



# Israel ADVOCACY INITIATIVE

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## INTRODUCTION TO LABOR:

### The U.S. Trade Union Movement and the Organized Jewish Community

Written by the Jewish Labor Committee, in cooperation with the Israel Advocacy Initiative, a joint project of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs and the United Jewish Communities.



February 2008

Dear Israel Advocate,

The Israel Advocacy Initiative (IAI), a joint project of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs and the United Jewish Communities, is dedicated to enhancing the capacity of Jewish Federations and Community Relations Councils (CRCs) in their vital work on behalf of Israel and a strong U.S.–Israel relationship. The challenges facing Israel advocacy today command our immediate action. The IAI is committed to providing the tools Israel advocates need to meet these challenges.

Effective Israel advocacy demands that we work strategically. This guide for working with the American labor movement is intended to be a hands-on resource. It is essential that we prioritize educating non-Jewish constituencies and cultivating relationships with these individuals and groups in our Israel advocacy efforts. This is the only way we can achieve long-term support for Israel.

By using this manual, you are taking an important step in gaining a deeper understanding of the American labor movement – its history, values, and relation to the Israeli-Palestinian issue. No matter how events unfold in the Middle East and at home, our need to engage our friends and neighbors about Israel remains at the forefront of our agenda. We hope this manual will be an asset in your important advocacy efforts. B’Hatzlacha!



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The American labor movement's support of Israel predates the Balfour Declaration of 1917, and it continues today. Whether it is supporting Israel on Capitol Hill, or in international gatherings of union leaders overseas, organized labor has stood shoulder-to-shoulder with America's Jewish community in its support for Israel.

But it is not just on issues affecting Israel that unions and American Jewry share a common agenda. From mobilizing against genocide in Darfur to strengthening civil rights here at home, organized labor and the Jewish community share a common agenda. Just as significantly, with more than 12 million members, organized labor has the strength to help make that agenda a priority for policymakers at every level.

For those in the Jewish community who regularly meet with and discuss domestic and international issues with union leaders in their local communities, this basic introduction to organized labor will provide useful background information on the challenges facing the labor movement today. For those who have not developed contacts with labor leaders in their own communities, we hope this document will be a useful tool in building a strong relationship with organized labor.

The alliance between America's unions and American Jews made sense in the past; it continues to today.



Stuart Appelbaum, President

Jewish Labor Committee

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# Overview

Professional staff and lay leaders of Jewish organizations have expressed both a need and a desire to be in contact with their counterparts within the organized labor movement. There are many issues of common concern to both the trade union movement and the Jewish community, including health care; child care; housing for the poor and elderly; and the welfare of Israel.

The internal workings and language of the trade union movement may appear unusual to outsiders. Unions are neither mutual aid associations, nor collective bargaining agents, nor social service provider agencies, nor political organizations – to a degree, they are a mixture of all of these. Unions are distinctive parts of the social, economic, and political landscape of our communities. In fact, the political and organizational cultures of the labor movement are quite active, varied, and strong.

In terms of Israel advocacy, the relationship between the Jewish community and organized labor remains one of great strategic importance. Organized labor is mobilized throughout the country, especially in many rural areas where there is no vibrant Jewish presence. Through strong relationships with the organized labor movement, we can reach groups in areas where our messages may not otherwise resonate.

# Union Organization

## What Is a Trade Union?

A trade union, sometimes known as a labor union – or even simply a union – is a voluntary association of workers who have joined together to address common issues that they confront in their workplaces. Unions in the United States and many other countries have legal status. The legal status of unions in the U.S. is defined in various federal and state statutes as well as in common law. Their primary purpose is to represent workers in collective bargaining of contracts, basic working conditions, benefits, and the like. Unions also often use their organizational strength to advocate for social policies and legislation of importance to their members and workers in general.

## What Is the AFL-CIO?

The American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) is a voluntary federation of U.S. unions representing more than 9 million working women and men across the country. Many AFL-CIO-affiliated unions have members in Canada as well as in the United States. Thus, they may have membership in both the AFL-CIO and the Canadian Labor Congress (CLC). Structurally and politically, the relationship between the AFL-CIO and its member unions is similar to the relationship between the United Jewish Communities (UJC) and its affiliated local Jewish Federations.

## History of the AFL-CIO:

Samuel Gompers founded the American Federation of Labor as a federation of skilled craft and trade unions to improve wages and working conditions, shorten working hours, abolish child labor, and provide for collective bargaining. Initially called the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions (1881), it was reorganized as the “AF of L” in 1886, with Gompers serving as president from 1886 to 1924 (except in 1895). In 1935, United Mine Workers President John L. Lewis, dissatisfied with the organizational structure of craft unions, led 10 dissenting unions to form the Committee for Industrial Organizations (CIO) to operate within the AFL. A central issue in the controversy was the difference between craft unions, organized by trade or by specialty (e.g., cigar-makers or plumbers) and industrial unions, which include all workers within a given industry regardless of their individual craft (e.g., mine workers or automobile workers). Their differing approaches to organizing workers led to the expulsion of the CIO from the AF of L in 1936 (which then became the independent Congress of Industrial Organizations). The AFL and CIO operated separately until 1955, when they merged to form the AFL-CIO.

The Jewish Labor Committee, from its inception, has had working relationships with a number of AFL-affiliated unions, and throughout its existence, with the CIO as well. The same is true with the AFL-CIO.

## What Is Change to Win?

The Change to Win labor federation is a group of unions representing 6 million members, including some large and powerful organizations that formed a new federation after the July 2005 AFL-CIO convention. The unions affiliated with Change to Win are the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), the Teamsters, UNITE-HERE (clothing and textile/hotel workers union), the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, the Laborers’ International Union of North America (LIUNA), and the United Farm Workers of America (UFW).

