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## CHRISTIAN CHURCHES AND THE PALESTINE QUESTION

DUNCAN L. CLARKE AND ERIC FLOHR

Mainline American Christian churches, as a group, represent the largest grass-roots body in the United States. Their potential for influencing government policies is substantial, particularly if they act in a sustained, unified fashion. Churches, or major elements within them, have united for political-moral purposes during the civil rights movement of the 1960s, the Vietnam War, and at other times.

Several churches have had long-standing interests in the Arab-Israeli and Palestine questions; most have issued moral pronouncements on the subject. The intifada, however, sparked new ecumenical and interreligious\* actions as well as notable developments within denominations that are grounded in a moral concern for the plight of the Palestinian people. The threat to Palestinian Christians in Israel and the occupied territories is an especially important factor.

The national assemblies of most mainline Christian churches in the United States—Episcopal, Evangelical Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, and others—have taken vigorous, unified policy stances in this area. They agree on the following points: the right of Israel to exist within secure and

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\* The word *ecumenical* refers to fellowship or cooperation among Christian denominations, while *interreligious* activities involve Christians and non-Christians.

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recognized borders; the right of Palestinians to self-determination and sovereignty; respect for human rights; that U.S. aid to the Middle East should be consistent with U.S. human rights policy and reflect opposition to Israeli settlements in the occupied territories; the necessity of an international conference for seeking regional peace; and the need for weapons reductions throughout the Middle East.<sup>1</sup>

These policy positions are well-known. Our principal focus is on what is less visible: the mainline churches' advocacy activities in Washington and their educational efforts concerning the Palestinian question. Three broad groups are examined initially: traditional peace churches, denominations of limited advocacy, and activist churches. Various ecumenical and interreligious undertakings are then addressed.

### *Traditional Peace Churches*

The Brethren, the Friends (Quakers), and the Mennonites fully endorse the above policy positions. As pacifists, they are assertive advocates of disarmament and the curtailment of arms transfers to the region. The Church of the Brethren is the least active of the three,<sup>2</sup> but the Mennonites and Friends have long traditions of overseas humanitarian service. Relief work among the Palestinians by the Mennonites and Friends began shortly after the 1948 Palestine war. For years they were the only Christian denominations working this issue through Washington-based advocacy offices. Consequently, despite their small memberships, Mennonites and Friends have many congregants with Middle East experience. These people form the core of their churches' educational and lobbying activities.

When those Mennonites who serve in the Middle East return to the United States they meet with people in the executive and legislative branches, and share their experiences with their congregations. An annual educational seminar on the Middle East is held in Washington and participants visit their congressmen. The Mennonites also issue "action alert" mailings and publish a regular newsletter that often examines Israeli-Palestinian matters.

The Friends also tap the resources of their members with Middle East experience. There are Quaker schools, development projects, and relief efforts in the occupied territories under the auspices of the Philadelphia-based American Friends Service Committee (AFSC). Quaker international affairs representatives have been stationed in Amman, Jordan, for thirty years. They are the eyes and ears of world Quakerdom in the region. Their full-time responsibility is to travel, observe, communicate, and collect information. The Quaker representatives, who return to the United States each year for educational speaking tours, are crucial elements in the AFSC's extensive peace education program. These people often have access to senior administration officials and frequently serve as informal lines of communication between nations and groups which have no official relations with one another.

The Friends Committee on National Legislation in Washington lobbies Congress, informs Quakers of legislative developments, and publishes a newsletter. To activate phone and write-in campaigns on legislation or policies, this office sends "action alerts" to members with an interest in the Middle East. Action alerts often ask people to contact key members of Congress, although the Friends focus considerable attention on the executive branch, partly because of its greater receptivity to their concerns.

### *Churches of Limited Advocacy*

There are 16.3 million Baptists in the United States, 7.9 million Lutherans, 9.1 million Methodists, and 53.5 million Roman Catholics.<sup>3</sup> These are the nation's largest Christian denominations. With notable exceptions, they have not been among the most active churches in educating their parishioners or in lobbying Congress on the Palestine question. However, there have been some significant developments since 1987.

