

Interfaith Peace Walk for Jewish-Muslim Reconciliation

Minutes of Meeting No. 8

Location	Philadelphia, PA	Issue Date	September 6, 2004
Type	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Phone Call	Date Held	August 4, 2004
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Place Held	Al-Aqsa Society, Philadelphia, PA
Subject	Interfaith Peace Walk for Jewish-Muslim Reconciliation—2 nd Post-Walk Planning Meeting	Recorded By	L. Laver

Participants:	Distribution:	Distribution:	Distribution:
Ronald Abrams	Bobbie Breitman	Rabbi Michael Holzman	Sue Miesnik
Dr. M. Almashhadani	Joe Brenman	Ophelia Hurst	Mizba Mirza
Mohammad Aziz	Joanie Brooks	Katherine Huseman	My Mohammad
Alison Carter	Kareem Brown	Moeiz Husini	Shahid Mohiuddin
Edd Conboy	Wilbur Bryant	Ambreen/Ajaz Hussain	George Mordecai
Patricia Coyne	Bonnie Buller	Iftekhar Hussain	Ron Morgan
Vic Compher	Dyhan Cassie	A.S. Mahdi Ibn-Ziyad	Fr. Joe Mostardi
Katie Day	Mitchell Chanin	Riham Ibrahim	Malik Mubashshir
Sr. Sheila Flynn	Andy Chary	Jaeson	Phyllis Myers
Peter Handler	Joe Clay	Ken Johnson	Aziz Nathoo
Iftekhar Hussain	Carroll Clay	Rachael Kamel	Emily Nepon
Adab Ibrahim	Abigail Cohen	Jonathan Kammer	Steve Newman
Inas Kanan	Emily Cohen	Josef Kardos	Jennifer North
Lance Laver	Rory Cohen	Tashir Kassam	Tim/Ellen O'Connell
Jim McGovern	Brian Daniels	Nehad Khader	Rev. Rene Oliveros
Rabbi George Stern	Stan Diamond	Bilal Khan	Hoon Park
Renate Woessner	Sean Dolan	Haajerah Khan	Patricia Pearce
	Willy Dounes	Robert Koh	Alex Pearl
Distribution:	Roy Feinberg	Marlis Kraft-Zemel	Victoria Pearson
Attendees	Jim Feldman	Al Krass	Abby Perkiss
Imam Jamil Abdullah	Catherine Fisha	Marwan Kreidie	Steve Perkiss
Sabriyah Abdullah	Temma Fishman	Rabbi Nancy Kreimer	Susan Quant
Zakiyyah Abdullah	Rita Fitzgerald	Jeanne Ayesha Lauernborg	Imam Farid W. Rasool
Thea Abu El-Haj	Rafiq Friend	Claire Laver	Abdul Rauf Campos-Marquetti
Osama Abu Shariefah	Fara Gaye	Mary Laver	Waqar Rehman
Irv Ackelsberg	M.J. Gentile	Nathan Laver	John Rice
Hassanah Ahmad	Hope Gerban	Leslie Leff	Carol Rick
Imam Shamsud Din Ali	Phyllis Gilbert	Margaret Lenzi	Janis Risch
Stephanie/Charles Andrews	David Goldstein	Pat Leopold	April Rosenblum
Elayne Ashbey	Ron Goldwyn	Kip Letiner	Judy Rosenblum
Dana Axelrod	Rabbi Lynn Gottlieb	Rob Rafi Levin	Anna Rosenfield
Judith Axler	Evelyn Haas	Herb Levine	Sara Rosenson
Sharon Barr	Jeanne-Marie Hagan	Rabbi Yael Levy	Josh Rothstein
Kathy Bergen	Zahida Halani	Dr. Nancy Lydick	Susan Rouda
Al Bingham	Jan Hamer	Rabbi Jill Maderer	Abby Ruder
Rabbi Aaron Bisno	Monica Hannon	Richard Maglenier	Schirlyn K. Abolus Sabur
Barbara Bloomfield	Ahmed Hefuna	Mary Martin	Nick Sandees
Aimee Brackbill	Rabbi Linda Holtzman	Steve Masters	Marlene Santoyo