### Other Unions Not Part of Either the AFL-CIO or Change to Win:

While the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), with 1.4 million members, is part of the AFL-CIO, a significant union that has never been a part of the AFL-CIO is the National Education Association (NEA), with 3.2 million members. Although merger negotiations between these two unions have not succeeded on the national level, several AFT and NEA statewide organizations have merged; the members of these organizations belong to both the AFT and the NEA.

In addition to the NEA, there are a number of other independent unions, usually small and unaffiliated, such as the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU).

### State Federations of Labor & City/Community-Based Central Labor Councils:

Currently, every state has an AFL-CIO chartered state labor federation (plus one in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico). In addition, there are 543 city or county-based Central Labor Councils (CLCs) (including one in Washington, DC), chartered by the AFL-CIO.

Local affiliates of Change to Win unions that left the AFL-CIO (e.g., an SEIU local in Chicago) are permitted to remain in state and local federations if they sign Solidarity Charters, and may run for office in these organizations. In some cases, those unions that do not sign the charters are prohibited from joining state and local central labor bodies. At their founding convention, Change to Win delegates discussed setting up their own local labor bodies. However, this did not occur.

All state and/or local trade union organizations maintain active legislative programs and participate in political activities.

### AFL-CIO Trade and Industrial Departments:

The AFL-CIO includes specialized departments that coordinate the overlapping activities of unions working in specific economic sectors. These include the Building and Construction Trades Department; the Department for Professional Employees; the Food and Allied Services Department; the Industrial Union Council; the Maritimes Trades Council; the Metal Trades Department; the Transportation Trades Department; and the Union Label and Services Department. For example, the Building and Construction Trades Department coordinates the submission of proposals for unions participating in large construction projects.

### AFL-CIO Constituency Groups:

There are a number of national labor organizations that were formed primarily by trade union members to act as liaisons between the trade union movement and their respective ethnic/cultural/gender/orientation communities; and act as advocates of their respective communities in the labor movement. These include:

- A. Philip Randolph Institute (APRI);
- Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA);
- Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU);
- Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW);
- Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA);
- Pride At Work (PAW {For lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered workers}).

### Other Labor-Affiliated Ethnic Groups:

- Irish-American Labor Coalition;
- Italian-American Labor Council;
- Greek-American Labor Council.

### Labor Movement/Allied Organizations include:

- Alliance for Retired Americans;
- American Center for International Labor Solidarity;
- Housing Investment Trust;
- National Labor College.

While technically listed as an Allied Organization, the **Jewish Labor Committee (JLC)** pre-dates the existence of all constituent, ethnic and allied organizations that work with the labor community. In fact, the JLC has served as the model for the formation of many of these groups.



# Structure of Labor Unions

Most unions in the U.S. are organized on a national basis, even though many are called international unions. As of February 2008, 55 unions are affiliated with the AFL-CIO and 7 unions are affiliated with Change to Win.

Most unions have local units – simply called locals (occasionally lodges or branches) – that are composed of the union’s members in a specific workplace or community. Often, unions have regional joint boards or state councils. In some unions, decision-making is in the hands of the local; in others, it is in the hands of the council. Decision-making power varies among unions — and even within the same union from state to state.

International unions regularly hold conventions where democratically elected delegates elect officers and executive board members, and approve budgets. A few international unions have direct election of officers via mail ballot to the entire membership. In addition to the election of officers, and the passage of budgets, unions also pass resolutions, including resolutions on international affairs.

In addition to maintaining membership in either the AFL-CIO or Change to Win federations, most international unions also belong to worldwide labor federations that meet regularly to discuss issues such as globalization, sweatshops, worker rights, and child labor. Unions take their international relationships very seriously, and larger unions have at least one full-time international affairs director.

It is not uncommon for labor unions in countries affiliated with the League of Arab States to introduce anti-Israel resolutions at meetings of worldwide labor federations.

# Significant Issues of Concern to the Labor Movement

The primary purpose of virtually every union is to represent members and workers in collective bargaining with employers. Representing bargaining unit members in the administration of the collective bargaining contract, as well as bargaining for new contracts, occupies a central role in the activities of every union. Organizing unorganized workers also plays an important part in the agenda of most unions. But unions do a lot more.

## Additional priority issues of the Labor Movement include:

- The right of workers to form unions or join existing unions, free of employer influence or intimidation;
- The right to collective bargaining;
- The need for meaningful penalties against firms engaging in unfair labor practices;
- The need for a “living” wage – or at least a higher minimum wage;
- The preservation of Medicare and Social Security;
- The crisis facing the U.S. pension fund system.

The labor movement has a broad public policy agenda. According to its Web page, the AFL-CIO “educates union members about issues that affect the daily lives of working families, and encourages them to make their voice heard for a government that works for working families. ... Our priorities include creating more good jobs by investing tax dollars in schools, roads, bridges and airports; improving the lives of workers through education, job training and raising the minimum wage; keeping good jobs at home by reforming trade rules, reindustrializing the U.S. economy and redoubling efforts at worker protections in the global economy; strengthening Social Security and private pensions; making high-quality, affordable health care available to everyone; and holding corporations more accountable for their actions.”

# The AFL-CIO and the Emergence of Change to Win

For many years, unions have seen a decline in their membership as a percentage of the national work force. A number of factors, including the contraction of the industrial sector, globalization and the loss of jobs to low wage workers overseas have contributed to this decline. Many union leaders believe channeling more resources into organizing non-unionized workers and restructuring the labor movement to more closely align with industry or market “shares” (through voluntary or involuntary mergers) would address this loss. The current President of the AFL-CIO, John Sweeney, was elected on a platform that called for unions to voluntarily put more funds into organizing campaigns to build membership. Few unions, however, put the kind of resources necessary into organizing as envisaged by Sweeney and others. As a voluntary umbrella organization, the AFL-CIO has no way to enforce its guidelines on member unions.