The 14.7-million-member Southern Baptist Convention is the nation's largest Protestant denomination, but it has been quiet on the question. The Southern Baptists and other Baptist conventions tend to be more fundamentalist in their orientation than most other mainline denominations, and are therefore more inclined to support Israeli policies. Those Southern Baptists (probably a majority) who find biblical justification for the modern state of Israel disagree with the position of the Presbyterian Church (USA), which states that "the State of Israel is a geopolitical entity and is not to be validated theologically."<sup>4</sup> Nonetheless, the Southern Baptist Convention did protest when United Methodist missionary Alex Awad (brother of Quaker peace activist, Mubarak Awad) was denied a visa by Israel in 1991 to serve as pastor to a Palestinian Baptist congregation in East Jerusalem. J. Brent Walker of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs called the visa denial an "egregious violation of religious liberty."<sup>5</sup> Moreover, one Baptist denomination, the 1.6-million-member American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A., is addressing Palestinian issues with considerable sensitivity. Indeed, it is a member of the ecumenical group, Churches for Middle East Peace (C-MEP), which is discussed below.

The 5.4-million-member Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has provided humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people since the 1950s and is an active member of the major Middle East ecumenical body, the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC). Church members learn about Palestinian issues through newsletters, presentations, study guides, and films. The Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs in Washington tracks Middle East policy developments, sends action alerts to church members with an interest in the region, and selectively informs the U.S. government of church positions. In 1991 the ELCA and the Episcopal Church were denounced by the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations for urging U.S. economic pressure on Israel to stop Jewish

settlements in the occupied territories.<sup>6</sup> While the ELCA has not yet lobbied on its own on Palestinian questions, it does work through C-MEP. It should be noted that the 2.6-million-member Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod takes no stand on most international political issues.

Largely through the efforts of the Women's Division of its General Board of Global Ministries, the United Methodist Church is active in educating members about Arab-Israeli issues. Some church publications and action alerts address the subject, recent Methodist annual conferences have featured "schools" on the Middle East, and each summer more than 30,000 Methodist women study National Council of Churches reports on current issues, including the Palestine question. But the Methodists' political advocacy has not yet matched their educational work. The national office of the Women's Division sends action-oriented mailings to its approximately eighty nationwide conference offices, but they rarely reach the grass-roots laity. There are no Methodist churches in the Middle East, the church has no systematic lobbying campaign of its own on Arab-Israeli issues, and it does not have a separate advocacy office in Washington.

There are signs, however, that Methodists are becoming more active. The church is a member of C-MEP and has a representative in Jerusalem to serve as liaison between the MECC and the U.S. Methodist Church. Moreover, church bodies and leaders have been increasingly and pointedly outspoken on Palestinian issues. Israeli actions to suppress the intifada prompted the church to urge the Israeli government to stop mistreating Palestinians because an "iron-fisted policy . . . brutalizes human beings, both oppressed and oppressors."<sup>7</sup> Joe Hale, general secretary of the World Methodist Council, called Israel's treatment of Palestinians "an affront to the religion of both Testaments of the Bible."<sup>8</sup> And Bishop J. Woodrow Hearn, head of the Board of Global Ministries, denounced Israel's "abuse of the rights of Palestinians and [its] relentless oppression of the Christian minority" in Israel.<sup>9</sup>

The National Conference of Catholic Bishops follows the Vatican's guidance on this subject. The Vatican does not maintain diplomatic relations with Israel and is unlikely to establish them before there is an Arab-Israeli peace settlement. The Holy See's primary objectives are: protecting Christians in the region, particularly the three million Catholics; preserving Jerusalem's unique religious status and guaranteeing access to holy places; supporting the Jewish people and the State of Israel; and supporting Palestinian rights, especially the right to a "homeland."<sup>10</sup> The most recent pronouncement of the U.S. Catholic Bishops was a cautious compromise statement issued in November 1989 after well-publicized consultations with both Arab-American and Jewish-American leaders. The Bishops called the intifada "a cry for justice [and] political identity." They urged the U.S. government to "support . . . a Palestinian homeland and Palestinian political rights" and, concurrently, to support Israel, "politically, strategically, and morally."<sup>11</sup> The Bishops, like the Vatican, did not call for a Palestinian "state," nor did they adopt a position toward Israel similar to the one they

had at the time toward El Salvador—urging an end to U.S. military assistance because of the regime's dismal human rights record. Except for issuing infrequent formal statements, the Bishop's Conference has promoted neither educational nor lobbying activities on the Palestine question.

