



Salt Lake City, Utah
PEACE

Gandhi Alliance for Peace Newsletter
ADVOCATE

September 2019

Mission Statement:

To increase public awareness and understanding of Mahatma Gandhi, his unique role in world history and his commitment to truth, nonviolence, service and justice. To encourage nonviolent resolutions of conflict among individuals, communities and nations.

Utah Poor Peoples Campaign -- Gandhi Peace Award Recipients For the Year 2019.

Franque Michele Bains, Esther Merono

The Poor People's Campaign is a national call for moral revival. Organizing in over 35 states around the nation, it is uniting people across the country to challenge the evils of systemic racism, poverty, the war economy, ecological devastation and the nation's distorted morality. The organization is at present supported by a diverse group of local community organizers. A revival of activities started by civil rights leaders in the 60's the group is demanding a moral agenda to address various issues.



across their differences.

The aim is to shift the narrative in communities that are daily facing the violence of gentrification, racism and oppression. The goal is to connect members in the community to the power of their voice, to ensure that the communities have nothing less than dignified representation of their members, opportunity to education, livable wages, health care and housing. The group works diligently to share stories that empower, connect people to their truth, and reach people

The PPC are made up of people of all races, black, brown, white, native, and Asian; old and young; people of all sexual orientations and gender identities; people of all abilities; and they live across this nation, from Alaska to Florida, from Maine to California.

PPC are impacted by and thus fight against voter suppression, systemic poverty, low wages, immigrant injustice, school re-segregation, homelessness, police violence, unjust housing, lack of healthcare and access to clean water and air, militarism, and the war economy. The PPC are people who challenge the false moral narrative of religious nationalism and are lifting up a moral vision of justice, love and care for the poor, the stranger, the sick, and the dispossessed as a guiding moral framework for addressing public policy.

Two Great Events to

Celebrate Gandhi's Birthday

Sept 29, 2019 at 3:00 pm at Tracy Aviary

Oct 2, 2019, Movie at the Library

All Are Invited. Admission Is Free.



GANDHI ALLIANCE FOR PEACE

A 501 (C)(3) NON-PROFIT CORPORATION EIN:87-0646549
549 Cortez Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84103-2122

Celebrating

Mahatma Gandhi's 150th Birthday

All Are Invited

October 2, 2019 at 7:00 pm

Nancy Tessman Auditorium
Salt Lake City Public Library
210 East 400 South Salt Lake City, UT 84111

Program

Gandhi Bhajans by **Julie Ray**

Q&A with Director & Producer **Kell Kearns** after the Movie

GANDHI'S Gift

And the final troubled days . . .

GANDHI'S GIFT shows the Master of Nonviolence at the end of his life, on the brink of attaining his lifelong goal of independence from the British but with his heart breaking by the



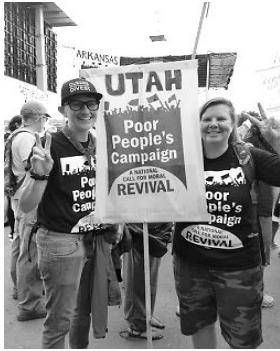
partition of India and the terrible communal violence that is killing untold thousands.



Having led masses in nonviolent marches, Gandhi now walks alone for unity and peace.

Utah Poor People's Campaign Truth Team

The Truth Team supports the goals to shift the narrative, build power, and impact policies and elections by exposing the truth about the ways structural racism, poverty, war, ecological devastation, and a distortion of what's right and wrong has hurt people in the past and present. It does this by presenting community- centered solutions; by gathering data and stories, and coming up with creative, educational ways to share them at events, actions, and through digital channels. At present, the Truth Team is working on a traveling trivia game.



This team is right for you if you love to learn new things through study and research, and you're all about finding creative and accessible ways to teach people. This is also a good fit for you if you have skills or want to learn more about multimedia and communications, like creating zines, writing blogs, editing short videos, and making memes.

Utah Poor People's Campaign Action Team

The Action Team supports the goals to shift the narrative, build power, and impact policies and elections by organizing events and actions that help build the base of activists and supporters, bring in more volunteers, develop leaders, and deepen our relationship to community partners and coalitions.

We do this through regular campaign orientations, canvassing, voter registration, political education events, art builds, nonviolent direct action training, skill shares, block parties, and anything else the team comes up with!

This team is right for you if you love to plan events, and you're all about finding creative and accessible ways to reach people. This is also a good fit for you if you have skills or want to learn more about the nuts and bolts of community organizing, like outreach and follow-up, event planning and logistics, training and leadership development, and nonviolent direct action strategies.