Unions that have put money, time, and energy into organizing new members have expressed frustration that many other unions have failed to do so. Led by Andrew Stern, the President of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), a number of union leaders publicly and privately challenged the leadership of the AFL-CIO to redouble its commitment to organizing, and to lessen its emphasis on supporting Federal legislation and candidates for political office. At the same time, these leaders put forward alternate models of organizing the labor movement, including proposals to merge many AFL-CIO-affiliated unions into 15 or 20 “mega-unions” of workers in specific industries. Finally, a number of dissident union leaders and activists called for the AFL-CIO to have more authority over its affiliates’ decision-making.

For its part, the AFL-CIO agreed that there was a need to emphasize organizing, but stated that organizing workers was primarily the job of individual unions. The AFL-CIO emphasized a greater need for work in the political arena. There has not been a major piece of pro-labor legislation passed in this country since the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) of 1938.

The FLSA is a U.S. Federal law that established a national minimum wage, guaranteed time and a half for over-time in certain jobs, and prohibited most employment of minors in “oppressive child labor,” which is defined in the statute. The FLSA, which applies to employees engaged in and producing goods for interstate commerce (unless the employer can claim an exemption from coverage), originally contained a large number of special industry exemptions, many of which were designed to protect traditional pay practices in small, rural businesses. The bulk of these exemptions have been repealed. Currently, the most important issues relate to the so-called “white collar” exemptions applicable to professional, administrative and executive employees.

In July 2005, four dissident unions boycotted the AFL-CIO Convention. A new Change to Win labor federation was formed. Three major unions, the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT), and the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), disaffiliated from the AFL-CIO. UNITE HERE (itself a merger of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees and the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union), and the Laborers’ International Union of North America (LIUNA) have since joined Change to Win.

The Jewish Labor Committee works with unions in both the AFL-CIO and Change to Win. JLC leaders are represented in both organizations, and both remain committed to working with the JLC and, through the JLC, with the Jewish community.



# Labor and the Jewish Community: Historical Allies

## **What labor does/can do for the Jewish community:**

### **1. Support for the State of Israel.**

Labor support for the State of Israel is both long-standing and deep. Please see a more detailed description in the next section of this guide.

### **2. Speak out against anti-Semitism.**

Just as it is important to have the moral voice of other faith and ethnic groups to combat anti-Semitism, it is important to show the public at large that the labor movement stands with us in opposition to anti-Semitism. The AFL-CIO strongly supported the campaign to aid Soviet Jewry and other oppressed Jewish communities.

### **3. Support Holocaust education.**

For twenty years, the American Federation of Teachers has been an active supporter and co-sponsor of an internationally acclaimed Holocaust and Jewish Resistance Teachers Program, an intensive annual summer seminar and biannual national alumni conference, together with the American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors and the Jewish Labor Committee.

### **4. Support (or oppose) Federal, state, or municipal legislation of Jewish concern.**

Many pieces of legislation of concern to the Jewish community are also of concern to the trade union movement, which has well-developed structures to lobby legislators.

### **5. Educate the labor community about the Jewish community, and key Jewish issues.**

The labor movement has a diverse range of publications, educational programs, as well as cultural activities, and educating its membership on the diversity of American society is on its agenda, and in our interest.

## **What the organized Jewish community can do/does for labor:**

### **1. Support (or oppose) Federal, state or municipal legislation of concern to labor.**

Many pieces of legislation that are of concern to the labor movement may also be of concern to the Jewish community. The JLC, JCPA, and CRCs can help develop and strengthen ties between Jewish and labor staffers working on — or potentially working on — the same issues.

### **2. Support efforts to protect workers' rights.**

The Jewish community has long supported local unions and workers in their efforts to secure better working conditions for themselves and their coworkers. The JLC and the JCPA believes that workers should not be impeded in their efforts to organize and freely choose unions without interference, threats, or coercion. An essential cornerstone of workers rights is the right to collective bargaining, a vital public good that makes for a more just, fair, open, and democratic society. In addition, the JLC and the JCPA support laws that prohibit employers from discriminating against employees who take part in union or collective activities; require employers to bargain with the appointed representative of its employees; regulate what tactics each side may employ to further their bargaining objectives; and establish procedural guidelines on good-faith bargaining.

3. Fair and speedy negotiations toward a contract between workers & management.

Often, anti-union employers intentionally delay negotiations to deny workers the fruits of long-sought-for union recognition. To recast an old expression, “negotiations delayed are union protections denied.” With the aid of the JLC, Jewish groups can help focus the concern of Jewish communal and religious figures toward fair and speedy negotiations, resulting in either a first contract or a newly negotiated contract.

4. Educate our community about the dignity of labor and the importance of unions to a democratic society with a vibrant middle class and a rising standard of living.

While large numbers of Jews are no longer prominent in blue-collar trades, understanding the importance of the rights of working men and women to better their lives through the labor movement is still crucially important to positive Jewish communal relations as we move through the 21st century. The JLC has experience in Jewish perspectives regarding matters of key concern to the labor movement. The JLC also has secular and religious resources on this issue.

# Labor and Israel: A Special Relationship

The U.S. trade union movement has a history of support for Israel going back three decades before Israel's independence, including statements in support of the Balfour Declaration. In fact, support for Israel's labor movement goes back to 1928 when the United Hebrew Trades in New York (UHT), now the New York Division of the JLC, started a fund-raising campaign among Jewish trade unionists to support the young Histadrut, now Israel's General Federation of Labor.

Individual trade unions — from the needle trades to the Communications Workers of America — have established enduring relations both with their “sister unions” in Israel and directly with the Histadrut. Since the State of Israel was established in 1948, U.S. trade unions have assisted in the construction of educational, health care-related, cultural and recreational facilities for workingmen and women in Israel, their families, and communities. These include the Max Pine Vocational School, the Glenn Watts Center, and the Morton Bahr education wing of the Yitzhak Rabin Center.