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Distribution:	Distribution:	Distribution:	Distribution:
Jenny Sawyer	Yaffa-Shira Sultan	Marghie Thompson	Martin Wiley
Jerry Schenkman	Cy Swartz	Ellen Tichenor	Dan Wolk
Jon Scherer	Lois Swartz	Barbara Tilley	Billy Yalowitz
Tariq Scherfen	Rabia Syed	Rhoda Toperzer	Abdul Yassin
Joseph Shamis	Rubina Tareen	Carol Towarnicky	Dena Zakaria
Lil Sigal	Yolanda Taurozzi	Wendy Univer	Simone Zelitch
Sharon Sigal	Vesere Taussig	Antonio Valle	
Larry Snider	Susan Teegen-Case	Rabbi Arthur Waskow	
Grace Song	Elizabeth Terry	Ezra Weinberg	

No.	Item	Action By	Due Date
8.01	Purpose: Interfaith Peace Walk for Jewish-Muslim Reconciliation Second Post-Walk Planning Meeting		
8.02	Opening prayer: Dr. M. Almashhadani chanted the opening prayer in Arabic about the hidden power in creation of heaven and earth, night and day; and that God has given us a soul and it is up to us to do well with it.		
8.03	Introductions: All participants introduced themselves and the groups with which they are affiliated.		
8.04	<p>Documentary film project on the Peace Walk: V. Compher reported that Usame Tunagur, a filmmaker who made a 17-minute documentary of the Peace Walk as part of an Ohio University graduate film school project, is looking for feedback from Walk participants.</p> <p>We then viewed a preliminary version of the film, which includes segments of the services during the Walk and comments from many of the participants during the Walk. Afterwards, we broke up into small groups and discussed our impressions. All agreed that the film is a wonderful, professionally-made version of the Walk. Some of the specific comments are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The film was very well done...it really captured the spirit of the Walk. • It was good to see and hear comments from both the leaders and others on the Walk. • It was good to see all the faces [making comments to the camera] and names...I would have wished for more interaction, more talking among the people on the Walk. • I had the same feelings watching the film as I did while walking. • I sent a description of the Walk to friends in Germany. I can't imagine having a Walk like this there...there's just so much tension in France now and throughout Europe. 		

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were many gifts that day. It didn't rain. The police were gentle. The people were all supportive. Everything went like clockwork. No one planned for this movie—it just happened. The film is another blessing. • It would have been good to have had some "breaking bread" scenes. • The "chapter" divisions seemed artificial. • The political remarks [by some of the Walkers] are jarring. • The black and white slides at the end were wonderful...I'd like to see more. • Perhaps the film could include the Peace Walk statement as part of the black and white shots at the end. • <i>(Post-meeting note: G. Stern and L. Laver forwarded name spelling corrections to U. Tunagur.)</i> <p>The group also discussed how the film could be used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One participant said that she will show the film to her students in a Religion and Culture class. • Another said she will send the film to a religious sister in Europe to show to faith/justice groups there—preferably with a viewer's guide. • Send a copy to Bill Moyers, the Jimmy Carter Center and the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, WYBE-TV and the public school system (because of its diverse constituency). • We should show the film to our own family members and discuss. • For use in obtaining "mayoral declarations" for future peace walks (as was accomplished in Albuquerque) and for the committee's ongoing public relations work. (P. Coyle volunteered to look into this possibility.) <p>We will send all comments to the U. Tunagur, who expects to make final edits on the film in September/October. Copies of the completed tape will be available at \$7.00 each for Peace Walk participants.</p>		
8.05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next steps/follow-up activities: At the previous meeting—the first after the 5/2/04 Peace Walk (6/9/04)—we brainstormed about possible future activities, including re-starting Maimonah; engaging in text study; educating people about civil liberties; having a social/ spiritual event/meal to build trust and learn together; holding a peacemaking conference; hold a program on 9/12/04; and having a camp experience for children of different faiths (see Meeting Minutes No. 7 for more detail). <p>We followed up with a "getting to know each other picnic" on 7/25/04 in Fairmount Park, attended by about 35 folks; and</p>		