THE PPC IN UTAH...

Our goal is to mobilize at least 25,000 Utahns to build the people power to impact policy and elections, challenging oppression at the root through political education, nonviolent direct action, electoral organizing, art, and media.

Get involved today to be part of shaping the Utah chapter to meet the needs of our community. Send us a message via email at utah@poorpeoplescampaign.org or social media.

There is hope for Palestine-Israel.

Frances ReMillard, Director, Utahns for a Just Peace in the Holy Land

The Palestinian people have been living under Israel's domination for 70 years. Two legal studies, one carried out by the Government of South Africa and a more recent study carried out by the United Nations, confirm that Israel's laws and practices towards the Palestinian people constitutes a "formal system of apartheid," a crime so grave it is considered a threat to world peace, therefore "a crime against humanity."

In Palestine Israel is using tactics that often fall below the media radar: destroying Palestinian wells, cisterns and water delivery systems in hopes the Palestinians will vacate their land; shooting to disable rather than kill Palestinians that participate in protests. Recently Israel began increasing tax rates on Christian Church properties in the Palestine, the increased rates retroactive to 1967. Churches have received bills as high as \$80 million. It is unlikely that churches can handle such exorbitant rates. They will likely lose their property.

Palestinians remain steadfast, refusing to cave in to the Zionist premise that Jews alone have rights to the land and resources in historic Palestine. Increasingly more young American Jews are joining with Palestinians in their call for equality. Last month one of the pro-Israel NGOs of the world, *The Israel Project*, closed down for lack of sufficient donations to fund them.

In November 2019, Utahns for a Just Peace in the Holy Land will be hosting two speakers on tour with *Combatants for Peace*. The speakers, an Israeli and a Palestinian, both former combatants, will share their personal stories about why and how they came to advocate for a non-violent struggle to end the occupation and end the conflict. Watch our website for dates and locations: www.ujphl.org

Being Water Protectors: Conversation With Two Siblings

I am Hande Togrul.

I will call them A&B. They are siblings and wish to remain anonymous. My conversations with them are illuminating. A&B feel profound connection to Water Protectors. However, they state that they are not Water Protectors, yet. The siblings each say in different ways, *"I feel that being a Water Protector is an honor. I have so many shortcomings; I cannot call myself a Water Protector."*

"Being a Water Protector is a big shoe to fill in. I have long ways to go to identify as a Water Protector. Indigenous peoples who lived on this land originally, and those that continue to live on Turtle Island, mostly in the reservation, are the Water Protectors. Indigenous ways of life create a society full of Water Protectors. I live in the city most of the time. Look how much water we use and abuse in the cities -- we don't have a way of understanding the Earth, above and below".

We sat on the kitchen floor, we had soup, tea, chocolate, and heard each other's' stories. For A&B, life had started in Mexico City and continued on the North of the border as immigrants. They are planning to go back one day and find their ancestors.

Bound By Borders

A says: *"Borders separate, categorize and isolate people from each other. Our ancestors belonged to this land, present day southwest U.S. We have not found our indigenous ancestors yet. Our family had to immigrate to the U.S. It was tough to sustain a family. I knew there was something wrong. Why did we have to leave? Why couldn't we stay?"*

And then continues, *"That experience woke me up, showed me how cruel the borders can be and how brown bodies are oppressed. Experiencing our forced immigration, I got involved in migrant rights, social justice work. Over the years, my family has been targeted. Two of my younger siblings went through deportation procedures. This is social racism. We are all connected, yet we are divided by borders. We do not have full comprehension of how we are connected."*

Towards Standing Rock

The siblings felt a profound connection to the land and water when they went to the action camp about Tar Sands in Southeast Utah in 2014. At Tar Sands, protestors/protectors of land work to bring life to soil with what they call "seed bombs." The siblings felt their first empowering experience here. They started to travel with



other SLC based activists and a groups of young indigenous people going to different locations of resistance camps.

They continued to share their story with tears dripping down their face. Their tears showed courage, love, understanding, passion, and strength. When they decided to stay at Standing Rock, they let their well-paid nanny job and apartment go. They took a big step to live outside the system; stayed at Standing Rock camp with the Red Warriors until it was shut down in January 2017.