Given the significant role played by the Israeli labor movement in the founding of the Jewish State and the creation of its infrastructure and institutions, it is not surprising that older U.S. labor leaders view Israel as a nation-state created by organized labor. This is one of the reasons labor union pension funds, union banks and union insurance companies have invested heavily in State of Israel Bonds.

Please **DO NOT** discuss with union members, representatives of the press or others, guesstimates of the value of State of Israel Bonds held by unions. “Divest from Israel” activists have used such information in their arguments and have quoted figures found in Jewish newspapers and/or provided by Jewish communal representatives.

In the 1980s, with the encouragement of the JLC, the AFL-CIO spoke out against the sale of U.S. AWACS aircraft to Saudi Arabia even though this cost U.S. workers' jobs. During the 1990s, the AFL-CIO strongly backed loan guarantees for Israel. More recently, at the JLC's initiative, AFL-CIO President John Sweeney addressed people from across the United States during the height of the second Intifada at an April 2002 “National Rally in Solidarity With Israel” in Washington, D.C. And, on September 20, 2006, Linda Chavez-Thompson, Executive Vice President of the AFL-CIO, prepared remarks for the National Solidarity for Israel Rally at the Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza in New York in which she declared unwavering support for Israeli workers who suffered through the Lebanon War, condemned Iranian threats to build a nuclear bomb, and promised enduring labor support for Israel. (For the complete transcript of both of their remarks, please see Appendix C.)

In recognition of the U.S. labor movement's historical bedrock support for Israel, anti-Israel forces have in recent years made a concerted effort to break these ties. The labor movement, however, has resisted these efforts. Most importantly, in May 2005, in response to a pending ballot initiative requiring the City of Somerville, MA, to divest its holdings in Israel bonds and any investments it has with companies that supply arms and military equipment to Israel, the AFL-CIO issued a strong anti-divestment policy statement that it distributed to every State Federation of Labor and Central Labor Council in the United States. (To learn more about the events in Somerville, please reference Appendix A. To review the communication sent by the AFL-CIO in response to the events in Somerville, please see Appendix C.)



# Working with Organized Labor

The JLC serves as the bridge linking the Jewish community and organized labor in their shared commitment to economic and social justice. As the pre-eminent resource on labor issues for the Jewish community, it is both strategic and beneficial that the JLC, in partnership with the JCPA, remain in the forefront of fortifying the dynamic connection between these two constituencies. To maximize outreach to labor contacts, the following guidelines should be followed:

## First Contacts:

- As a general rule, we recommend that Jewish community professionals and laypeople reach out to the JLC before making first contact on matters relating to the trade union movement. Locally and nationally, the JLC has decades of experience in working with labor on a range of issues of shared interest and concern, and is familiar with the internal language, culture, and politics of our labor partners. This is especially true given the split within the labor movement (AFL-CIO and Change to Win). The JLC can facilitate meetings through direct contacts or through the network of national labor contacts who work with local affiliates.
- Know with whom you're speaking, and at least some union background — most Central Labor Councils and State Federations of Labor leadership, officers as well as professional staff, come from specific unions. It would be impolitic not to know the specific union, its background, relations with other unions, the AFL-CIO, Change to Win, etc.
- Check with the JLC on whether or not the local labor person you're interested in speaking with has strong positions on matters such as the war in Iraq, the U.S. Administration, etc. Not knowing this may sidetrack what might otherwise have been worthwhile and productive discussions.
- Good community relations dictate that first contact between Jewish communal professionals or laypeople be about matters of shared domestic interest and concern, not Israel.
- It is important that during first contact between Jewish communal professionals or laypeople and union members, you show both understanding of and support for labor. Do not equivocate.

## Potential Joint Activities to Discuss with Labor:

- Join community-based coalitions dealing with issues, such as sweatshops, living wage, child labor, or immigration on which the organized Jewish community has a record of concern consonant with the labor movement. (For a summary of select JCPA policies on issues of shared concern to labor and the Jewish community, please refer to Appendix B.)
- Join community-based legislative coalitions on issues, such as health care, state minimum wages, and local "living wage" standards. (For a summary of select JCPA policies on issues of shared concern to labor and the Jewish community, please refer to Appendix B.)
- Unions face increasingly hostile corporate campaigns. Help local workers as they secure a union recognition by:
  - Writing letters of inquiry on behalf of workers;
  - Become part of community-based delegations to employers to gather information;
  - Become part of a local Worker Rights Board;
  - Help find rabbinic support for worker rights.

## **Small Gestures That Mean a Lot:**

- When building a new synagogue or Jewish communal building or making repairs to an existing building, specify that the contractor must use union members.
- Use a union printer and be sure there's a union label (bug) on your printed material. Many union officials "look for the union label" and will draw conclusions about your organization based on this one relatively small indication of support. Try to buy other union-made products. (See [www.aflcio.org](http://www.aflcio.org) for a complete list.)
- Do not cross picket lines.
- When you see a picket line, stop, ask who is in charge, find out what issues are being protested and show concern. Let the strikers know you are from the Jewish community.
- Once you know the issues, and if you are so inclined, send a letter to the employer supporting the workers with a copy to the union. End the letter with the wish that they reach an agreement soon.
- If you are so inclined, join a picket line, even if it's just for a few minutes. Workers on strike won't bite and will remember that support forever.
- Bring striking workers refreshments, compliments of a concerned member of the Jewish community.

## **Useful Tools:**

The JLC has a number of useful tools available to community professionals. These include a monograph titled, "Labor Rights in the Jewish Tradition," by Michael Perry, Director, Education and Employee Involvement, American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, Illinois Council 31; and bibliographies on Jews and the labor movement by Arieh Lebowitz, Director of Communications, Jewish Labor Committee.

