

## **5.2.2 Union for Reform Judaism Resolutions Concerning Zionism**

**The URJ gathers regularly to pass resolutions which guide the Movement and its member organizations. Below are resolutions passed relating to Zionism. For more URJ resolutions, see <http://urj.org/docs/reso/>.**

Instead of this heading, perhaps write a sentence saying something like the following:

The resolution below was passed by the Union at its 39<sup>th</sup> Council in March 1946, in Cincinnati, OH. In the resolution, the Union affirms its support of Israel as a people, and asserts each individual's right to form their own opinions on Zionism.

### **THE UNION ON THE AMERICAN JEWISH CONFERENCE AND ZIONISM**

The Union declares that its function is to interpret, maintain, and promote Reform Judaism and reaffirms its loyalty to its spiritual purposes.

The Union, continuing as a member of the American Jewish Conference, declares its sense of fellowship with all Israel and will associate itself with all worthy and practical efforts designed to ameliorate the tragic plight of world Jewry and to assist in reconstructing those communities that have suffered from the ravages of Nazi Tyranny.

Because in the congregations of the Union there are divergent opinions on the question of Zionism, the Union recognizes the right of each individual to determine his own attitude on this controversial question and therefore the Union refrains from taking any action on the Palestine Resolution adopted by the American Jewish Conference.

We call upon our congregations and their members to rally loyally to the support of the Union so that its great and noble work may continue to enrich the spiritual life of American Israel.

The below resolution was passed by the Union in at its 53<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly in November 1975, in Dallas, Texas. The resolution condemns United Nations members' attempts to deem Zionism racism, and applauds the work of those nations that have resisted and worked against this statement. In particular, the resolution elaborates on how labeling Zionism racist is against the objectives of the United Nations.

### **UNITED NATIONS**

The Union of American Hebrew Congregations has consistently supported the United Nations. Recent events at the United Nations evoke a sense of horror in every Jewish heart, echoed in the hearts of all men and women who cherish freedom and justice.

The movement to rob Israel of equal standing in the family of nations, starting with UNESCO and other specialized agencies, has shed its mask. Now Zionism – the Jewish assertion of dignity and free nationhood – is being branded as racist.

This vicious poison is being spread not by ignorant individuals but by a vast array of governments that knowingly pervert the objectives of the United Nations and thereby threaten the very existence of the United Nations itself.

These malicious attacks on Israel and Zionism are, in fact, attacks not only on all Jews but on human freedom everywhere.

If the world community witnesses these developments without passionate protest and resistance, it will open the door to chaos and tragedy.

Therefore, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, through the united voice, mind, and heart of its over 700 congregations throughout the length and breadth of the United States and Canada:

1. Salutes with pride and gratitude the determination of the governments of the United States and Canada not to remain silent even in the face of hostile majorities in the United Nations bodies. The special leadership assumed in this struggle by the United States is a shining example of clear-sighted, principled action;
2. Expresses its respect for all other governments that have refused to yield to pressure and have opposed this campaign of hatred;
3. Condemns the actions of all governments that have supported this campaign and urges them to consider once again the true historic

meaning of their votes and to change the dangerous course they have taken;

4. Within its own family calls upon all members of our congregations to join in a concerted action with the entire Jewish community, beginning with demonstrations of prayer and protest on the Day of Affirmation, the Shabbat of November 14, 1975.
5. Promptly communicates to the United States and Canadian representatives to the United Nations the full content of this resolution; and
6. Supports the resolution of the United Nations Committee # 3, which establishes the "Decade to End Racial Discrimination," but declares that the insertion into the resolution describing Zionism as racism and a form of racial discrimination subverts the "Decade" and is a vicious libel of Zionism.

The resolution below was passed by the Union's 55<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in December 1979 in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. The resolution affirms commitment to Israel as inspired by Jewish teaching, applauds recent peace efforts, and urges the United States to not deal with the Palestinian Liberation Organization until it recognizes Israel's sovereignty and to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

### ISRAEL

We, delegates from Reform congregations throughout North America gathered in the city of Toronto for the 55th Biennial Assembly of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, send greeting to our brothers and sisters in the State of Israel. We rejoice with you in your triumphs and share in your sorrows. The ties that bind our communities are eternal. We reaffirm our unswerving support in your struggle for a secure future within the context of a comprehensive resolution of all regional conflicts, which will bring the blessings of peace and normalized relations to all people of the Middle East.

