

Annual Report for Israel Palestine Working Group of New England Yearly Meeting

“Great openings” appear as this spring’s massive protests make visible the many connections among oppressed communities seeking justice. The Israel Palestine Working Group (IPWG)—activists nurturing comprehension of shifting realities—asks Friends during 2020 sessions to affirm that the Equality Testimony is universal. Let us embrace our awareness of unity among all who seek justice both nationally and globally.

Can we unite, now, when asked to accompany the oppressed? There was no discussion last year when Friends heard internationally renowned Palestinian Quaker lecturer and author Jean Zaru challenge NEYM to make a decision about whom we are accompanying—the oppressor or the oppressed?

IPWG’s major emphasis this year is AFSC’s No Way To Treat A Child campaign. Northwest Quarterly Meeting’s Minute 202038 asks Friends, at 2020 sessions, to support HR 2407: *Promoting Human Rights for Palestinian Children Living Under the Israeli Military Occupation Act*. This national effort invites us all to 1) Educate folks about Palestinian children incarcerated in Israeli military prisons and H.R. 2407; 2) Write an op-ed in support of H.R. 2407; 3) Lobby Congress on behalf of H.R. 2407, as an individual or group.

IPWG coordinated an endorsement of AFSC’s call for Israel to release all children from military prisons with the Racial Social Economic Justice Committee; together with RSEJ, we also asked Friends to work for the release of those most vulnerable to Covid-19 in U.S. prisons.

One of our 2019 lunchtime discussions focused on the paucity of Monthly Meeting and Yearly Meeting connections with AFSC’s efforts to achieve justice in Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem. Another looked at Jewish Voice for Peace’s **Deadly Exchange campaign** to end Israeli military training of police across the U.S. Derek Chauvin’s Memorial Day chokehold on George Floyd led Miko Peled (the internationally known author of *The General’s Son: The Journey of an Israeli in Palestine*) to write, “The similarities are no coincidence and they may well be the result of what has become known as the ‘Deadly Exchange,’ a collaboration between the two racist states who see no problem in executing and watching the slow agonizing death of black and brown people.” More **HERE**.

In another 2019 business meeting, the presiding clerk asked Skip Schiel to speak about his 17 years of activism in Palestine: a witness that was visible in an exhibit of Skip's photographs from his two-month journey last spring. He answered questions about "The Ongoing Nakba" during a dinner presentation.

IPWG makes available The Promised Land Exhibit, a set of traveling panels from The Jewish Museum of the Palestinian Experience. Monthly meetings find it to be helpful as they search for the meaning of antisemitism, colonization, Islamophobia, racism, and Zionism.

In other developments this year: Cliff Bennett attended the Third Conference of Scientists for Palestine at MIT; Northeast Kingdom MM approved a travel minute for Scott and Susan Rhodewalt; and Palestine Museum in Woodbridge, Connecticut featured Skip Schiel's The Ongoing Nakba photographic project exhibit.

Our **WEBSITE** is a resource for Friends to discern who to accompany in seeking justice. Knowing that "an injury to one is an injury to all" we remember "there is no justice until there is justice for all."

Skip Schiel, Clerk

Scott Rhodewalt, Recording Clerk