One of the most effective tools for building relations with labor leaders is utilizing the JLC Labor Haggadah to hold a Labor Passover Seder each year. We strongly recommend this tool as a way to open dialogue and maintain contact with local labor leaders. The JLC will be happy to assist you in organizing a Labor Seder in your community.

Above all, keep in mind the dictum of the community relations field: IF YOU WANT A FRIEND, BE A FRIEND.

# Appendix A: Case Studies

The following appendix is designed to provide examples of how the Jewish community and the labor movement have mobilized to combat Israel advocacy challenges.

## Israel Divestment:

### Madison, WI

Divestment resolutions have been proposed in a number of communities — to faculty associations and student organizations, as well as to union locals of teachers and teaching assistants.

Many of the campus-based proposals are the work of a small number of politically active individuals associated with Al-Awda, or the Palestine Right to Return Coalition, based in Carlsbad, California. Al-Awda characterizes itself as a “broad-based non-partisan global democratic association of thousands of grassroots activists, including students and organizational representatives, concerned for the Palestinian Refugees’ Right to Return ... [with] local action committees (more than 40 in the US and 20 in other countries) ... [that] engage in local direct action and coordinate actions between chapters.”

Madison, WI-based activists Mohammed Abed, with Alternative Palestinian Agenda, and Fayyad Sbaihat, of Al-Awda, initiated a number of divestment resolutions that were brought before faculty associations, student unions, and graduate student/teaching assistant unions in the University of Wisconsin campus system. Two of these passed (one by the faculty Senate at the University of Wisconsin at Platteville, on a 7-6 vote, and the other at the Teaching Association of University of Wisconsin Professionals). Other such resolutions, however, were defeated by the UW-Whitewater faculty senate and the UW-Madison’s Teaching Assistants’ Association.

The JLC worked with the Milwaukee Jewish Council for Community Relations and the director of the Hillel Foundation-Madison to help Jewish members of the Teaching Assistant Association (TAA) at the University of Wisconsin at Madison – the flagship campus of the UW system – to completely alter a resolution that called upon the UW Board of Regents to divest from companies doing business with Israel.

Two factors influenced the decision of the TAA: Fear that a large number of Jewish graduate students might quit the Teaching Assistants Association if the resolution passed; and an understanding that divestment is part of Al-Awda’s goal of a one-state solution resulting in the destruction of the Jewish State of Israel. Al-Awda’s goal stands in opposition to the public position of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, who publicly supports a two-state solution.

The JLC also suggested that the TAA take the moral high ground. The JLC wrote a counter-proposal titled “Invest in the Peacemakers,” to propose rewarding both Israel and Palestine for taking risks to achieve peace, and help put the unemployed to work. This positive, hopeful proposal stood in stark contrast to the negative, hate-filled Al-Awda proposal.

When the Al-Awda resolution came before the TAA, the leadership amended the resolution removing any mention of Israel from the document. In short, the resolution that passed the TAA called on the university’s Board of Regents to divest from any company responsible for the spread of weapons worldwide.

## Somerville, MA

In 2003, a number of individuals in Somerville, MA, attempted to secure support for a city government resolution calling for divestment from Israel Bonds and Caterpillar, Inc. In November 2004, the JLC, in partnership with the Boston Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC), secured the support of a number of union locals to testify against the proposed resolution before meetings of the Somerville Board of Aldermen. The resolution before the Aldermen was defeated. Pro-divestment forces didn't give up and tried to introduce a ballot initiative on divestment in the fall of 2005. The JLC and the Boston JCRC worked with colleagues in the labor movement and the organized Jewish community to successfully oppose this ballot initiative. Additionally, the AFL-CIO responded and issued a strong anti-divestment policy statement that it distributed to every State AFL-CIO Federation and Central Labor Council in the country. (To review this statement, please reference Appendix C.)

## Rachel Corrie and the Labor Movement:

The tragic death of Rachel Corrie, a young political activist, provided ammunition to anti-Israel forces in the United States and around the world. A U.S. volunteer activist with the anti-Israel International Solidarity Movement (ISM), Corrie was killed on March 16, 2003, when the Israeli military demolished a Palestinian home covering a smugglers tunnel in the Gaza Strip. At the time of Corrie's death, she was a student at Evergreen State University in Olympia, WA. She also worked at a local mental health clinic and was active in Local 1199NW, part of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU).

A central figure in the local Olympia Movement for Justice and Peace, Ms. Corrie actively opposed the U.S.'s "war against terror" and U.S. militarism. Among her causes was strong opposition to the Israeli occupation and support for the creation of a Palestinian state. She had studied Arabic at Evergreen State University and left Olympia on January 18, 2003 to go to the West Bank and Gaza.

Ms. Corrie's death became a *cause célèbre* among sectors of the anti-Israel left in the United States and abroad. Her local passed a resolution that began:

"Whereas SEIU 1199 NW member Rachel Corrie was run over and killed by a D-9 armored Caterpillar bulldozer driven by an Israeli soldier while she was trying to protect a family home in Rafah, Gaza from destruction on March 16, 2003. This despite the fact that she was clearly visible and was wearing a bright orange vest and speaking into a bullhorn directly in front of the driver when he ran over her once, and then backed the bulldozer up and ran over her again,"

and concluded,

"Let it hear by [sic] be resolved that in honor and memory of our SEIU sister Rachel Corrie, and in honor of the union adage, 'An Injury to one is an Injury to All,' that SEIU Local 535 henceforth make every effort to begin divesting from all bond and pension holdings related to Caterpillar, and formally request other organizations that have business with SEIU 535 (CalPERS, and the AFL-CIO for instance) to consider doing the same until Caterpillar observes its own code of conduct statement and ceases its sales of bulldozers to the Israeli military if they continue to use this equipment for destructive purposes against the civilian population and ecosystem of the West Bank and Gaza Strip."