As Reform Jews, our commitment flows from the wellspring of our faith. We are committed to the religio-moral imperatives of Zionism and to the prophetic vision that Zion will be redeemed with justice. Any specific stand we take on political, economic, and social issues that are part of the negotiations on the Middle East must be from the perspective and in the context of the Jewish religious tradition, which values the sanctity of life and the pursuit of peace above all.

During the two years since our last Biennial Assembly, great strides have been taken toward peace. In the Camp David Accords and the ensuing peace treaty, Egypt and Israel have demonstrated a willingness to take risks in the pursuit of peace. We applaud the statesmanship of Prime Minister Begin and President Sadat and are deeply gratified by the personal contributions of President Carter. The progress of the ongoing trilateral negotiations underscores the potential of creative diplomacy once psychological barriers are overcome. It is our hope that before long all parties to the conflict will assume their rightful role in the political process.

The single greatest obstacle to peace in the Middle East is the Palestine Liberation Organization, which remains committed to Israel's destruction and to the use of terror as a means to this end. Those who support the PLO give succor to irredentist forces that reject a negotiated peace while seeking only death and destruction. In signing the Camp David accords, Israel has acknowledged the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian Arab, and has committed itself to a process in which the Palestinians will participate in the determination of their own future. The autonomy proposal forwarded by the Israeli government offers the

Arab inhabitants of the West Bank their first opportunity for self-realization after centuries of domination by others, most often their fellow Arabs. We favor the Israel government's continuing efforts to involve the leadership of the Palestinian Arabs in an authentic self-determination process.

In this regard, we call upon the United States government to reaffirm in unambiguous terms its commitment not to deal with the PLO unless and until the PLO recognizes Israel's sovereignty, accepts United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, renounces terror, and revises its National Covenant accordingly.

A Middle East policy based on political expediency or cowering before Arab petro-blackmail ill befits the land of the free and the home of the brave. For the thirty-two years of its existence, Israel has remained America's only democratic ally in the Middle East and Western civilization's only sure bastion of stability against the incursion of international Communism and the unsettling influences of national and religious upheaval.

We call upon the United States and Canada to take the long-overdue step of recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital and to endorse the permanent reunification of the city under Israeli sovereignty. During the nineteen years of Jordanian control prior to 1967, Jews were barred access to our holy places in the Old City; more than one hundred synagogues and yeshivot were destroyed, and thousands of graves on the Mount of Olives were desecrated. Mayor Teddy Kolek and others have advanced plans for involving all religious and ethnic communities within the city in its municipal administration. This approach to creative coexistence could make Jerusalem a prototype for other ethnically troubled cities throughout the world.

Our tradition is replete with statements, both biblical and rabbinic, about the sanctity of the Land of Israel. We affirm the Jewish people's historic claim to the land of biblical Israel and affirm the legal right of Jews to settle securely in that land. Biblical and legal claims to the land are valid only in relationship to the security of Israel, and the ultimate religious and moral imperatives of peace, and the *mitzvah* of the continued safe and creative existence of the Jewish people. Creative approaches to peace, admittedly involving risk, are essential.

The precept of *Pikuach Nefesh*, the sanctity of life, applies not only to individuals but also to the Jewish people as a whole. Concern for life and peace must take precedence even over concern for territorial boundaries.

We call upon the government of Israel to consider carefully the effect on the peace process and also the economic, political, and demographic effects of all proposed new settlements. We hail the recent decision of the Israeli Supreme Court establishing military security as the sole criterion for expropriating privately held land.

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**Comment:** Again, if the resolution was passed without this comma, then it should not be added in

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**Comment:** This should read "but also", but if the resolution said "but" that's what the DAK should present

All issues are proper subjects for discussion, but no issue--whether territorial or concerning the rights of all peoples in the area--can be discussed in isolation from other issues or without regard for these basic precepts. We urge the government of Israel to be guided by these fundamental religious principles in its pursuit of peace.

The resolution below was passed by the 45<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in November 1977 in San Francisco, CA. The resolution establishes ARZA (the Association of Reform Zionists of America) and Kadima (in Canada) as organizations to present the voice of Reform Zionism to the broader Zionist world. In particular, the resolution specifies that ARZA and Kadima are to represent Reform Zionism to the World Zionist Organization, and that they will be formed of voluntary members within the Reform Movement.

45th General Assembly  
November 1977  
San Francisco

### **ARZA/KADIMA**

We Reform Jews – ideologically and programmatically, as individuals, as congregations, and as a movement – have manifested our commitment to the State of Israel and its future.

