

Jewish Clergy Escalates Attack on Carter 'Apartheid' Book

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CCAR - Reform Rabbis cancel visit to the Carter Center during Rabbinates' upcoming annual convention in Atlanta. The Central conference of American Rabbis, the world's largest group of Jewish clergy cites former president Jimmy Carter's book, *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*.

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CCAR

(release)

January 11, 2007

New York City (January 11, 2007) ? The Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), which represents nearly 2,000 Reform rabbis, the world's largest group of Jewish clergy, issued the following statement about the cancellation of a visit to The Carter Center during the CCAR's March 2007 convention in Atlanta, Georgia.

For the sake of Zion, I will not be silent ? Isaiah 62:1

?Our sadness emerges from our respect for the way that President Carter has largely used his retirement years. Many Reform congregations have participated in Habitat for Humanity-- one of America's great examples of tikkun olam (repair of our world through social justice)-- which Mr. Carter has helped to popularize. So, too, The Carter Center has been an institution of dialogue and honest brokering in the name of statesmanship. In many ways, President Carter has demonstrated a gentle spirit and a commitment to such basic Jewish ideals as tzedek (justice) and chesed (loving kindness).

But with the publication of President Carter's latest book, *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*, we firmly disassociate ourselves from Mr. Carter and The Carter Center.

Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid contains numerous distortions of history and interpretation, and apparently, outright fabrications as well. Its use of the term 'apartheid' to describe conditions in the West Bank serves only to demonize and delegitimize Israel in the eyes of the world.

Its praise of such radical Arab 'leaders' as Yaser Arafat and Hafez el Assad, and his [Carter's] attempted rehabilitation of such terrorist groups as Hezbollah and Hamas demonstrate either a clear anti-Israel bias, extreme naivet?, or both.

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In the light of the many mainstream critiques of his book, President Carter has made several public statements implying that something akin to a 'Jewish conspiracy' has discouraged conversation about the Palestinians' plight. These statements are not only false; they make subtle use of classic anti-Semitic themes, unbecoming for any fair-minded person, much less a former President of the United States and Nobel Laureate.

We wish that President Carter had used his moral authority to press the Palestinians into a more rigorous pursuit of peace, to condemn terror unequivocally, and to decry the corruption and failures of Palestinian leaders. Instead, Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid is pervasive, biased and unfair anti-Israel propaganda. It ignores the facts of history, legitimizes the intransigence of extremists, and thus, further diminishes the prospect of real peace and reconciliation between Israel and the Palestinians.

We call upon Mr. Carter to better educate himself and his readers as to the true root causes of the Palestinian people's dire plight, and once again to dedicate his efforts to promoting peace, not prejudice, in the Middle East.

As the rabbinic body of Reform Judaism, the largest denomination of religiously affiliated American Jews, our cancellation of the visit to The Carter Center reflects our continuing commitment to Israel, Zionism, and America's role in the establishment of a just and lasting peace between the State of Israel and all her Arab neighbors.

To arrange a conversation with Rabbi Harry K. Danziger, the President of the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), or Rabbi Steven A. Fox, Executive Vice President of the CCAR, please contact Adria Greenberg, Sommerfield Communications, Inc. at 212-255-8386 or adria@sommerfield.com

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