This resolution was initially submitted to a small San Francisco chapter of Local 535 of SEIU at its biennial membership meeting on January 8, 2004; it passed unanimously. It was then submitted for consideration by the Executive Board of the statewide Local 535. Through the hard work of a number of JLC members who are members of Local 535, together with the Los Angeles Director of the JLC California – Western Region, national JLC staff, and colleagues in the local labor movement and Jewish community, the statewide body defeated the resolution.

Central to this success was the JLC's understanding of the internal workings of labor, and the JLC's knowledge that the best solutions are often found by approaching a problem indirectly. For example, the JLC knew:

- 1) Employees at Caterpillar are represented by the United Auto Workers (UAW);
- 2) There is an unwritten agreement in the labor movement that unions do not undertake positions that undermine the financial well-being of workers in a sister union.

Contact was made with the UAW national headquarters; local UAW leaders in California (including a Latino-Jewish UAW former political director, active in the JLC); and key individuals at the highest level in the national headquarters of SEIU. Officials from SEIU and UAW contacted the leadership of SEIU Local 535 and made clear their opposition to the resolution. As noted, the resolution was defeated.

## **Labor, Anti-Israel Provocations and the Jewish Labor Committee:**

### **1. Challenge to Israel via the GSP – USTR**

In the mid-1980s, the AFL-CIO was successful in convincing the U.S. government to incorporate adherence to basic workers' rights as a consideration in a country's receipt of certain trade benefits under the Trade and Tariff Act of 1984. The State of Israel was a beneficiary of this act, which was actualized through the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) and overseen by the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR).

In 1988, the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) petitioned the United States Trade Representative to challenge Israel's status as a beneficiary of the Generalized System of Preferences. It claimed that Palestinian Arabs working in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as well as those willing to work in Israel, were denied internationally recognized workers' rights. ADC representatives presented testimony at hearings in November of that year, as did representatives of the National Association of Arab Americans (NAAA).

The Jewish Labor Committee, in partnership with the JCPA (at the time the agency was called the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, or NJCRAC) and other colleagues in the Jewish community, presented expert testimony to the GSP Subcommittee of the Office of the USTR refuting the many charges made by the representatives of the ADC and the NAAA. The JLC also secured rebuttal testimony from their colleagues within the trade union movement, including the AFL-CIO, the American Federation of Teachers, the Communications Workers of America, and the Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftsmen.

The ADC's petition was denied.

### **2. Anti-Israel Resolutions in Union Bodies**

In addition to diverse Christian denominations grappling with proposed resolutions to divest from investments in Israel, and/or companies that do business with, or in Israel, a number of similar resolutions have been proposed for consideration by trade unions, union locals, and related organizations.

In 2002, Charles Minster, representing Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA) Local 1141, proposed a resolution for the San Francisco Labor Council to consider. That resolution condemned Israel for allegedly destroying the headquarters of the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) during an air assault against a police station and Yasser Arafat's private apartment in Nablus. In fact, the PGFTU building suffered only minor collateral damage; it was not destroyed.

The resolution passed, but local JLC activists and members of the San Francisco Labor Council (SFLC), working with national JLC staff and colleagues at the San Francisco JCRC, were able to overturn this resolution at a subsequent meeting of the SFLC. It is worth noting that several of the key labor leaders in San Francisco had visited Israel on trips organized by the JCRC for key community leaders with the goal of giving a first-hand look at the complexities of the region and Israeli society today. This favorable turn of events would not have been possible without the established, valuable relationships between the labor movement and the Jewish community.

### 3. Labor for Palestine [LFP]

Al-Awda and New York City Labor Against the War (NYCLAW) founded Labor for Palestine (LFP). NYCLAW is part of a larger group, U.S. Labor Against the War (USLAW).

NYCLAW was formed quickly after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, "to affirm that there are many progressives in the labor movement who will not go along with the Bush administration's assault on Afghanistan." The group issued a statement signed by nine local New York union presidents, and hundreds of other union members who, "called for a just and effective response to September 11 based on five demands: no war; justice, not vengeance; opposition to racism and defense of civil liberties; aid for the needy, not the greedy; and no labor 'austerity'."

More than a hundred trade union leaders and activists gathered at the Teamsters Local 705 hall in Chicago on January 11, 2003, to discuss labor's response to the imminent possibility of war on Iraq. At the end of the day they launched a new organization to mobilize antiwar sentiment within the union movement: U.S. Labor Against the War (USLAW).

In October 2004, Al-Awda NY and NYCLAW introduced Labor for Palestine (LFP), "a new, labor-driven campaign for justice in the Middle East." It held its "founding convention" in June 2005, just before the AFL-CIO Convention in Chicago. Much, if not most, of the agenda of LFP consists of:

- Promoting the passage of divestment resolutions in union locals;
- Promoting the Palestinian "Right of Return";
- Fighting the "Apartheid Wall";
- Speaking Tours for the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions.

This remains a small, but vocal, group of activists with representatives in various unions.

### 4. Labor Committee on the Middle East (LCOME)

In August 1987, San Francisco political activists Jeffrey Blankfort and Steven Zeltzer co-founded the Labor Committee on the Middle East (LCOME). The following spring, Blankfort, the key individual in this endeavor, became the editor of the *Middle East Labor Bulletin*, which LCOME published until 1995. Zeltzer was one of the speakers at the founding convention of Labor for Palestine in June, 2005. Although the organization collapsed totally in the post-Oslo period, Blankfort claims that it still has

chapters in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Boston. He periodically makes use of the name of the organization to organize, co-host, or co-sponsor events. Blankfort claims that “during the first Intifada, this small, independent group organized most of the anti-Israel protest rallies in the Bay Area.”