Some Roman Catholic organizations are active, however. The Bishops' Conference asked the Conference of Major Superiors of Men to represent the U.S. Catholic Church in C-MEP because the Bishops felt uncomfortable about joining themselves. The Major Superiors' Conference comprises leaders of men's Catholic religious orders in the United States. It is subject to a distinct, less formal chain of command than are the Bishops and enjoys more freedom of action. Yet the Major Superiors' work on the Palestinian issue focuses almost exclusively on participation in C-MEP.

Another Catholic C-MEP member is the Justice and Peace Office of the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers. The Maryknollers have sponsored seminars on Israeli-Palestinian issues and the Justice and Peace Office has occasionally lobbied members of Congress and the executive branch. But the most important influence of this mission society on the Palestine question is through its publications. When writing for Maryknoll publications, Maryknollers are not bound by church or Maryknoll Society policies. Authors must answer to their superiors, but are otherwise free to interpret events and issues independently. The Justice and Peace Office publishes the widely read and frequently reprinted newsletter, *News Notes*, which often includes information and action items on Arab-Israeli matters. The approximately 1,200 subscribers include Catholic and non-Catholic religious organizations, human rights advocates, college professors, and others.<sup>12</sup>

### *Activist Churches*

Four denominations with a combined membership of 7.4 million are in the forefront of mainline Christian educational and lobbying efforts on Arab-Israeli issues: the Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Unitarian Universalists, and the United Church of Christ. These activist churches have given the issue significant visibility. They are also leaders in an increasingly broad-based ecumenical coalition.

A majority of the 7,600 Anglicans (Episcopalians) in the Middle East are in Israel or the occupied territories. The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem operates thirty schools and other major service institutions in the region. The American Episcopal Church has long encouraged members to understand the concerns of Palestinian Christians. The church's Good Friday offering goes to the Jerusalem Diocese, groups of Episcopalians annually visit church institutions in the occupied territories and Israel, and a church group sponsors speaking tours in the U.S. by people like Bishop Samir Kafity of the Diocese of Jerusalem.<sup>13</sup>

The Episcopalians have not limited their lobbying to C-MEP activities; they lobby Congress directly. The church's Washington office cultivates cor-



dial relationships with the forty-one Episcopal members of the House, nineteen Episcopal senators, and important non-Episcopal committee members. The church's House of Bishops has also begun to lobby Congress. In September 1990, for instance, fifty bishops spoke with their respective representatives and senators. The Diocese of Washington, D.C., is particularly active, especially through its Committee on Israeli-Palestinian Peace and this group's newsletter, *The Cobban Letter* (named for a frequent contributor, Middle East specialist Helena Cobban). The Committee organized the first national Episcopal Advocacy Day on Israeli-Palestinian issues, held on 7 June 1989. Episcopal clergy and laity, led by the late Bishop John Walker, met with about forty members of Congress. Some members of the local Jewish community subsequently charged the Washington Diocese with impeding Middle East peace efforts.<sup>14</sup>

No church is more committed on the Palestinian issue or has more informed, organized advocacy and educational programs than the Presbyterian Church (USA). It was one of the first denominations to urge the U.S. government to "end its unqualified commitment to Israel" and "deny further aid to Israel until . . . [Israel] ends its West Bank and Gaza settlements policy."<sup>15</sup> The Middle East has been a major mission area for the church for more than 160 years, and there are 50,000 Presbyterians in the region. The Presbyterian Peacemaking Program has brought prominent Palestinian Christians to the U.S. to speak, and has sponsored trips to Israel and the occupied territories. Returning travelers write and speak about the area.

The church's Washington office invites Presbyterians to contact executive and legislative branch officials, especially their own congressmen. However, they are not always encouraged to identify themselves as Presbyterians. Because the church is so outspoken, there is some concern that gratuitous disclosure of denominational affiliation might dilute the impact of their opinions. The Washington office also engages in direct lobbying, targeted particularly at the more than twenty Presbyterian members of the House and several Presbyterian senators. The office finds considerable congressional responsiveness to human rights concerns, but little interest in linking human rights or other issues with continued U.S. foreign aid to Israel.