A said, *"I did not have the slightest idea about sacred grounds."*

"I kept waiting and staying and staying for the whole time till January 2017 when Standing Rock was forcefully shut down. It is scary when the police are at your face when you are helping someone out there. All that was done up there was for the best interest of Companies. They terrorize people; rubber bullets shoot around...a lot of triggers! I think one has to have experience {of the} front line. It is not a good scene. It is not what I prefer to do."

What else could I have done? What does it look like to be a Water Protector?"

I asked, "How do you feel about violence and non-violence action? Can they work at the same time?"

A spoke thoughtfully, *"I feel a little conflicted about it. Elders at the main camp, Oceti, Seckowi, were saying it is a prayer camp. There are many different indigenous groups. Our elders in the Red Warriors, were asking, 'how can we be peaceful if they are desecrating the land.' I think, when you are on the frontlines, you cannot stay non-violent. When you are terrorized, it is not possible to stay non-violent. It was tough to be at the frontlines while elders were asking us to be non-violent. Some of our mentors were saying you got to do what you got to do. We were there to interrupt the diggings and machines."*

A&B continued with some passion, *"In peaceful protest, you are holding your banner up. They don't even hear you. Next step is to stand in front of the machine. As soon as you do that police and/or security officers ask for back up. They join in. What do you do? Next step is to risk to be arrested. You have to feel it out. It is really that moment you decide. The elders told us to 'feel it out.' If it is a peaceful action work, you do what you have to do. There is a very fine line between peaceful resistance and violent action. I have to defend myself when need be. Elders were saying, 'don't say anything violent.'"*

Black Mesa

Since the fall of 2017, A&B have been helping Dine Elders in Black Mesa in Northern Arizona. They lived with the elderly on and off. During the mid-70s, 14,000 Dine - Navajo peoples were forced to relocate from their ancestral lands by federal government and energy companies whose purpose was to extract billions of tons of coal, uranium and natural gas. Since then the water, air, lands have been poisoned. For many decades, Dine elders refused and are still refusing to leave their property while energy companies continue to extract and poison.

"Dine Elders in Black Mesa, the grandmothers have been resisting. The mining company gave a paper saying '70 years after your death if your kids are living here they will be considered trespassers'. She did not sign it. She has been getting a lot of harassment. Those Grandmothers have no choice, since being children they have been Water Protectors, they cannot be forced not to be so."

"They showed us how water is in the circle of life for them and their ancestors for centuries. They protected it and kept it flowing, towards the sea. They herd sheep, plant corn, use water just like you and I. The big difference is this: there is running water in city homes. In those lands water did not come to them readily, imagine that for a minute."



One of the most famous plays by Bengali writer and poet Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) *the Post Office* was completed in 1912, a year before Tagore became the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize in Literature. Tagore's play originally was translated into English by W. B. Yeats, which sustains a strong poetic tone. It was performed in German-occupied France during World War II, in the ghettos of Poland and in concentration camps. The message is about finding the best in a terrible situation.

A Board member of The Gandhi Alliance for Peace first learned about Tagore's play, after reading "The King of Children" by Jean Lifton which is the story of Janusz Korczak, a Polish pediatrician. During the Nazi control of Warsaw, Korczak's orphanage was forced to move into the Warsaw ghetto. To help the children accept death, the orphanage produced *"The Post Office."* When the time came, Korczak boarded the box car for the death camps with the children.

The international community failed to save the children and adults of the Warsaw ghetto. Far too often, we continue to fail to protect the children of our world.

Deb Sawyer, president of the Utah nonprofit Gandhi Alliance for Peace, came up with the idea of staging *"The Post Office"* to raise awareness of refugees' needs and fundraise for them in a nontraditional way. The current production of *"The Post Office"* gives all of us the opportunity to help more children living in refugee camps receive an education—a fundamental right of childhood.

The shows presented in August 2019, in Salt Lake City were very successful and well attended. The 55-minute production was a part of an impressive civic collaboration, bringing together Plan-B Theatre, the Granite School District, the Gandhi Alliance for Peace and the United Nations Association of Utah.

The play rich in mystical symbolism has a simple story line. A child confined to his home because of illness, is desperate to fulfill its restless curiosity about the outside world. The allegory represented the yearnings of the confined to attain the freedoms of the "outside." The play effuses symbolism of liberation and being freed from cages.

In Tagore's original work, some warn the confined child to obey the doctor, and stay put, for its own good, while others warm to his wishes for a different future and even encourage him to defy the orders.



Photo Credit Rick Pollock

Cottonwood High School drama teacher, Madeline Ashton was the very creative, impressive set designer and the costumes by Maddiey Howell-Wilkins were quirky fun.

