

**The Alliance of Concerned Jewish Canadians (ACJC)
invites you to a strategic planning conference to build an
Independent Canadian Jewish Movement
For Peace And Justice & Against The Occupation
March 28-30, 2008
Steelworkers' Hall 25 Cecil Street, Toronto**

The ACJC is convening a meeting of Jewish groups in Canada that are united in opposing Israel's occupation of the West Bank and siege of Gaza. Our goal is to discuss coordinating the existing anti-Occupation movements across Canada who share a commitment to building real peace and justice in the Middle East. Working together, we have the potential to offer alternative perspectives to the views of organizations like the Canadian Jewish Congress and B'Nai Brith, who support uncritically all actions of Israeli governments.

We hope to unite in pursuit of the following goals:

To give Jewish Canadians an alternative that works for peace and justice: The coordination of alternative Jewish movements would enable us to work more effectively for peace and justice in Israel and Palestine. By uniting our efforts, we can convey to members of the Jewish community and the wider society the fact that many Jews are concerned about the Israeli government's intransigence in maintaining a never-ending confrontation with the Palestinian people.

To challenge the Jewish establishment's views on the Middle East: Self-appointed organizations supporting the most hawkish positions claim to speak for all Jewish Canadians. Their attitude of blind, unquestioning loyalty to the policies and actions of Israeli governments undermines prospects for peace in the Middle East, promotes insecurity of Jews and Arabs alike, and inhibits democratic discussion. They function as a political lobby group that tries to dominate Jewish thinking and shape socially repugnant policies in the name of all Jews. An independent movement could give voice to a variety of Jewish opinions and inform the media as well as the government that there are a variety of views on this subject that exist within the Jewish population in Canada.

To open up discussion about Israeli government and military actions: Out of a combination of fear and loyalty, many Jewish Canadians feel pressured either to support Israel's actions and policies uncritically or to remain silent. They know that those who protest unjust Israeli government policies risk being branded anti-Semites or "self-hating." Within Israel itself, public criticism of government policies is a normal part of civic discourse, yet the expression of similar views in Canada is denounced by self-proclaimed leaders of the Jewish community. Together we can provide an antidote to their dominance by offering both Jews and non-Jews alternative perspectives.

To support the right of Canadians to discuss Israeli policies without fear of being accused of anti-Semitism: We are adamantly opposed to anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and all other forms of racism. The outrageous fact is that those who criticize Israeli policies are often attacked as being anti-Semitic. (Witness the treatment of former U.S. president Jimmy Carter when he criticized Israel's treatment of the Palestinians.) Jews who do not react in lockstep with Israel,

especially if they are well organized, have a unique ability to defend those who raise justifiable concerns about official Israeli practices.

To promote contacts with Muslims and Arabs in Canada and to demonstrate that we can work together for peace: We have an important role to play in standing up against anti-Arab and anti-Muslim racism and in promoting peace and harmony among different ethnic and religious groups here in Canada and in the Middle East.

To oppose wars of aggression: Israeli and U.S. hawks are calling for a pre-emptive assault on Iran and continuing occupations of Palestine and Iraq. Independent Jews are able to say, loudly and clearly, “Not In Our Name!”

To work in solidarity with the peace movements and war resisters within Israel: Many Israelis and other progressive Jews oppose the Occupation and other unjust Israeli government policies. Canadian media tend to downplay or ignore dissent within Israel, leaving a false impression that there is a single, unanimous point of view amongst Jews that supports everything Israel does. We can combat this illusion by publicizing and supporting the efforts of progressive and dissident Jews inside and outside of Israel.

To coordinate national campaigns to educate and work in political concert with Jews and non-Jews to promote peace and social justice in Israel/Palestine. We can conduct coordinated campaigns, do research and carry out educational work. For example, in federal elections, we can focus attention on those political parties whose policies fail to promote justice and peace as well as those of the CJC, CIJA and B’Nai Brith on issues related to the Middle East.

Purpose of the Conference: to Coordinate Anti-Occupation Groups

- To network, to share resources, and to discuss ways to support each others’
- work in order to make our efforts more effective.
- To establish strategic and tactical priorities.
- To facilitate and encourage the formation of working groups, communication networks, and local chapters of ACJC that would provide platforms for independent Jews to speak their mind on Israel, Palestine and other issues.
- To invite anti-Occupation organizations to affiliate with the ACJC to make our collective work more effective.
- To ensure that critical Jewish voices are heard throughout Canada.

Who Is Being Invited?

1. Members of anti-Occupation Jewish groups seeking peace and justice in Israel/ Palestine.
2. Members of Jewish-Muslim, Jewish-Arab, and Jewish-Palestinian groups.
3. Representatives of potential allies (international Jewish peace and justice groups, Canadian unions, churches, Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian groups, and peace groups).
4. Members of ACJC.

Friday night and Saturday will focus on dialogue and include all participants. The plenary session on Sunday will focus on a wide-ranging discussion which could include plans for

concerted actions. This decision-making session will have the purpose of bringing together proposals that reflect a broad consensus.

Before the Conference

- Prepare action ideas, strategic suggestions, and ways that the group you belong to might contribute to building a pan-Canadian movement.
- Prepare to present your group's views and to engage in making decisions about how we can most effectively work together.
- Contact us with any questions, concerns, or suggestions that will help make this conference a success.

Agreeing to any specific solution (1-state, 2-state, etc.) is NOT a pre-condition of participation in this conference. Let us know if you or your group 1) can offer financial help to cover costs of the conference or 2) need financial help to send delegates to Toronto. Please join us at this historic conference.

Yours for peace and justice,

Diana Ralph
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Conference Planning Coordinator, Alliance of Concerned Jewish Canadians

The Alliance of Concerned Jewish Canadians, Alliance de Canadiens/nes juifs/juives concernés/es (ACJC) is an umbrella organization of Canadian Jewish groups and individuals who believe Canadian Jews should play a larger role in supporting and promoting a peaceful and just solution to the Israel-Palestinian conflict. We are sponsoring this conference to clarify areas of mutual agreement and to explore ways we all can support each other without sacrificing the autonomy of any individual group.

ACJC2006-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ACJC2006>

News/nouvelles & discussion List-e:

JUNITY-CANADA-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

JEWISH CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM

Name _____

Organizational affiliation _____

Address _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Special needs (food, hearing, mobility, translation) _____

Do you need a billet in Toronto? _____

Do you need financial aid for travel? (how much?) _____

Top 3 workshop preferences (1=highest, 3=lowest)

- _____ Strategies to influence mainstream Jewish groups and individuals
- _____ Getting our views out: Communication and media strategies
- _____ Changing Canadian policies: lobbying strategies
- _____ Building alliances with labour, churches, and peace movement around boycott, divestment and other tactics
- _____ Supporting international and Israeli Jewish peace movements
- _____ Growing a progressive Jewish student movement
- _____ Creating a progressive Jewish think tank
- _____ Challenging Islamophobia: Alliances with Palestinians, Muslims & Arabs
- _____ Women organizing for peace in Israel/Palestine
- _____ Brainstorming ideas for creating an infrastructure for the umbrella group
- _____ (Your suggestion) _____

Suggested donation: \$50

Please donate more if you have the resources, to help cover costs, including subsidies to low income registrants.

If you cannot afford \$50, please pay what you can. No one will be turned away.

Amount of donation \$ _____

REGISTER BY MARCH 1

Email registration form to: [jewish.conference@yahoo.ca](mailto: jewish.conference@yahoo.ca)

Mail cheque and registration form to: 22 Boyce Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K2B 6H9