

Unitarian Universalists for Justice in the Middle East

2016 – 2017 Annual Report

by Mark Jagner

Description

Unitarian Universalists for Justice in the Middle East (UUJME) advocates for a human rights-based approach to achieving peace in Israel-Palestine and resolving the seven-decades-long Palestinian refugee crisis. UUJME has 22 chapters in 14 states, including our group at UUAA.

Accomplishments

With Larry Cooper as national president, members of Ann Arbor UUJME were instrumental in drafting and advancing the business resolution “Divestment from Corporations Complicit in the Violation of Palestinian Rights” at the 2016 UUA General Assembly. UUAA delegates attended GA well informed about human rights abuses and Apartheid conditions in Israel-Palestine. Despite lobbying of UU clergy and top UUA officials by pro-Israel groups to silence debate, a 55% vote in favor of divestment demonstrated denomination-wide support but fell short of the two-thirds required for adoption. However, our efforts likely contributed to the UUA Socially Responsible Investment committee’s decision to adopt a human rights screen.

Other Activities

- Anne Garcia organized a screening at the Michigan Theatre of the “The Wanted 18”, a film about 18 intifada cows that were declared a threat to Israel’s security in 1987
- Documentary films: “Roadmap to Apartheid” and “Occupation of the American Mind”
- Video: “Remarks on Middle East Peace” by Sec. John Kerry
- Fourth series of Israel-Palestine study sessions
- Promoted campaign to Boycott Hewlett Packard
- Monthly meetings and information table in the social hall

Active Participants

Mark Jagner and Anne Garcia (Co-Chairs), Larry Cooper, Diane Cooper, Ruth Vail, Marina Brown, Akin Ori-Orisan, Halla Motawi, Jane Capin, Jan Bower, May Seikaly

Reflection

This year reflects more active engagement in resistance against oppression as we join with other faith communities, college campuses, and human rights activists around the world in support of the Boycott, Divestment & Sanctions (BDS) Movement for Palestinian Rights.