Various individual and organizational donors, with contributions ranging from \$500 to \$3,000 each, ensured that all sales proceeds go to Adopt-A-Future programs. All proceeds from ticket sales will support refugee education at the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya, established in 1991 for children fleeing war in Sudan, including the so-called Lost Boys. And, all ticket sales and donations were quadrupled: initially matched by the Telemachus Fund and then matched again by the Educate a Child Fund, sponsored by

Sheika Moza Bint Nassar of Qatar.

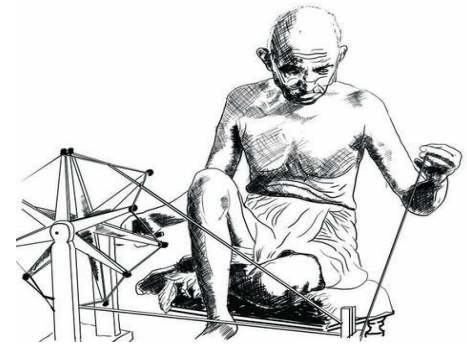
Utah playwright Melissa Leilani Larson adapted this Tagore classic for 21st century audiences. Larson's adaptation is suited to actors of any race or ethnicity as well achieving gender parity. It makes the 1912 drama accessible to contemporary audiences, while preserving the integrity of Tagore's original. The cast of high school students represents immigrant, refugee and citizen communities at Cottonwood, Granger, Kearns, Olympus and Taylorsville High Schools. The play was directed by Adam Wilkins,

The Gandhi Alliance is extremely grateful to Jerry Rapier, Adam Wilkins and all those involved in producing Melissa Leilani Larson's adaption of "*The Post Office*."

Art has the power to help us cope with the unacceptable. Art also has the power to inspire us to reach beyond our expectations.

Gandhi – A 100 Years Ago. Beginnings of *Swaraj*, Self-Rule Movement

On August 8th 1919, in a letter to *The Hindu*, an English daily, Gandhi wrote, "I want every man, woman and child to learn hand-spinning and weaving. Let every man learn to provide for his clothing in his house and many of our current problems will resolve themselves." On the same day, speaking in Poona, Gandhi said "It is through *Swadeshi*, home spun, that we shall get *Swaraj* or self-rule. I want to propagate this idea and it is my hope that, in a few days or maybe months, everyone in India, from the Viceroy down to the sweeper, will realize that *Swadeshi* can bring *Swaraj*."



To help promote these ideas Gandhi started a Gujarati language newsletter called *Nav-jeevan*, *New Life*, and an English bi-weekly called *Young India*. Initial focus was to propagate "*Hind Swaraj*" Self-Rule for and by Indians. The English newsletter paved the way to translate the concept in the multiple local languages in different provinces of the British Raj.



A very inspiring Musical Event was held on May 31, 2019 to raise funds for Adopt A Future Campaign to build schools in refugee camps in Kenya.

The event was organized by Gandhi Alliance for Peace and the United Nations Association of Utah. Calvary Baptist Church hosted it. The wonderful evening raised \$1,405; included was fantastic refreshments and a great silent auction - thanks to Cathy Kreuter!

An attendee writes: *I always believe there is a strong connection between music, singing and emotions. Music unifies people's emotions and feelings, therefore it unifies people. God has made sounds in this world so that we can hear and feel. In that amazing evening, a lot of people from different backgrounds left a lot of good impressions on me by singing wonderful songs.*

Gandhi Alliance for Peace
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BUZZ FROM THE BOARD

We welcome Sergazy Nurbavliyev our newest board member at Gandhi Alliance for Peace. He comes from Kazakhstan and is a PhD candidate in mathematics and statistics at the University of Utah. Sergazy's research interests are probability theory, stochastic processes and Bayesian Statistics, predictive analysis and machine learning.

In his spare time, Sergazy enjoys volunteering, reading popular science books and journals, playing chess and Sudoku. Sergazy has been involved in volunteering since high school. He is very active with the Emerald Hills Institute in Utah being one of the founding members, and has a passion and hope to helping people in need.

Gandhi Birthday Celebrations

**At Tracy Aviary, Liberty Park, SLC UT
on September 29, 2019 at 3:00 pm**

All are invited

Program includes

Presentation of Gandhi Peace Award
Brief comments by recipients
Gandhi Bhajans [musical items] by Children
Classical Dances of India
Tree Planting