In January 1992 the national Presbyterian Church instituted a Covenants of Stewardship program which encourages church members to put church teachings into practice in three areas of life. Stewardship of Public Life is one of these areas. Among the ten options within this public policy area is the Middle East. This enhanced public policy emphasis, managed by the church's Washington office, should increase the number and, perhaps, effectiveness of Presbyterian policy advocates.<sup>16</sup>

The Unitarian Universalist Association is a small denomination, but it is active on Arab-Israeli issues. Robert Alpern directs its Washington office and also chairs C-MEP. Alpern leads many trips to the Middle East. The travelers, mostly clergy, have been responsible upon their return for numerous interviews, newspaper articles, radio shows, sermons, and so forth. The

Association's Washington office sends action alerts and other mailings on Middle East and Palestinian issues to members; Alpern lectures widely on the subject; and an annual Unitarian Universalist workshop in Washington often features sections on the Middle East. Unitarian Universalists are urged to contact their congressmen and Alpern personally lobbies legislators.

The fourth activist church, the United Church of Christ (UCC), has a 200-year history of involvement in the Middle East through health care projects, educational undertakings, and relief efforts. It works closely with the MECC. Like other activist denominations, the UCC sends action alerts and mailings to members and conducts workshops and seminars on Palestinian issues. But while the church has lobbied Congress in conjunction with UCC seminars on the Middle East, it has not sponsored a major lobby event of its own. The UCC has a policy of not engaging in activities as a denomination when those activities can be pursued ecumenically. Hence, lobbying is primarily through C-MEP.

### *Ecumenical and Interreligious Groups*

Several ecumenical and interreligious groups address Middle East issues. The most visible ecumenical group is the National Council of Churches (NCC), which comprises thirty-two Protestant and Orthodox communions. The NCC's widely circulated 1980 "Middle East Policy Statement" recognized the Palestinians' right to "a sovereign state."<sup>17</sup> All Council members with Washington offices are members of C-MEP, and the NCC's Middle East Committee handles C-MEP's administration. The Washington office of the NCC lobbies within the C-MEP framework.

C-MEP is a coordinating organization of nine mainline Protestant denominations, the NCC, and four organizations, two of which are Catholic groups. C-MEP began in 1984 as the Middle East Task Force and came into existence under its current name in 1987. It seeks "security and justice for all peoples and countries in the region" and concentrates on human rights, terrorism, arms transfers, the status of Jerusalem, and a peace process where all parties, "including the leadership designated by the Palestinian people," have a part.<sup>18</sup> It has a small budget provided by member organizations and a one-person staff, Corinne Whitlatch. The C-MEP member organizations meet monthly to discuss policies and activities, and information is distributed through the publications and mailing lists of these organizations. Despite C-MEP's meager resources and infrastructure and its lack of a newsletter or action alert network of its own, C-MEP has conducted phone campaigns on several issues, including U.S. housing loan guarantees to Israel in 1990 and 1991. In January 1992, teams of C-MEP people visited congressional offices to urge that such loan guarantees be tied to a freeze on Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, and sent a letter to President Bush with the same appeal, which was signed by fifteen heads of prominent Christian organiza-



tions.\* C-MEP seeks to influence officials and affect the language in bills and reports primarily through ongoing visits to congressional and executive branch offices.

Although not a C-MEP effort, many people associated with C-MEP member organizations participated in a November 1989 Interfaith Call on Congress for Israeli-Palestinian Peace. About 400 participants, including many Jewish and Arab Americans, visited congressional offices in teams. Several legislators reported that this was their first visit by anything other than a committed pro-Israel group on the Palestinian issue. The C-MEP visitors were often asked to return, but some legislators said that while they personally agreed with the positions outlined, they were not going to do anything on the issue because they feared the political consequences. The first official C-MEP Washington Advocacy Days event was held over 13–15 May 1990. The effort went reasonably well, but faltered occasionally at the tactical level. Lobbying techniques were subsequently refined for the April 1991 Advocacy Days.<sup>19</sup>

