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AMERICAN-ARAB ANTI-DISCRIMINATION COMMITTEE (ADC)

Chairman: James Abourezk
Executive Director: James Zogby
Headquarters: Washington, D.C.
Founded: 1980
Publications: ADC Reports, ADC Issues, ADC Background Papers

The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) was organized in May, 1980, by former South Dakota Senator James Abourezk, and leading pro-PLO activist, James Zogby.

Although ADC contends that its purpose is to combat negative "stereotyping of Arabs in the U.S. media" and "discrimination against Arab-Americans in employment, education and political life," it has emerged as perhaps the most vocal and highly active pro-PLO propaganda group in the U.S. ADC's activities and publications reflect a number of political goals not included in its stated purpose, ranging from suspension of U.S. aid to Israel to provision of political support to suspected PLO terrorists residing in the U.S. ADC currently boasts 41 regional chapters across the country and a national membership of 11,000.

During ADC's first year of operation, the organization formed some 20 grassroots chapters. Marking the establishment of each new chapter, ADC held "outreach dinners" to mobilize the active support of local Arab-Americans and the sponsorship of public officials. During these founding dinners, ADC leaders consistently related the issue of Arab stereotyping to both U.S.-Israeli relations and the pro-Israel lobby. At the founding meeting in Los Angeles, for instance, Abourezk charged that "because of America's involvement with Israel, so many in this country are turning into fascists" and are defaming the Arab people.

According to Abourezk and Zogby, the 1980 Abscam scandal was a dramatic example of discriminatory stereotyping against Arab-Americans and served as the main inspiration for organizing ADC. The ADC leaders claimed that the FBI used Arabs in the "scam" because the U.S. media had "repeatedly accused them of buying up America." In response, ADC claims to have written letters of protest to all networks and newspapers which had reported on Abscam without noting that the "Arab sheik was an FBI myth."

Throughout the remainder of 1980, ADC lodged numerous other complaints with U.S. newspapers to protest alleged anti-Arab bias in reporting and in political cartoons. For instance, in response to a widely published Associated Press news story describing an "underground railroad" in Israel which had smuggled unmarried pregnant Arab women out of the occupied territories to prevent their being murdered at the hands of irate family members, ADC charged that the story was a deliberate attempt by AP "to arouse disgust for Palestinian Arabs and to show them to be a barbaric and dangerous people." ADC stated that the article was fraudulent, presenting "negative racist stereotypes as reality."

More recently, ADC attacked the New York Post for its pro-Israel stance as "nothing but a Jewish Defense League of print journalism."

ADC's criticism of the U.S. media extends to broadcasting journalism as well. In 1981, ADC filed a complaint with the Federal Communications Commission and met with ABC's Executive Producer concerning "The Unholy War," a television documentary about PLO terrorism in the Middle East. ADC charged that the program was a "misrepresentation and stereotyping of Palestinian Arabs."

In early 1981, ADC announced the formation of "ADC Monitoring Groups." These groups were to act as local links in "ADC's effort to establish a national network" capable of responding to "negative stereotyping and discrimination against people of Arab descent." ADC produced a "Media Monitoring Guide," designed to assist its media monitors in lodging complaints against the U.S. media.

Also during 1981, ADC joined the Palestine Human Rights Campaign, another pro-PLO group, in providing support for Arabs and suspected PLO members who have faced legal action in the U.S. For example, in 1981, ADC participated in the mobilization of a wide-scale campaign in defense of Ziad Abu Eain, a Palestinian Arab who was then awaiting extradition from the U.S. to Israel where he had been charged with terrorism for planting a bomb which killed two persons and wounded 36 others. ADC organized a petition drive, candle light vigils, and a telegram campaign to then-Secretary of State Alexander Haig on behalf of Abu Eain. Abu Eain, however, was eventually extradited to Israel where he was tried, convicted, and sentenced to life imprisonment.

Spurred by the June, 1982, Israeli military action in Lebanon, ADC embarked on a multi-faceted political action and propaganda campaign against Israel. In early June, ADC lobbied for passage of House Resolution 359, introduced by Rep. Nick Joe Rahall (D., WV), which called for a suspension of all U.S. arms to Israel. In addition to lobbying on Capitol Hill, ADC members met with Congressmen in their home districts to express their support for the Resolution.

