

44th ASSEMBLY, 2003

ISRAEL ADVOCACY

All Israel is responsible for one another.
(Shavuot: 39a)

Issue

Reaffirmation of support for the State of Israel's right to exist and for her people to live in peace.

Background

With the failure of the Camp David Summit talks in 2000 the Palestinian terrorists embarked upon a reign of terror and death against Israeli civilians, causing hundreds of casualties. Israel's response has been to root out terror cells militarily and restrict movement of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank by means of fences, checkpoints and other barriers. This effort by Israel to protect her people has regrettably brought hardship and deprivation to the general Palestinian population. It has aroused Palestinian supporters worldwide to condemn Israel's actions with messages of hate, anti-Semitic violence and campus calls for a divestiture campaign against Israel.

The "road map" peace plan proposed by the United States, Russia, the European Union and the United Nations became the basis for still more negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. In spite of the involvement of the United States Administration in these efforts Palestinian militant groups continued their suicide bombing of Israeli targets, which subsequently halted further negotiations. With this failure the Israeli government continued its expansion of the settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, making more difficult the creation of a viable Palestinian state and the chances of reaching a two-state solution.

The last few decades have demonstrated that the United States government is a vital and necessary player in helping to end this Middle East conflict. For peace to reign there is the awareness that each side must recognize the fundamental justice and inalienable moral claims of the other for independence, freedom and security. Only through the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel can this be achieved.

Now more than ever Israel needs the active support of all Jews in the Diaspora as it struggles to find a secure and lasting peace. Jews born before 1948 who were observers of the tragedy and struggle that finally brought into being the modern Jewish State feel a very strong tie to Israel. But most Jews living today were born after 1948 and for them this bond has to be forged and strengthened. In the Resolution on Reform Judaism and Zionism, adopted at the WRJ 41st Assembly in 1997, there is the statement from the Miami Platform, "Even as *Medinat Yisrael* serves uniquely as the spiritual and cultural

focal point of world Jewry, Israeli and Diaspora Jewry are inter-dependent, responsible for one another, and partners in the shaping of Jewish destiny."

Resolution

In its everlasting support for Israel and her people and at this time of escalating conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, Women of Reform Judaism calls on its affiliates world wide to:

1. Develop programs for their members to strengthen their relationship to Israel, instilling a love of Zion, through, among others, education, travel and support of Israeli institutions and businesses;
2. Undertake a program of advocacy for the State of Israel in local communities with governmental representatives,
 - a. Reaffirming Israel's right to exist within peaceful borders,
 - b. Supporting a two-state solution—the State of Israel and a Palestinian state,
 - c. Endorsing Israel's freeze policy on Israeli settlement construction in the West Bank and Gaza;
3. Urge their religious schools and youth groups to educate students to prepare them to be effective advocates for Israel on campuses and in the workplace; and
4. Support educational programs for college students and young adults to empower them to be effective advocates for Israel on campuses and in the workplace.

Women of Reform Judaism also calls upon United States Sisterhoods to urge the United States government to remain steadfast in its support of Israel and to remain actively engaged in the diplomacy to resolve the conflict.