The Christian institutions and groups of C-MEP agree among themselves relatively easily and are reasonably cohesive on the Palestine question. They are, however, somewhat more susceptible to Jewish community suspicions of latent anti-Semitism than are interreligious groups, despite C-MEP's acute sensitivity to Jewish community sensibilities. On the other hand, it is generally more difficult for interreligious groups of Christians and Jews—or Christians, Jews, and Muslims—to address Arab-Israeli matters than it is for ecumenical organizations. The contentiousness of the issues threatens to disrupt productive interfaith cooperation in other areas. Arab-Israeli problems are, therefore, usually ignored.<sup>20</sup>

An example can be drawn from the experience of the North American Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine (NACC). The NACC dates from 1984 and coordinates various secular and religious nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) concerned about Palestinian issues. Although unaffiliated with the United Nations, UN resolutions guide its efforts. The NACC publishes a newsletter and sponsors occasional petition and letter writing campaigns, but its primary activity is arranging annual symposia in New York. Because of NACC's diverse membership—Jewish, Muslim, Christian, and secular—final statements at these symposia have been general, qualified, and difficult to reach. The NACC has never lobbied in Washington.

The U.S. Interreligious Committee for Peace in the Middle East, however, does deal with the difficulties of interfaith relations. The Committee assumed institutional form in June 1987 when forty-five Jewish, Muslim, and Christian leaders met to elect a board of directors, appoint an executive director (Ronald J. Young, a former AFSC Middle East representative), and draft

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\* See *JPS* XXI, No. 3 (Spring 1992), Document C3.

an agreed policy statement. That statement, "A Time for Peace," asks the U.S. government to make Middle East peace a priority and to pursue negotiations on the basis of three principles: Israel's right to peace and security as embodied in United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338; the Palestinians' right to self-determination, including the right to choose their own representatives; and the need for an international peace conference involving all parties to the conflict and the permanent members of the UN Security Council.<sup>21</sup>

By January 1988, 500 prominent religious leaders, businessmen, and academics had endorsed "A Time for Peace" and the Interreligious Committee publicly announced its existence. The Committee believes that U.S. political leaders must be presented with a broad-based interreligious constituency for Middle East peace. Jews and Muslims must interact, says Young, and, while Christians must be actively involved, they should not sit in the "first row." Moreover, Young asserts that "debate [on the Palestine issue] between Jews and non-Jews . . . will be morally bankrupt and self-defeating" and (contrary to several mainline Christian churches) he argues against pressuring Israel by threatening to cut its foreign assistance.<sup>22</sup>

The Committee has concentrated on increasing its membership and forming local interreligious committees around the country. It had 1,400 prominent members and about 14 local committees by 1991. The group's first National Convocation for Peace in the Middle East was held in Washington in 1989, featuring a press conference, workshops, and visits to 101 congressional offices by interfaith groups representing 38 states. Congressmen often remarked that this was their first meeting with an interreligious group on Israeli-Palestinian issues, and that this demonstration of solidarity made a strong impression. A second National Convocation was held in Washington in 1991. Moreover, Young is constantly traveling, speaking, and organizing, and the group's lobbying and educational activities appear to be increasing.

The Interreligious Committee's inclusive membership has some advantages: the notion that political success is more likely when Christians work with and through the Muslim and, especially, Jewish communities is presumptively credible; the image of "togetherness" is an asset in the eyes of many congressmen; and the Committee is not vulnerable to charges or suspicions of anti-Semitism. But an interfaith approach has real limitations:

- The cohesiveness of interreligious coalitions is questionable. The principles in "A Time for Peace" are necessarily vague. When their meanings are clarified, as they eventually must be, fissures will surely arise in the coalition. Such a frail foundation cannot sustain a vigorous lobbying campaign. Moreover, most Jewish leaders resent criticism of Israel by non-Jews.<sup>23</sup> This does not bode well for frank interreligious dialogue.
- Unlike C-MEP, the Interreligious Committee consists of individuals, not institutions. The collective influence of selected religious and secular leaders is, therefore, limited. It may also be worth noting that while almost 60

percent of American Jewish leaders in 1989 thought Israel was treating West Bank Arabs "unfairly,"<sup>24</sup> major Jewish organizations did little to put these concerns into political practice.