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	<p>various sub-committees are looking into the other suggestions. <i>(Post-meeting note: In lieu of a separate program on 9/12/04, people are encouraged to attend an Interfaith Memorial Service and Vigil for Peace: Remembering September 11th at the Friends Center Meeting House, 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, on 9/11/04 program. See details in announcements section below, 8.09.)</i></p>		
8.06	<p>Identity discussion: As a follow-up to the last meeting's group identify discussion, one Muslim participant raised some important questions for the group to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we develop ways to involve more of the Muslim community in this work? There are issues of security and mistrust in the society now that affect how Muslims view cooperation with others. What is the nature of the peace we are seeking? The president doesn't need others, so how can he expect us to say that we need others? <p>The group agreed that building trust is key to achieving any kind of reconciliation and that this can happen only when civil rights and security laws apply equally to all citizens. So the group will look into linking up with others who are working through education and protest to ensure equal application of civil liberties.</p> <p>Another way to build trust is to engage in tangible, interfaith projects together. Two participants described projects where this is currently happening.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A. Ibrahim described the ongoing Al-Aqsa façade project, which the mosque is doing together with the Arts & Spirituality Center, Mural Arts Project program and youth from local Muslim, Christian and Jewish groups. She described this project as a form of post-9/11 healing through artwork. The result will be a community mural/façade to transform the building and street—that many different faith/community groups have participated in. This kind of work can give hope to people who have left another country only to find similar depressing circumstances here. It can free people from inertia and help them see the advantages of getting involved in community work, and engaging in other activities, like voting, that can make a difference. • L. Laver described the work of the Interfaith Community Building Group, where Jewish and Christian participants have donated time for the past eight summers to work on community building projects in Mississippi, El Salvador and the Frankford, Germantown and Kensington sections of Philadelphia. This summer's project, about a mile from the mosque, was helping to renovate two adjacent row houses as part of the Norris Square Neighborhood Project for <i>Grupo Motivos</i>, a group of women who use their community garden, cooking/ catering and the arts to keep alive the Puerto Rican culture in Philadelphia. Some of the women, he added, also described experiences of 		

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	<p>inequality when they first arrived in Kensington two decades ago. The gardens and other neighborhood resurrection projects (some with municipal agencies' support) helped to greatly improve the neighborhood's quality of life and give hope to its citizens.</p> <p>These projects all have in common people from different areas, faiths, races and economic classes struggling together physically (to work on the project), spiritually (to find common ground), emotionally (to support each other) and politically (to overturn injustices in the society) in helping to "build community."</p> <p>Other suggestions to this end included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the triangle of the physical, intellectual and spiritual in what we do. Perhaps have a monthly discussion about our own experiences to link people together (M. Almashhadani). • Consider also the triangle of struggle, work and play in structuring activities together (K. Day). • Listen to each other. Don't just tell people about our problems, but listen to those of the other person. Make our core groups stronger, bring others in (M. Aziz). • Use the concept of "compassionate listening" developed by therapist, writer and international peace worker Gene Knudson Hoffman (V. Compher). The following are excerpts, that we briefly reviewed, from her guide to Compassionate Listening developed to assist groups' reconciliation processes (see www.coopcomm.org/compassion/): <p><i>Compassionate Listening is adaptable to any conflict. The listening requires a particular attitude. It is non-judgmental, non-adversarial, and seeks the truth of the person questioned. It also seeks to see through any masks of hostility and fear to the sacredness of the individual and to discern the wounds suffered by all parties. Listeners do not defend themselves, but accept what others say as their perceptions. By listening, they validate the other's right to their perceptions.</i></p> <p><i>I'm not talking about listening with the 'human ear.' I'm talking about discerning. To discern means to perceive something hidden or obscure. Like the potential for good-will in hostile people. We must listen with our 'spiritual' or psychological ear. This is very different from deciding in advance who is right and who is wrong, and then seeking to rectify it. And, it's very hard to listen to people we feel are misleading, if not lying. Hard to listen to such different memories of the same event. Hard!</i></p> <p>We decided to discuss Compassionate Listening at the beginning of our next meeting.</p>		
8.07	<p>Funds: The group currently has \$742.42 in the TAB account (to which people can make tax-deductible contributions for future activities). V. Compher suggested making a \$150 donation from</p>		

