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"PA" NEWS
 Sat 25 Jun 2005

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9:12am (UK)

Jewish Anger as Church Votes on Israel

By Caroline Gammell, PA Deputy Chief Reporter

Jewish groups reacted angrily today against a motion passed by senior Anglicans urging all provinces around the world to reconsider their investments with Israel.

At a meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council in Nottingham, members voted unanimously in favour of the resolution concerning the Israeli and Palestinian conflict.

It called for the 38 provinces which make up the Anglican Communion globally to look carefully at any business dealings they may have with Israeli companies.

Bishop John Paterson, the New Zealand chairman of the ACC, said the council commended "the resolve of the Episcopal Church (USA) to take appropriate action where it finds that its corporate investments support the occupation of Palestinian lands or violence against innocent Israelis".

The ACC went on to encourage "investment strategies that support the infrastructure of a future Palestinian State".

The council, which meets every three years, called for "peace, justice and co-existence in the Holy Land".

But the resolution was met with anger by Jewish organisations in the UK.

Rabbi Barry Marcus, the spokesman on Israel for Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, said: "Moves towards divestment represent a flawed and disastrous course.

"They will do nothing to advance the twin causes of security for Israel and statehood for the Palestinians.

"The report itself took a one-sided and subjective view of the situation, and did not reflect the present reality."

Jon Benjamin, chief executive of the Board of British Deputies of British Jews, told The Guardian: "That Israel alone should be singled out for such treatment, particularly at a time when dialogue is beginning to prevail, shows an inequality in the treatment of the Jewish state which must raise concerns about the Church's relationship with our community.

"Once again, the outrageous falsehoods levelled against Israel are used by the enemies of peaceful co-existence to undermine the genuine goodwill of those who want to see an end to conflict in the region."

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