- The Committee's inclination to relegate the numerically predominant Christians to something other than the "front row" may be appropriate within the group itself, but is questionable when extended to the larger American polity. Arab-Israeli issues are not, for most Americans, Muslim-Jewish issues. They are international issues of national concern which engage the moral, political, security, and fiscal interests of all U.S. citizens. Excluding mainline Christians from the first pew effectively buttresses a domestic political status quo in which Congress consistently defends Israeli interests.

- The Interreligious Committee's opposition to using U.S. foreign aid as an instrument for change reinforces the status quo. Absent U.S. pressure, Israel has little reason to stop contravening U.S. policies on human rights, West Bank settlements, Jerusalem, nuclear proliferation, etc. Congress is very unlikely to place meaningful conditions on aid to Israel if it has no political incentive to do so.

### *Conclusion*

The number, variety, and scope of mainline Christian church activities on the Palestine question since the mid-1980s is remarkable. Arab-Israeli issues are addressed through scores of educational programs, publications, lobbying efforts, and increasingly more forceful policy statements. Activists like the Episcopalians and Presbyterians have led the way, while most other mainline churches have become more involved.

These developments paralleled a shift in American public opinion. Israel's human rights abuses and resistance to U.S. policies and peace efforts weakened public support for its large annual U.S. foreign aid subsidy.<sup>25</sup> Hence, the gap that sometimes exists between a church leadership's policy pronouncements and its membership's views (on abortion, for example) was not evident here.

Despite the churches' efforts on the Palestinian question, however, they have yet to realize the tangible success, such as the defeat or derailment of proposed legislation. They were on the "winning" side of the 1991 loan guarantee dispute, but probably influenced the deferral of Israel's request only slightly. The churches, which are deeply concerned about the legitimate rights and expectations of Israelis as well as Palestinians, are constrained in their lobbying by insufficient funds.

Two other factors particularly inhibit their efforts. The first, and most decisive, was well put by James Reardon-Anderson, coordinator of the 1989 Episcopal Advocacy Days: "There is a lack of commitment in the American Christian community . . . in comparison to the American Jewish community. Christians just don't care enough."<sup>26</sup> The commitment of most American

Jews to Israel provides the finances, staffs, organizational networks, and votes needed to sustain a continuously effective effort. While the mainline churches have certainly made their presence known to Congress, lawmakers usually have little to gain in terms of votes or campaign contributions by opposing the Israel-related legislative agenda of major Jewish groups.

The second factor has been mentioned—the fear of being labeled anti-Semitic. A 1991 survey found that 40 percent of American Jews agreed with the following statement: “The criticism of Israel that we hear derives mainly from anti-Semitism.”<sup>27</sup> Many Christians (especially clergy) are so concerned about this that they are reluctant to give the Palestinian question more salience. It is only natural that such concerns weigh heavily on Christians, given the dismal historical record of the Christian West toward the Jewish people. But this fear, and sometimes guilt, can so paralyze people as to impede the pursuit of essential church missions: the promotion both of a stable peace and of justice for the oppressed.

Despite limitations, mainline Christian churches may gradually become somewhat more influential on the Palestine question. In addition to being in step with the general direction of American public opinion, external events could be important. Any Israeli move to alter Jerusalem’s multireligious character, for example, could quickly affect American Christians and, of course, Muslims. When Israel covertly funded the takeover of St. John’s Hospice in the Christian quarter of Jerusalem in the spring of 1990, many members of Congress were irate, and American Jewish organizations warned Israel about the negative political ramifications.<sup>28</sup> Analyst Larry Fabian believes that “no other development . . . would vex religious America more deeply” than tension in Jerusalem with religious overtones.<sup>29</sup> Absent such external stimuli, however, the churches’ political achievements are likely to be modest. Hopes of dramatic successes can only be matters of faith. Still, faith is an abundant resource with this group.

