

Israel Discourse Advisory Committee

Report to Board of Trustees

March 20, 2018

The Israel Discourse Advisory Committee (referred to as “IDAC” or “the committee” throughout this report) did not meet during the month of February but convened on March 8. At that time, Rabbi Bach updated the committee on plans for an educational activity on Zionism he will be conducting this fall in partnership with Emily Katz through the Adult Education Committee. The course, possibly a single offering or a series of classes or seminars, will be a broad treatment of the topic, using Gil Troy's, *The Zionist Ideas* as a reader and sourcebook. The committee expressed its continuing support for this offering.

The committee discussed at length the offer of a congregant to donate an Israeli and an American flag to the congregation to be displayed in the sanctuary or elsewhere in the synagogue. Because the introduction of these flags into the physical setting of the synagogue at this particular time presents difficult issues, it was felt best to devote additional thought and discussion to the topic, taking it up again at its next meeting when members absent at this meeting may be present, before making a recommendation.

The committee reviewed three preliminary ideas presented by the Adult Education Committee in response to its request for greater overall programmatic balance on Israel-Palestine issues. The prevailing view of the committee was that these ideas on the whole do not adequately respond to the concerns that had been expressed earlier about presenting a breadth of perspectives in this sphere. The committee outlined its concerns about each of the ideas, which have since been conveyed to the Adult Education Committee. The committee also reiterated its view that while it is its responsibility (that is, the responsibility of the Israel Discourse Advisory Committee, or IDAC) to provide its judgment on these matters, it remains the role of the Adult Education Committee to initiate, plan, and conduct programming. Accordingly, the committee (IDAC) encouraged the Adult Education Committee to be more proactive in seeking potential speakers and topics that would achieve greater overall breadth of perspectives. In an effort to be helpful to the Adult Education Committee in fulfilling its role, the committee (IDAC) also developed a number of specific, practical suggestions, subsequently conveyed to the Adult Education Committee, on how that group might identify potential speakers.

In response to a question about a situation that arose on the day of the meeting, the committee was advised that an inappropriate reference to Judea Reform Congregation had been removed from an Action Network Petition to the Durham City Council in connection with the “Demilitarize From Durham2Palestine” campaign. It is not known how that reference got on the online form or how long it had been there, but it had been replaced earlier that day.

Submitted by Norm Loewenthal, Committee Chair