetime work has given him an understanding of the workings of the U.S. Congress and the United Nations. He has attended numerous ecumenical and non-governmental organizations gatherings. Mark has an undergraduate degree in Urban Studies and a graduate degree in International Studies. He served as a Mission Intern in Botswana for the General Board of Global Ministries.



TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL! BECOME A MONTHLY SUSTAINER

IFPB staff and board work hard to create quality educational delegations for North American residents to Palestine/Israel. Just as we are committed to providing a program that delegates can depend on, we need support we can depend on. If you have been a regular supporter of IFPB or share IFPB's commitment to building peace through personal experience, now is the time to join our circle of monthly sustainers!

- A \$10 monthly donation provides IFPB with the funds necessary to send an entire delegation our Welcome and Reading Packet, which helps equip our future delegates.
- A \$20 monthly donation brings one of our incredible delegation leaders to Washington DC.
- A \$35 monthly donation pays for one full day of orientation - a vital time for delegates to ground themselves in our principles and come together as a group.
- A \$50 monthly donation covers 10 meetings with Palestinian and Israeli groups and activists.

The future success of the organization depends on consistent, reliable support from our supporters and those who believe in the vision of Interfaith Peace-Builders. We need 30 more monthly donors to fulfill some of our big plans for IFPB's future.

Will you join the circle of IFPB monthly sustainers?

Becoming a monthly sustainer is easy! Simply check the box 'I would like to make a monthly recurring donation' on the enclosed envelope or select 'recurring contribution' when donating online at: www.ifpb.org/donation