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#### INTERVIEWS

- Mia Adjali, Women’s Division, General Board of Global Ministries, United Methodist Church, New York, 5 March 1991
- Nancy Alexander, Washington office, Friends Committee on National Legislation, 12 February 1991
- Robert Alpern, Director, Washington office, Unitarian Universalist Association, 1 March 1991 and 14 January 1992
- Gail Boling, North American Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine, Washington, D.C., 13 March 1991
- Reverend Mark Brown, Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs, Washington, D.C., 3 July 1991
- Dan Butry, Director, Peace Program, American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A., Washington, D.C., 26 February 1991
- Brother Eugene Caspar, Director, Justice and Peace Office, Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America (Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers), Washington, D.C., 8 March 1991

- Betty Coats, Presiding Bishop's Staff Officer, Washington office, The Episcopal Church, 12 February 1991
- Dennis Frado, Washington office, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 12 March 1991
- Delton Franz, Director, Washington office, Mennonite Central Committee, 12 February 1991
- Oli Ganaway, Presbyterian Peacemaking Office, Washington, D.C., 11 March 1991
- James Hamilton, Director, Washington office, National Council of Churches, 14 January 1992
- Father J. Bryan Hehir, Director, Justice and Peace Division, United States Catholic Conference, Washington, D.C., 11 April 1991
- Melva Johnson, Acting Director, Washington office, Church of the Brethren, 22 February 1991
- Richard Killner, Director, Presbyterian Peacemaking Office, Washington, D.C., 8 March 1991
- Reverend Jay Lintner, Director, Washington office, United Church of Christ, 16 April 1991
- James Matlack, Washington office, American Friends Service Committee, 11 March 1991
- L. Robert McClean, General Board of Church and Society, United Methodist Church, New York, 5 March 1991
- Father Joseph Nangle, former representative of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men to Churches for Middle East Peace, Washington, D.C., 12 February 1991
- Walter Owensby, Director, Washington office, Presbyterian Church (USA), 8 March 1991 and 14 January 1992
- Robert Parham, Southern Baptist Convention, Washington, D.C., 26 February 1991
- Lorette Picciano-Hanson, Program Director, Interfaith Impact for Justice and Peace, Washington, D.C., 15 March 1991
- James Reardon-Anderson, Chairman, Committee on Israeli-Palestinian Peace, Washington Diocese, The Episcopal Church, 7 March 1991
- Sister Nancy Sylvester, Impact, Washington, D.C., 19 March 1991
- Corinne Whitlatch, Churches for Middle East Peace, Washington, D.C., 12 March 1990 and 5 February 1991
- Lisa Wright, Washington office, National Council of Churches, 13 March 1991
- Ronald J. Young, Executive Director, U.S. Interreligious Committee for Peace in the Middle East, 16 April 1991

## NOTES

1. Churches for Middle East Peace, "Washington Advocacy Days," Washington, D.C., 13-15 May 1990.
2. The Brethren's religious beliefs impart an apolitical legacy. However, the Brethren General Board Meeting has passed resolutions supportive of Palestinian aspirations.
3. The figure for the Baptists includes only the Southern Baptist Convention and the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1990*, 110th ed. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1990), pp. 56-57.
4. John Bolt, "Presbyterians Back Jewish Faith, Stay Neutral of Middle East Politics," *Washington Post*, 20 June 1987, p. D6. The role of fundamentalist and evangelical churches is beyond the scope of this article. If all fundamentalist and evangelical Baptists are in-

cluded, the denomination could number 30 million or more. A coalition of twenty fundamentalist churches established a pro-Israel, California-based lobbying organization in 1987: the Christian Mid-East Conference. Another fundamentalist lobby appeared in 1990, Christians' Israel Public Action Campaign, described by a founder as "the sister of AIPAC [American Israel Public Affairs Committee]." Ruth Mouly, "Christian Soldiers—for Israel," *Washington Jewish Week*, 25 April 1991, p. 19.

5. "Visa Politics: The Alex Awad Case," *The Christian Century* (11 December 1991), p. 1168.
6. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, "Advocacy," Washington, D.C., 1989; Rev. Mark Brown, "The Forgotten Faithful," in *World Encounter* (Chicago: Division for Global Mission, ELCA, 1991), p. 22.

