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**Want to donate to  
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If you haven't yet made your  
2024 donation, please  
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more information on how to  
donate.**



# March 2024 Newsletter



Ploughshares Calgary Society Presents:

## People Power Peace: How Civil Society Stops War

JOIN US FOR AN EDUCATIONAL MEETING  
FEATURING RIVERA SUN



### March 13th

7:00PM MST

**On Zoom**

**Contact Us:**



OFFICE@PLOUGHSHARESCALGARY.CA



@PLOUGHSHARES CALGARY



@PLOUGHSHARES\_CALGARY



# PLOUGHSHARES CALGARY SOCIETY

A secure world without war. A just world at peace.

## Membership Application

### Join Us! Become an Official Member!

Ploughshares Calgary Society (PCS) is reviewing our governance and official membership to strengthen ourselves as an organization committed to educating on peace and justice.

### Membership Details

1 year term beginning on January 1st and ending on December 31st of the same year

## Why Become A Member of Ploughshares Calgary Society?

### Vision

A secure world without war. A just world at peace.

### Mission Statement

Ploughshares Calgary Society (PCS) seeks to educate and encourage research to create mutual respect and understanding so as to contribute to human security and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. We seek to build sustainable peace, encourage practical steps toward nuclear disarmament and minimize recourse to military force.

### Objects

- Educate and encourage public discussion on human security and non-violent conflict resolution
- Educate and encourage public dialogue on Canadian foreign and defence policies
- Educate and encourage public discussion on issues such as: nuclear disarmament, control of conventional arms, militarism, and specific wars and interventions

### Benefits of Membership

- Opportunities to stay informed, learn about, and engage in dialogue on important issues related to peace
- Belonging to a concerned community of like-minded people, who gain strength from one another in designing actions and policies that support peace
- Regular email notices about our work, online and in-person educational talks, workshops and events, as well as our monthly newsletter
- Reduced fee at educational events that may have a cost
- Borrowing privileges for Ploughshares resources
- Opportunities to participate in and/or volunteer with our activities, such as in-person meetings, the Floating Lanterns Peace Festival, Culture of Peace Exhibits, and Ploughshares Pathway to Peace Walk
- Voting Privileges at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and at general meetings of the society when held
- Ability to have a voice in the direction and activities of the PCS
- An invitation to our annual membership appreciation event
- Most importantly, members can make an active contribution to the work of building peace in our communities and on our planet. Help grow our community and contribute your energy, resolve, talent, passion and voice.

**Visit our [website](#) to join today!**

**EDUCATORS FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE**

**BECOME A VOLUNTEER**



# **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

**EDUCATORS FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE IS SEEKING  
SUPPORT FOR EVENTS AND PRESENTATIONS ON  
PEACE-RELATED TOPICS.**

**IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING YOUR  
TIME AND TALENTS, PLEASE REACH OUT VIA  
FACEBOOK OR INSTAGRAM!**



**@ Educators for Peace & Justice- Alberta**



**@educators4peacejusticeab**



## YUVAL HARARI ON THE CURRENT

March 4th, 2023

Yuval Noah Harari is a professor of history at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and the author of several best-selling books including “Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind” (2014), “Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow”, (2016) and “21 Lessons for the 21st Century” (2018.) His latest project is a series of books for young readers, called “Unstoppable Us.” Harari was recently a guest on CBC’s morning show The Current, with Matt Gallaway. Here is a taste of that interview.

“What is happening in Gaza is absolutely terrible,” Harari states, emotionally moved by the horrendous suffering that Palestinians are currently enduring. Harari was also personally affected by Hamas’ attack on Israel on October 7, as his aunt and uncle lived in one of the communities under siege. He spoke about the immense pain and psychological trauma Israeli Jews continue to suffer in the aftermath, including the hundreds of thousands who are still displaced from their homes. But Harari refuses to take sides. He says, “I think it is the job of intellectuals to be able to think in a complex way, to be able, you know, to hold two thoughts at the same time. It shouldn't be a miracle to do that, that you can be in favor of a free Palestine and of the rights of Palestinians to live dignified and safe lives in their Homeland and at the same time, to be in favor of Israelis living safe and dignified lives in their Homeland. This must include an acknowledgement of atrocities that have been committed by both parties. He says, “ if there are difficult facts, we need to acknowledge them rather than just deny them.”