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	these funds to the Fellowship of Reconciliation for continued Interfaith Peace Walk work in other cities. Walks are currently planned for Vancouver, Seattle and Spokane (in addition to those that have taken place in Albuquerque, New York City, Las Vegas, Tucson and Philadelphia). The group unanimously agreed.		
8.08	<p>Next meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The next planning meeting will be at Al-Aqsa on Wednesday, October 13, 2004, at 7:00 PM. <p>(Meeting participants: Please note the date change from the 10/6 date discussed at the meeting.)</p>		
8.09	<p>Additional announcements: Following are other forthcoming programs/notices (in chronological order) of significance to the Peace Walk group. All events are free unless noted otherwise. Additional information and detail to follow in subsequent e-mails:</p>		

DATE/TIME	EVENT	PLACE	CONTACT
Thursday, 9/9/04: 7:00 PM	<p>Neighbors – Israeli-Palestinian theatre performance on an intimate encounter between an Arab musician and Jewish actor in the Galilee (part of the Phila. Fringe Festival) General Admission: \$15.</p>	International House, 3701 Chestnut Street, Phila.	Middle East Center, University of Pennsylvania and Multicultural Youth Exchange (Info: 215-413-1318)
Friday, 9/10/04: 8:00-9:00 AM	<p>Arts and Spirituality Center Fundraising Continental Breakfast</p>	Philadelphia Cathedral, 38 th Street (between Market and Chestnut Sts.)	Joe Brenman – joebrenman@hotmail.com or Vic Compher – viccompher@comcast.net
Saturday, 9/11/04: 5:30 PM	<p>Interfaith Memorial Service and Vigil for Peace: Remembering September 11th – 5:30 PM: Music performed by Naila Schulte 6:00 PM: Interfaith Memorial Service WITH SPEAKERS: Rebecca Alpert, Rabbi; Tenzin Tsultim, Buddhist Lama; Iftekhar Hussain, Imam; Elizabeth Terry, Exec. Director of The Other Side Magazine 7:30 PM: Progression to and Vigil at Love Park</p>	Friends Center Meeting House, 1501 Cherry Street, Phila., & Love Park	American Friends Service Committee – 215-241-7123 or see www.afsc.org/peace/peace-program/memorialize.htm
Fri., 9/17/04 & Sat., 9/18/04: 8:00 PM	<p>An Olive on the Seder Plate: The High Holiday Edition – multi-media performance using music, puppetry and video on how progressive Jews grapple with current events in the Middle East Tickets: \$15, \$5 for students, activists and low-income.</p>	The Theater at 2111 Sansom Street, Phila.	Olivetrees@riseup.net (Liberty Cabbage Theatre Revival)

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Friday, 9/17/04 to Sunday, 9/19/04	First Midwest Palestinian-Jewish Dialogue Weekend Registration fee.	Duluth, Minnesota	Libby or Len Traubman -- L.Traubman@igc.org -- 650-574-8303
Sunday, 9/19/04: 1:00 PM	Iranian Animation Festival	International House, 3701 Chestnut Street, Phila.	Middle East Center, U of Penn & International House (Info: 215-387-5125)
Sunday, 9/26/04: 4:00 PM	<i>Current Events and Current Prospects for Peace: A View from Israel: Talk by Adam Keller, Israeli Peace Activist, Journalist & Refusenik</i> (spokesperson of Gush Shalom, Israeli Peace Bloc)	Friends' Center, 15 th & Cherry Streets, Phila.	Philadelphia Jewish Peace Network – pjpn@verizon.net or Cy Swartz: cswartz@pil.net
Sundays, 10/3, 10/10, 10/17, 10/24 & 10/31: 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Islam 101 – a course taught by Iftekhar Hussain: an understanding of Islam from its main source, the Qur'an and Sunnah (lifestyle) of Muhammad; To be followed by Islam 301 in February 2005: an understanding of Islamic culture during its Golden Age (Tuition fee for these courses.)	Mishkan Shalom, 4101 Freeland Avenue, Phila. (Freeland Ave. and Shurs Lane in Roxborough)	Lance Laver – llaver4@comcast.net
Thursday, 10/7/04: TBA	The "Unseen" Fronts of War	Friends' Center, 15 th & Cherry Streets, Phila.	American Friends Service Committee – 215/241-7123
Saturday, 10/23/04 to Tues., 10/26/04	Second National Conference on Dialogue and Deliberation Registration fee.	Denver, Colorado	http://www.thataway.org/conference/
Sunday, 11/1/04: evening	International Election Eve Vigil	Friends' Center, 15 th & Cherry Streets, Phila.	American Friends Service Committee – 215/241-7123