7. General Board of Church and Society, UMC, "Faithful Witness on Today's Issues: Arab-Israeli Conflict," Washington, D.C., 1988, p. 9.
8. Joe Hale, "A Democracy for Israelis Only?," in *Christian Social Action* (Washington, D.C.: General Board of Church and Society, UMC, September 1988), p. 8.
9. *Virginia Episcopalian* 99 (May 1990).
10. J. Bryan Hehir, "Papal Foreign Policy," *Foreign Policy* 78 (Spring 1990), pp. 47-48; George E. Irani, *The Papacy and the Middle East: The Role of the Holy See in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1962-1984* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986), pp. 54-55, 95-96, 156-62.
11. National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Toward Peace in the Middle East: Perspectives, Principles and Hope* (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1989), pp. 22, 26. See David Scott, "U.S. Bishops' Statement: An Eloquent Evasion of Moral Accountability," *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* 8 (February 1990), p. 23.
12. A third Catholic group is Network. It has not focused on the Palestinians, but might do so in the future. Network is a registered lobby with a paid membership of 10,000.
13. *Remember the Forgotten Faithful: The Arab Christian Church in the Middle East* (Jerusalem: The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, 1989), p. 1.
14. Marjorie Hyer, "Episcopal Bishop Leads Effort for Palestinian State," *Washington Post*, 8 June 1989, p. C3; *The Cobban Letter* 3 (March/April 1990), p. 3.
15. Washington Office and Peacemaking Program, Presbyterian Church (USA), "Become A Presbyterian Advocate of the General Assembly's Policy Recommendations on the Middle East," Washington, D.C., (undated).
16. Presbyterian Church (USA), "Covenants of Stewardship—Interim Description," Washington, D.C., 1991.
17. National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., "Middle East Policy Statement," New York, 6 November 1980, pp. 11-12.
18. Churches for Middle East Peace, "Who We Are—The Focus of Our Work," Washington, D.C., 1990.
19. During the 1990 event a few participants launched emotional verbal assaults on Israeli policies which created an "inflammatory, negative atmosphere" in some congressional offices.
20. This is so, for instance, with the Christian-Jewish group, Interfaith Impact for Justice and Peace, founded in December 1990.
21. "Building a Constituency for Middle East Peace," an interview with Ronald J. Young, *Christian Social Action* (September 1988), pp. 20-21; U.S. Interreligious Committee for Peace in the Middle East, "A Time for Peace," Philadelphia, PA, 1988.
22. "Building a Constituency," pp. 20, 22-23. Young would seat Arab-American Christians in the first row.
23. Steven M. Cohen, *Israel-Diaspora Relations: A Survey of American Jewish Leaders* (Tel Aviv: Israel-Diaspora Institute, January 1990), p. 68. According to Young, "trying for a more detailed position might generate . . . splits among us . . ." Letter from Ronald Young to Duncan L. Clarke, 5 June 1991.
24. Cohen, *Israel-Diaspora Relations*, pp. 9, 67-69.
25. Tom W. Smith, *What Do Americans Think About Jews?* (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1991), p. 57; Duncan L. Clarke and Steven Woehrel, "Reforming United States Security Assistance," *The American University Journal of Law and Policy* 6 (Winter 1991), pp. 245-48; John E. Reilly, "Public Opinion: The Pulse of the '90s," *Foreign Policy* 82 (Spring 1991), pp. 93-94. Interviewees often mentioned their initial surprise at finding so little support for Israel among rank and file church members.
26. Interview, James Reardon-Anderson, 7 March 1991.
27. 33% disagreed and 27% were not sure. American Jewish Committee, Institute on American Jewish-Israeli Relations, "The 1991 National Survey of American Jews," New York, 1991, p. 3. Survey research since 1978 indicates that linkage between "anti-Israel and anti-Semitic attitudes . . . is not especially strong." Smith, *What Do Americans Think About Jews?*, p. 16.
28. Larry Cohler, "Don't Misread the Numbers," *Washington Jewish Week*, 10 May 1990, p. 7.
29. Larry Fabian, "The Role of Religion," in *U.S. Middle East Policy: The Domestic Setting*, ed. Shai Feldman (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988) p. 55.