During July and August, ADC placed 64 advertisements in 62 U.S. newspapers, calling on Americans to support a cut-off of U.S. economic and military aid to Israel. Suggesting that the \$2.2 billion a year given Israel in foreign aid could best be spent "at home," most of ADC's ads asked readers if their "City's Taxes" should "be Used to Kill People in Lebanon?"

Also in early summer, ADC organized a series of four Congressional Seminars on Capitol Hill in an attempt to "inform members of Congress" of its concerns about Israel and Lebanon. Each seminar had a legislative sponsor known for his sympathies for the Palestinian cause. The first seminar, sponsored by Rep. George Crockett (D., Mich.), focused on alleged Israeli repression on the West Bank and featured Felicia Langer, an Israeli attorney and member of that country's Communist Party, who has frequently defended Palestinian Arabs accused of terrorism or other violations of Israeli law. The second Congressional Seminar was sponsored by Rep. Walter Fauntroy (D. Wash., DC), and featured such leading figures in the pro-Arab propaganda network as Edward Said, Clovis Maksoud, and James Zogby. Sponsored by Rep. Nick Joe Rahall (D., WV), the third seminar gathered top leaders of the Christian clergy in an attempt to "counter the notion" that the Israeli action in Lebanon had aided the Christian community there. As a result of this seminar,

ADC issued a document entitled, "American Christians Speak Out For Peace In Lebanon: Statements From a Congressional Briefing." This publication contains the presentations of several seminar participants, including: Bishop Dale White of the United Methodist Church, Rev. John Badeen of the Antiochan Orthodox Archdiocese of North America, and James Henderson of the National Office for Black Catholics. The final ADC Congressional Seminar, held through the auspices of Rep. Mervyn Dymally (D., CA), focused on the future of the Palestinians in Lebanon. This seminar featured Hatem Hussaini, then-Director of the PLO's Information Office in Washington, D.C.

In August, ADC launched the "Save Lebanon Campaign" promoted as a "multi-faceted humanitarian campaign to aid the Palestinian victims of war." As part of this campaign, ADC initiated the "Save the Child Airlift," an effort to bring wounded Palestinian Arab children to the U.S. for medical treatment at the Arab-American-run Monsour Medical Center in Pittsburgh.

Throughout the summer and fall of 1982, ADC conducted several press conferences and issued press releases condemning the Israelis as "Nazis" and referring to the Israeli military action in Lebanon as both a war of "genocide" and a "Holocaust" against innocent Palestinians; coordinated a petition drive calling upon members of Congress to "suspend all U.S. military aid to Israel"; held "austerity dinners" in several U.S. cities to express solidarity with Palestinian Arabs in Lebanon; arranged speaking engagements on the "Israeli invasion"; and organized a nationwide U.S. speaking tour for Christopher Giannou, a Canadian doctor who spent two years working as chief surgeon in a PLO Palestine Red Crescent Society Hospital in Lebanon. In addition, ADC has produced a 22-minute film entitled "Report From Beirut: Summer of '82," which purports to depict atrocities of the war in Lebanon. ADC is planning to distribute this film to high schools and universities across the country.

In late November, 1982, ADC and 20 other organizations formally established "The Middle East Working Group," a coalition of pro-PLO church, peace, human rights and ethnic groups. The coalition's first activity was to lobby members of Congress against U.S. aid increases for Israel. Coalition members include the International League for Peace and Freedom, the Friends Center on National Legislation, and the Washington Area Jews Against the Israeli Invasion of Lebanon.

ADC recently formed a "Research Institute" headed by Eric Hooglund, a former professor of Middle East politics at Ohio State University. Since its establishment, ADC's "Research Institute" has published two anti-Israel documents. One is entitled "U.S. Press Coverage of the Israeli Invasion of Lebanon," and the other is titled "Israel's Arms Exports: Proxy Merchants for the U.S." In addition, ADC publishes the ADC Background Papers, ADC Issues, and a bi-monthly membership publication entitled ADC Reports.

JAMES ABOUREZK

The first Arab-American elected to the United States Senate, James Abourezk, 51, has emerged in recent years as the Arab-American spokesman most widely quoted by the news media. His preeminence in this regard has coincided with the rapid growth in membership and influence of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) which Abourezk co-founded in May, 1980, with James Zogby, another leading pro-PLO activist and former head of the Palestine Human Rights Campaign (PHRC).

