

Understanding Gaza – One Conference, One Book – ALA Reads 31

Assigned by Council Resolutions  
Committee Miller  
Member Initial ML

Whereas the world watched in horror the recent conflict in Gaza;

Whereas the mainstream media in the United States has long refused to report objectively on Palestinian and Israeli relations, preferring instead to promote United States foreign policy toward Israel, thus depriving most Americans of a full and accurate picture of the history and present state of affairs between these two peoples;

Whereas the American Library Association (ALA) has as a mission priority the task “to help inform and educate the people of the United States on [social] problems and to encourage them to examine the many views on and the facts regarding each problem” and further commits ALA “to take a position on current critical issues” (Policy 1.1);

Whereas ALA states that “Libraries should make available and readily accessible information on possibilities for disarmament and alternative ways of solving conflicts” (Policy 50.10);

Whereas ALA “encourages its members to help raise public consciousness regarding the many ways in which disinformation and media manipulation are being used to mislead public opinion in all spheres of life” (Policy 52.8);

Whereas the Library Bill of Rights outlines basic principles requiring libraries to include in collections materials on cultures, histories, and viewpoints of all peoples, and to resist all efforts to censor or otherwise abridge access to knowledge and ideas (Policy 53.1);

Whereas even amongst ALA members discussion of issues related to Palestine and Israel often falls short of an informed search for understanding, a fact that suggests that we ourselves might benefit from exposure to information that the mainstream media refuses to provide to the public at large; and

Whereas there exists today throughout the United States and the world a renewed sense of hope for the possibility of diplomacy and peaceful resolution of conflict; now, therefore, be it

Resolved that the American Library Association (ALA), in the spirit of fostering historical and cultural understanding of the situation in Gaza amongst its members,

1. request the Membership Meeting Committee to establish an ALA Reads working group, inviting representatives from the Diversity Council and the Social Responsibilities Round Table to work on the one conference, one book project;
2. direct the working group to select for the Chicago 2009 annual conference a book highly regarded for its sympathetic portrayal of the Palestinian people and their history for ALA members to read before annual, inviting the book’s publisher to join the effort as a partner;
3. set aside part of one ALA membership meeting at annual 2009 for a conversation on how libraries might best foster understanding of the Palestinian people, their history and culture within our communities;
4. promote this “Understanding Gaza – One Conference, One Book – ALA Reads” event throughout the membership of ALA via all print and electronic means at its disposal.
5. instruct the working group to evaluate the event and make recommendations by Midwinter 2010 for its possible continuation.

Moved by Elaine Harger, Councilor-at-Large, EconoLodge Denver (510/206-8614, my roommate’s cell phone)  
Seconded by Al Kagan, Councilor-at-Large, Crown Plaza Denver

Some titles for consideration include: *Married to Another Man: Israel’s Dilemma in Palestine* by Ghada Karmi; *Drinking the Sea at Gaza*, by Amira Hass; *Habibi*, by Naomi Shihab Nye; *Palestine: Peace or Apartheid*, by Jimmy Carter; *The Islamic Cleansing of Palestine*, by Ilan Pappé.

REVIEWED FOR CONFORMATION WITH  
GUIDELINES  
by Council Resolutions Committee

On Wednesday, January 28, 2009, the ALA Council *defeated* 2008-2009 ALA CD#37,  
Understanding Gaza—One Conference, One Book—ALA Reads Resolution.