## 5. Palestine Labor Support Committee (PLSC): U.S./Canada

According to its website, the Palestine Labor Support Committee (PLSC) was formed in the fall of 2002 as an outcome of tours of Palestinian labor representatives in the United States during 2002 and 2003, “in response to the needs of organized labor to educate and mobilize in support of Palestinian unions in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. The PLSC supports the end to Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the establishment of independent states of Palestine and Israel [sic] with secure borders and viable economies.”

The main activities of the PLSC included:

- Organizing two cross-country tours of Palestinian trade unionists, one in November-December 2002 and another in September-October 2003, with such representatives as Abdel Raheem Khatib (Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions) and Fayez Audah (Palestine Farmers Union);
- Organizing a trip to Israel and the Occupied Territories of the Labor Art and Mural Project (Mike Alewitz and Christine Gavreau, together with a half-dozen other individuals), and some follow-up;
- Organizing one or two other similar trips to Israel and the Occupied Territories;
- Distributing information via the Web.

The PLSC is apparently now dormant. It appears that the PLSC is composed of two or three people, a Web site, e-mail address and a mailing list. Some of its key people may have become involved with Labor for Palestine.

## Conclusion for Appendix A:

Several lessons should be learned from these case studies:

- 1) Being an effective Israel advocate with the labor movement means building and nurturing relationships.
- 2) The pre-existing alliance between the Israel advocates in the Jewish community and in the labor movement should be leveraged to further develop a stronger network of labor supporters for Israel advocacy.
- 3) We must remain vigilant about the current events unfolding in the labor movement and know the players involved so that we can maximize our response to any challenges that arise.
- 4) When an issue arises, we must be proactive in working with our partners in the labor movement to find appropriate solutions.
- 5) In most cases, those promoting divestment are not interested in changing Israeli policy; they are interested in the destruction of the State of Israel via a one-state solution.
- 6) Those opposed to the existence of the State of Israel are tenacious. A defeat is only a minor setback. They will try again.



# Appendix B: Select JCPA Policies on Issues of Shared Concern to Labor and the Jewish Community

For a complete history of JCPA policy resolutions, please refer to the JCPA Web site at [www.jewishpublicaffairs.org](http://www.jewishpublicaffairs.org).

## **1. JCPA Resolution on Immigration Reform (Adopted by the 2007 JCPA Plenum)**

Comprehensive reform of the United States immigration system is long overdue. The current morass of illegality, human suffering and violence must be ended.

In 2004, the JCPA adopted a resolution in favor of comprehensive immigration reform. Since that time, the lack of federal movement has caused state governments, local municipalities, and individual citizens to take action on their own, leading to broad ranging policies that have lacked uniformity and caused increased confusion. There is growing recognition of the need for broad-based workable solutions and a consistent approach by the states and the federal government.

The following resolution on immigration reform is founded upon American values of democracy, tolerance, entrepreneurial spirit and equality under the law and core Jewish values of human rights, human dignity and fairness.

### **The JCPA believes that:**

1. Recognizing that nations have the right and need to secure their borders and that national security is of critical importance:
  - a) The United States has a valid national interest in promoting the rule of law, securing borders and excluding those who engage in criminal or terrorist activity.
  - b) The U.S. should develop effective, reasonable and consistent security standards, to be applied to those wishing to enter as well as to those who are already here, whether legally or illegally.
  - c) The U.S. should allocate sufficient resources for the enforcement of immigration laws.
2. Recognizing the inherent value and uniqueness of all individuals, their diverse origins, and the contributions that they can and do make to this country, many who migrate to the United States, are, for the most part:
  - a) Hardworking and willing to endure great personal sacrifice to improve their circumstances;
  - b) Devoted to family values, seeking to provide a better future for their children, and committed to educating their children; and
  - c) Open and eager to embrace American culture and values, while preserving the culture and values of their countries of origin.

3. Recognizing that the United States was founded by individuals who came here in search of religious and political freedom and economic opportunity, and based upon the ethical imperative to 'welcome the stranger,' United States policy should make every effort to:

- a) Institute uniform, compassionate and humane protocols and criteria to process refugee and asylum claims, so that those fleeing persecution are protected; and
- b) Be accessible and welcoming toward those who wish to come here to work and live.

4. In view of the core American principles of equality, fairness and due process of law:

- a) Those entering the country legally with the intention to settle here permanently should not be subject to a delayed process as a result of any administrative procedures or legislative changes.
- b) A rational, timely, and judicious mechanism should be developed to establish immigrants' status.
- c) Punitive measures that criminalize actions by immigrants, social service providers, and others—actions that would not otherwise be prohibited—are unrealistic, potentially discriminatory, and harmful to individuals and communities.
- d) Undocumented workers are vulnerable to exploitation in the workplace and should be afforded appropriate protection as to working conditions and standards.
- e) A family reunification policy should be implemented to eradicate the prolonged and inhumane separation of family members: children and parents, spouses, and siblings.

5. Recognizing that the United States has an interest in economic growth and revitalization:

- a) A rational system of immigration fosters entrepreneurship, attracts productive workers, and helps the nation maintain its competitive edge.
- b) When those presently undocumented become "legal," their contribution to the U.S. economy through work, paying taxes, and buying goods and services is enhanced.
- c) For the U.S. to remain on the cutting edge in the sciences, the humanities, and the arts, and to foster the cross-cultural exchange of ideas that enriches our society, U.S. policy should be welcoming to students, researchers, academics and artists.
- d) Any changes in immigration laws must not erode the ability of American citizens to compete fairly for jobs at all skill levels.

6. Recognizing the American commitment to democracy and to the democratic decision-making process:

- a) Those individuals and groups who will be most affected by U.S. immigration policy should have an opportunity to be represented in the reform process.
- b) The Jewish community should continue to work in coalitions and partnerships with these individuals and groups and should participate actively in the reform process.