Harari makes clear that there is a distinction between the current Israeli government and Israelis themselves, many of whom do not support Netanyahu’s policies. Similarly, he distinguishes Palestinians from Hamas, an organisation he believes has little interest in a peaceful solution in Gaza, but rather a determination to eliminate Israel and its Jewish people.



## YUVAL HARARI ON THE CURRENT

But Harari does not give up on hope. He counsels that it is important to reach beyond the current narratives that are being driven forward by supremacist nationalist views on both sides. He criticises the careless application of a western colonisation narrative onto Israel, explaining that the majority of Israeli Jews were expelled from their former homelands in Arab nations in 1948. Furthermore, he says that there is abundant land and resources for both Palestinians and Israelis to live in this region in comfort and peace. What we need is a new story, a story that goes deeper than twisted tales of ownership and dominance, vengeance and righteousness, currently being promoted by the powers on either side, to one that recognises common humanity, and that inspires each person to commit to helping one another thrive. Harari says, “ I still try to hold on to the hope of peace. I think, you know, when people are in the moment of greatest pain, everything looks dark and you think it will last like this forever. But as a historian, I still cling to the kind of long-term view, and I know that every storm eventually passes. And if we plant good seeds right now, it may take many years for the fruit to be there, but it will come.”

To listen to the full interview, click [here](#).



**“We should also be able to acknowledge at some point the pain of other people, otherwise there is really no chance for peace.” Yaval Noah Harari**



## TRACKING ANTI-NAVALNY BOT ARMIES

**Evan Solomon**  
**GZero**  
**February 22nd, 2024**  
**Summary**

The media company GZero recently commissioned Cyabra, a “social threat information company” specialising in tracking bots, to look for disinformation surrounding the online reactions to news about Alexei Navalny’s death. Cyabra uses proprietary AI-driven software to track “attacks such as impersonation, data leakage, and online executive perils as they occur.” The team focused on condolence tweets posted on X by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and President Joe Biden shortly after news of Navalny’s death.

Cyabra analyzed two messages from Trudeau from his official account, one in English and one in French, to examine the presence of bots targeting him. Their research indicated that 25% of the responses to Trudeau’s tweets were made by bots, not humans, and these were estimated to have the potential for 354,000 views. It is possible that some fake accounts were missed and the percentage is actually higher. These fake accounts were attempting to spread harmful content against Trudeau, targeting him for past actions, and attacking his domestic policy all with the intention to divert negative public attention from Putin to him.

29% of the responses to Biden’s similar tweet on X were judged to be originating from fake accounts, with similar intent.

According to CEO of Cyabra, Dan Brahmy, the percentage of fake accounts participating in everyday online conversations typically varies between 4 and 8%. That such a high percentage of the responses to tweets regarding Navalny’s death were generated by fake accounts is significant, and of great concern.

You can find the report by Cyabra [here](#), and read the article in GZero [here](#).





