



Maxine Kaufman-Lacusta

Born in San Francisco in October of 1941, I initially moved to eastern Canada in 1963, where I and my first husband raised our three children. They - and the 7 children my two eldest have between them - are now scattered from BC and Alberta to Ontario.

Although I have attended Quaker meetings since 1963, and have been a member for much of that time, I never completely relinquished my Jewish connection, and have long referred to myself as a Quaker Jew.

Now, having returned to Or Shalom after several years away, I am experiencing a revived sense of connection and nourishment in this community's warm environment, and increased appreciation for the guidance offered by the renewal interpretation of Jewish tradition.

I consider myself a "semi-retired activist." I was an enthusiastic Zionist in my teens, with the ambition of spending my adult life on an Israeli kibbutz. I attended the Ninth Habonim Youth Workshop on Kibbutz Geshet Haziv in 1959-60 (yup, same one as Riva), and arranged to remain in the country for an additional 6 months, as part of an Israeli pre-Nachal gar'in (on Kvutzat Tse'elim). When my Israeli comrades went to the army, I returned to North America to work briefly as a youth leader (as required by the Movement).

Those 6 months amongst largely cynical Israeli teens pretty well cured me of any illusions that the kibbutz was still the pioneering venture I craved, and a subsequent year of university rid me of most remaining nationalist sentiments - although I didn't totally shed my Zionism until I'd spent nearly a full 4 years working at the joint Israeli-Palestinian Alternative Information Center in Jerusalem (Feb 1990 - Feb 1994), mainly translating articles about the historical and ongoing mistreatment of the Palestinians under Israeli control - especially, but not only, in the occupied territories - and about visions of a possible shared future.

During the 7 years I lived in Jerusalem (Dec 1988 - Oct 1995), I also was involved in a number of activist groups, both Israeli and joint, and after my return to Canada, I maintained a focus on support for Palestinian and Israeli nonviolent resistance to the Israeli occupation, largely through sharing emails from Is-Pal activist groups and otherwise sharing what they had to say (see <https://refusingtobeenemiesthebook.wordpress.com>).

After returning from my Jerusalem sojourn, I have lived on unceded Coast Salish territory, in the foothills of Burnaby Mountain. Although arrested half a dozen times during anti-occupation actions in the occupied West Bank, I didn't feel moved to commit civil disobedience after my return, until becoming aware of the TMX planned desecration of Burnaby Mountain (aka my backyard) and beyond in the fall of 2014, when I was arrested twice, with an overnight stay in the Burnaby RCMP lockup after the second. A further arrest on March 24, 2018 led to a guilty plea and 50 hours of community service doing fundraising and publicity for the Highs and Lows Choir (<https://highsandliwschoir.ca>).

During Covid, I've mostly confined my activism to photo surveillance and the internet. However, I anticipate more direct involvement in protection of [at least this small part of] the planet from the depredations of TMX in the coming months....

Ask me about my time there, my ongoing involvement in efforts to Stop TMX, and what's a Quaker Jew, anyway?