Abourezk received his law degree from the University of South Dakota in 1966, practiced law in Rapid City, South Dakota, was elected in 1970 as a Democratic member of the House of Representatives, and a U.S. Senator in 1973. He served one term in the Senate but did not seek reelection. He entered the private practice of law in Washington in 1979.

While still a member of the Senate, Abourezk was a powerful spokesman for the Palestinian Arab cause and an outspoken critic of Israel and the "Zionist Lobby." In 1977, he chaired hearings on Israel's "colonization" of the West Bank, held before the Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees and International Law of the Senate Judiciary Committee. Four of the five academic figures called as witnesses by the subcommittee were long-time critics of Israel, while the pro-Israel positions of the fifth witness, Professor Yehuda Blum of the Hebrew University (later appointed as Israel's UN Ambassador) were characterized by Abourezk in an official report as "artful sophistries." In the same report to the Judiciary Committee, Abourezk compared Israel's West Bank policies to those of the British in India and those of "other classical colonial empires."

In 1978, Abourezk wrote an article in the February issue of Penthouse magazine entitled "The Relentless Israeli Propaganda Machine." This article, reprinted and distributed by the Arab League's Arab Information Center in New York, charged among other things that:

-- The 1947 UN Partition plan for Palestine was the result of "political chicanery used by the Zionist movement";

-- President Truman recognized the new State of Israel since he "could not afford to lose the support of American Jews, because of both votes and money";

-- The formation of the "exclusive Jewish state" of Israel represented "the ultimate betrayal" of the Arabs and the establishment of "a new colony by the world's big powers, controlled. . . by Europeans";

-- "U.S. policy on the Mideast is virtually directed by Tel Aviv";

-- The Zionist lobby "takes its orders from Israel and then lays down the party line to the American Jewish community," it employs "political intimidation" and "intellectual terrorism," and "generates hate mail to target politicians."

Abourezk went so far as to charge the "Lobby" with "bomb threats . . . to prevent speeches critical of Israel from being given." He

also charged that "virtually the entire U.S. press corps [is] acting as Israel's propaganda machine in America."

Since his retirement from the Senate in 1979, Abourezk has devoted himself to his leadership of the ADC and to his own law practice. In 1980, he represented the interests of the Iranian revolutionary government of Ayatollah Khomeini in the United States. He is now a member of the Washington, D.C. firm of Abourezk, Sobol and Trister.

Abourezk has frequently been a featured speaker at functions of the leading pro-PLO organizations in the U.S., including the Association of Arab American University Graduates (AAUG), and the PHRC. He has been associated with several other pro-PLO, anti-Israel political activities in recent years. These include the Elias Ayoub Defense Committee (formed to oppose the deportation of Ayoub, a Palestinian Arab student who failed to maintain his student status, according to the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service) and the Committee to Defend Ziad Abu Eain, a Palestinian Arab eventually extradited to Israel, tried, and convicted in connection with a fatal bombing incident.

Abourezk has been a sharp critic of American military aid to Israel. In an interview in the August, 1981, issue of the Arab League's Arab Perspectives, Abourezk asserted: "I think it is a disgrace for the United States Government to get away with supplying weapons to Israel." He also called upon Arab governments to oppose such aid more actively since "you would expect the Jews to do what they do, and you would expect the American Government to react the way it does."

In June, 1982, during Israel's action in Lebanon, Abourezk wrote a letter to members of Congress -- reprinted in an ADC newspaper ad -- in which he urged Congress "to take immediate and effective action to stop the genocidal war against Lebanon and its people," and in which he described Israel's action as "the pogrom of the Warsaw Ghetto being recast in 1982." Abourezk has often exploited Holocaust imagery in this context, even charging that "the American media. . . have joined in an Israeli propaganda effort that would have made Joseph Goebbels proud."

Such false and exaggerated rhetoric from Abourezk regarding Israel did not, however, begin with the Lebanon action. In March, 1981, for example, Abourezk was quoted as follows by the Religious News Service: "Because of America's involvement with Israel, so many in this country are turning into fascists."

During 1982, Abourezk became president of the Twenty-First Century Fund, a Washington, D.C.-based non-profit foundation whose proclaimed objective is "to create better relations between the people of the United States and the people of the Arab world."