## THOUSANDS TURN OUT FOR NAVALNY'S FUNERAL IN MOSCOW

**Valerie Hopkins**

**NYT**

**March 1st, 2024**

**Summary**

- The service took place under tight monitoring from the Russian authorities, who have already arrested hundreds of mourners at memorial sites since Navalny's death.
- At least 400 people have been detained since Mr. Navalny's death, according to the watchdog OVD-Info, including some for simply laying flowers at improvised memorials to him.
- His widow, Yulia Navalnaya, who has vowed to carry on his political activities, and his children, Daria and Zakhar, who no longer live in Russia, did not appear to be present.
- Outside the church, people chanted, "Thank you, Aleksei" and "Love is stronger than fear," according to videos from the scene. As they gathered next to the cemetery, mourners cried out, "peace for Ukraine – freedom for Russia!"
- Almost 270,000 people were watching a livestream of the event organized by Mr. Navalny's allies, while about 150,000 watched coverage on YouTube by the independent TV Rain, according to figures provided by the streaming platform.
- Many people travelled from afar to be present for Navalny's funeral, including Anastasia, 19, who had flown in from Novosibirsk, 1,800 miles from Moscow. In Russia, it is considered bad luck to give living people an even number of flowers in a bouquet – those are reserved for funerals. But Anastasia said that many mourners carried bouquets with an odd number, "because for them, Navalny lives on."

To read the full article, click [here](#).



# TRUDEAU MAY NOT BE ABLE TO FEND OFF NATO'S CEASELESS DEMANDS FOR MORE MONEY

**Doug Roche**  
**The Hill Times**  
**March 4th, 2024**  
**Summary**

- The Ottawa Conference on Security and Defence will be held on March 7th & 8th.
- The conferences sponsor, The Conference on Defence Associations, has a multitude of high level speakers to demand that Ottawa get in line with the new mantra that Canada is headed for the scrapyards unless we boost our military spending.
- Though PM Justin Trudeau has held a strong stance of fending off NATO's demands for more money, he may not be able to continue doing so.
- Canada is already the 13th-largest military spender in the world, and the sixth largest in NATO.
- The government plans to spend \$553-billion over the next 20 years to buy new weapons systems like fighter jets, armed drones, and warships. But the militarists say this is not enough.
- Peggy Mason, policy adviser to then-prime minister Joe Clark and now the head of the Rideau Institute, says, "It is absurd to peg military spending to a percentage of economic activity, extrapolated into the future. We need to base our funding on our assessment of the threats to security that Canada faces and our determination of the best means, including non-military means, to address them."
- Trudeau deserves credit for at least questioning NATO's militaristic thinking that puts the welfare of defence contractors ahead of the financial needs of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, a 15-year multi-billion-dollar program to ensure the well-being of the most vulnerable people, and which is itself a prime contribution to global security.
- So far, Canada has contributed \$35.5-billion to the SDGs.



## UPCOMING PLOUGHSHARES CALGARY EVENTS

- On Wednesday, March 13th, **Ploughshares Calgary Society** will host **People Power Peace: How Civil Society Stops War** featuring **Rivera Sun**, award-winning author, internationally-respected nonviolent strategy teacher and program director for Pace e Bene/Campaign Nonviolence. Contrary to common view, wars are not always won or prevented by military or even diplomacy. Sometimes, determined and passionate societies halt them – or keep them from breaking out in the first place. Rivera will share stories from around the world, some better known – like the Women of Liberia Mass Action For Peace – others less well known, but equally powerful. She will also lift up moments amidst broader struggles where nonviolent action kept armed factions from descending into civil war. This event takes place on Zoom starting at 7:00pm. Please register for free on our Eventbrite page or by emailing our office at: [office@ploughsharescalgary.ca](mailto:office@ploughsharescalgary.ca).
- On Wednesday, April 10th, **Ploughshares Calgary Society** will host board member **Bev DeLong** who will speak on the current situation in Canada and the world regarding nuclear weapons.
- On Wednesday, May 8th, **Ploughshares Calgary Society** will host **Dr. Daniel Voth**, a professor of Political Studies U of C, on a topic relating to Decolonization.