Despite this commitment, Reform Judaism has remained outside the organizational framework of Zionism. The World Zionist Organization is today one forum in which broad segments of Israeli and Diaspora Jewry have constructive dialogue. Until this day, the only voices in that worldwide Zionist forum affecting programs, funding, the quality of Jewish life, and education have been those of Orthodoxy and of secularism. The time has come for Reform Judaism to join in this dialogue. The UAHC Board of Trustees has created an opportunity for such dialogue by establishing, subject to ratification by this biennial, national affiliates of the Union to be known in the United States as ARZA (Association of Reform Zionists of America) and in Canada as Kadima. The purpose of these affiliates would be "to seek individual members from amongst our congregations and to seek full voting membership in the World Zionist Organization through its territorial bodies, the American Zionist Federation and the Canadian Zionist Federation."

By giving Reform Judaism a full voice in the councils of the World Zionist Organization, the proposed new affiliates will enable us as Reform Jews to communicate more effectively our concerns regarding Israel and the Jewish future, in particular the status of the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism. It will also increase the potential for a more equitable distribution of funds allocated in Israel and throughout the world for educational and cultural projects. The affiliates would add to the deliberations of world Jewry a flexibility to meet the needs of each generation and the combination of prophetic ideology and relevant action that is the cornerstone of Reform Judaism.

Within our own ranks, ARZA and Kadima will provide the long-awaited vehicles for those who have been frustrated in seeking a channel for their Zionist commitment.

The Board recognized that there are members of our Union who may not wish to seek affiliation with ARZA or Kadima. As is the case with all UAHC affiliates, membership in either is voluntary. Since diversity is an essential strength of Reform Judaism, nonmembership in these affiliates will in no way reflect upon any UAHC member's commitment to our Union.

THEREFORE, this Biennial Assembly ratifies the action of the UAHC Board of Trustees, which established ARZA and Kadima. In so doing, we reaffirm the essential freedom of choice of our individual members to join the new affiliates.

We call upon this 54th General Assembly to add the strength of Reform Judaism to the organized councils of world Zionism in order to implement one of the primary purposes of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, as set forth in Article II, paragraph D of our Constitution, which reads "to enrich and strengthen the State of Israel as a vibrant exemplar of eternal Jewish values."



The resolution below was passed by the 59<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in November 1987 in Chicago, Illinois. The resolution calls for greater recognition in Israel of non-Orthodox streams of Judaism and, to this end, calls for support of the newly established Israel Religious Action Center.

## **THE JEWISHNESS OF THE JEWISH STATE**

### **BACKGROUND**

The State of Israel is founded upon the principles of prophetic justice. As Reform Jews we are committed to the moral imperatives of Zionism and to the prophetic vision that Zion will be redeemed with justice.

We are aware that Israel lives in a world of force, surrounded by enemies that seek to destroy her. Secure borders and military strength are matters on which her very survival depends.

Nonetheless, we know also that Israeli strength and survival depend on the democratic nature of the Jewish State and on the moral character of Jewish life there. We are therefore deeply troubled by recent developments in Israel which, if unchecked, could ultimately undermine the democratic and Jewish values that we all cherish.

We are particularly concerned about the increasing fanaticism of Israel's Orthodox and Ultra-Orthodox political parties. They have attempted through legislative initiatives and through disregard and contempt for the Israeli judicial system to impose their will on all of Israel's citizens and to deprive Progressive Jews of the few rights which they currently enjoy. We are equally concerned about the willingness of some leading secular politicians to accommodate this trend for political gain.

**THEREFORE**, BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of American Hebrew Congregations:

1. Applaud the establishment of the Israel Religious Action Center in Jerusalem and call upon all areas of our movement to support ARZA in its efforts to develop and expand the Center. A project of ARZA, the Center will be operated by the Israeli Progressive Movement as a vehicle to pursue social justice and peace, as well as a focus for legislative and judicial efforts to achieve religious freedom, pluralism, and civil liberties in Israel. The World Union for Progressive Judaism, the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, and ARZENU are also cooperating in this project.

2. Call upon the Prime Minister of Israel to instruct his Interior Ministry to register immediately as citizens all Reform and Conservative converts who have immigrated to Israel, as required by the Law of Return and by recent decisions of the Israeli Supreme Court.
3. Call upon the government of Israel to recognize the legitimacy of Jewish life cycle events performed by religious leaders of the Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist and Ethiopian communities.
4. Strongly protest continuing efforts to amend the Law of Return, including the commitments given earlier this year by Likud to the ultra-Orthodox Shas party.