## EVENTS

- From March 11th to April 14th, **World Beyond War** will be hosting an online course titled **War and the Environment 2024**. The course price is on a sliding scale from \$25 to \$100 or more if you can afford it. There will be a limit of 150 tickets sold for this course. The cost of the course is the same for someone completing all, some, or none of the assignments. Registrations are not refundable. The course has two main components: a six-week online learning program and three interactive live sessions interspersed throughout. If you would like to sign up for this course, please visit [worldbeyondwar.org](http://worldbeyondwar.org).
- On Friday, March 15th, **ICNA Relief Canada (Calgary)** will be hosting a **Ramadan Fundraising Iftar to provide Relief for their Gaza Projects** including: family support with survival packs, orphan sponsorship program and Palestine clean water project. Keynote speakers for this event include Sh. Riad Ouarzazi & Sh. Hacene Chebbani. This event starts at 5:30pm at the Thorncliffe Greenview Community Association (5600 Centre Street North). Tickets start at \$22.63 and are available on Eventbrite.ca.
- On Saturday, March 16th, **Afri-Can Connect Society** will be hosting **Dare to Know Us Africans**. Come and explore African food, music, their stories and learn how you can be an ally to them. There will be a DJ, poetry and dance. There will be series of events such as: Hear our story: an hour and a half morning event where Africans will share their stories of racism in the Canadian workplace with Albertans to create awareness. There will be speakers sharing their stories and the audience will be given an opportunity to ask questions. There will also be cultural booths representing around 10 different African countries and an educational training session in the afternoon. This event starts at 9:00am at the Silver Springs Community Association (5720 Silver Ridge Drive NW). This event is free.



## GOOD NEWS

- The Ottawa Treaty (The treaty is about anti-personnel land mines) is the most universalized humanitarian disarmament Treaty. 133 States signed the Treaty in 1997, and the Treaty entered into force on March 1, 1999 once 40 States had ratified it. After 25 years, we have 164 State Parties. Many of the 33 States Not Parties mostly comply with the Treaty because the norm against landmines is now so strong. We see this as a huge success! Every landmine destroyed from a stockpile is a life or limb saved. This is why a combined total of 55 million anti-personnel mines destroyed is such an achievement! Stockpile destruction is the best preventative measure and we are thankful that we have come this far in 25 years. 55 million mines that could have been threatening lives or livelihoods are now destroyed before ever being used. (Mines Action Canada, March 1st, 2024).
- A dementia care village in England has incorporated a day nursery for small children—bringing together young and old for learning and sharing. Stimulation, learning, and fun—these are all activities that are known to delay the progression of dementia, and what better way to add these critical elements of life to a daily regimen than to let a flock of preschoolers do it? Belong is a nonprofit operator of senior homes, specializing in dementia care, and this is the first to integrate children. Children feature in the daily life of residents and tenants, enjoying experiences together including shared mealtimes, stories, arts and crafts, and exercise. (Good News Network, February 20th, 2024).



Photo Credits:  
Belong Chester / Ready Generations





## GOOD NEWS

- Local Calgary man, Matthew Edwards, is aiming to clean things up - in more ways than one. Edwards heads out several days a week to pick up litter around Calgary, carrying the tools he needs to collect litter in a backpack, including a collapsible garbage can and foldable picker. Edwards started cleaning up the streets in late summer 2023 after being fired from his job and getting sober from alcohol. Edwards says he'll continue cleaning up Calgary as long as he can. "One person can make a difference and that's what helps me continue my sobriety," Edwards said. He has also managed to raise \$2840 for the Alberta Children's Hospital. (Global News Calgary, February 26th, 2024).
- When Dr. Ruth Gottesman was left an inheritance of \$1 billion from her late husband; she used it to pay forward the tuition of students at a Bronx medical school. When her gift to the school was announced, the cheers—and tears—filled the auditorium of Albert Einstein Medical College. Gottesman's gift is the largest ever given to an American medical school, and one of the largest ever received by any American institute of higher learning. With this donation, all current fourth-year students will be reimbursed for their spring 2024 semester tuition, and effective August of this year, all students moving forward will receive free tuition. (Good News Network, February 28th, 2024).



Photo Credits: Goods News Network