### The Jewish Community Relations field should:

1. Work to ensure that the U.S. develops reasonable, consistent, and effective security standards that will promote U.S. national security.
2. Participate in coalitions and partnerships with individuals and groups in the immigration reform process.
3. Work to ensure that those entering the country legally with the intention to settle here permanently are afforded a reasonable, effective, and judicious process, and that a rational and timely mechanism be developed to establish immigrants' status.
4. Work to develop a family reunification policy to eradicate the prolonged and inhumane separation of family members, such as children and parents, spouses, and siblings.
5. Work to ensure that U.S. policy will grant asylum and protection to refugees and be accessible to those who need refuge from persecution; Create a high-level office within the Department of Homeland Security to oversee all issues relating to asylum and expedited removal; Allow all asylum applicants to appeal their claims to an immigration judge in order to reduce the risk that those claiming asylum are deported unjustifiably; Establish detention standards appropriate for asylum seekers and seek alternatives to detention; Promulgate regulations to promote consistent implementation of parole criteria; Eliminate the arbitrary one-year deadline for filing asylum claims; and Reject further erosions of asylees' rights in the United States.

#### *Immediate Strategies to be followed to implement Immigration Reform*

1. Participate in coalitions and partnerships with other community groups.
2. Work with local, state and national legislators whenever possible.
3. JCPA and its members should continue to work with organizations such as HIAS, AJC and others already committed to immigration reform, and engage other organizations that would potentially be interested in participating.
4. Work with all synagogue movements and streams of Judaism.
5. Engage in efforts and activities to combat stereotypes about immigrants.
6. Work to ensure that employers abide by state and federal laws with respect to misclassifications of employees, workers compensation insurance, and workplace health and safety regulations.

## **2. JCPA Task Force Concern on Equal Opportunity and Social Justice (Adopted by the 2006 JCPA Plenum)**

### Racial Disparities in Healthcare

Census data for 2004 revealed that the number of uninsured Americans rose for the fourth year in a row resulting in 45.8 million Americans uninsured. In light of this growing problem the JCPA reaffirms its support for quality, affordable health care coverage, regardless of income, in accordance with our 2000 resolution on healthcare. We call for passage of legislation which would address the crisis of racial and class disparities in health care. We support legislation that expands health coverage to include the

more than 45 million Americans lacking adequate health insurance, 52% of whom are minorities; removes language and cultural barriers experienced by 21 million people in the United States in regards to procuring quality health care; supports and expands programs to reduce health disparities especially diabetes, obesity, heart disease, asthma and HIV/AIDS which disproportionately impact racial and ethnic minorities; and ensures funding of the Office of Minority Health and the National Center for Minority Health and Health Disparities and the important work that they do.

Although only 29% of the U.S. population, African Americans, Hispanics and Asian Americans represent a majority (52%) of the nation's 45 million individuals who were uninsured year-round in 2003. In that same year, 20% of African Americans, 33% of Hispanics, and 19% of Asians were without health insurance year round compared to 11% of whites. Additionally, the health care needs of racial minority Americans are great.<sup>1</sup> Minority Americans often cannot obtain preventative care in a timely manner that would prevent the development of acute and chronic conditions. Americans in minority groups have higher rates of acute conditions, chronic diseases, pregnancy-related complications, and infant mortality. As a result of structural biases in the health care system the age adjusted death rate for many preventable chronic illnesses was higher for African Americans than it was for whites by 41% for stroke, 30% for heart disease, 25% for cancer, and more than 750% for HIV disease in 2002.<sup>2</sup> Despite a substantial need for health care, minority groups often encounter obstacles in obtaining it. This is due, in part, to high rates of uninsured minority Americans. Lower socio-economic status, educational achievement, and a higher rate of un-insurance are major contributors to health disparities. Language barriers impede access to health care and may have a negative impact on the quality of care received.

#### The JCPA:

- Will promote discussion and advocacy in the Jewish community with the goal of securing quality affordable coverage to uninsured families;
- Calls for passage of the Healthcare Equality and Accountability Act (HR 3561 and S. 1580) which addresses the crisis of racial disparities in health care;
- Encourages our community actively to engage coalition members to inform the community at large on the lack of affordable health coverage, especially among working families, including a disproportionate number of minority families; and,
- Will promote affordable health-care for each and every member of the community regardless of sex, age, race, creed or color.

### **Climate Change and Energy Independence**

The United States and many other countries have become increasingly dependent on oil in the Middle East. U.S. foreign policy is constrained by the burden of protecting oil supplies in nations whose autocratic governments are often hostile towards democracies and the West in general and the U.S. and Israel specifically. As stated at the 2001 Plenum, the JCPA wishes to reaffirm our support for the development of a comprehensive national energy policy that increases U.S. energy independence by reducing our reliance upon fossil fuels – particularly oil from the Middle East – through energy efficiency and the development of environmentally-clean, safe, affordable, alternative energy sources and technologies. The U.S. Congress should adopt new policies that maximize these efforts.

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<sup>1</sup> Rockey Moore, Maya. *Health Discrimination: A 21st Century Civil Rights Issue*, Excerpted from Issue 141, 6/9/05, of *The Black Commentator*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

Since the Jewish Council for Public Affairs first addressed the issue of climate change in 1997, the evidence that human activity is causing climate change has become compelling. Serious debate in the scientific community is no longer about whether climate change is occurring, but rather by how much and how fast. Some experts believe we may only have a decade to make major changes in worldwide energy policies before the effects of a warming planet become irreversible.<sup>3</sup>

The community relations field should:

- Educate and advocate on the importance of climate change as an issue in environmental, religious, ethical and moral terms and lobby for the reversal by the US Government on the Kyoto Accord;
- Urge the Jewish community to work with those in leadership positions within their communities and in businesses to demonstrate what can be done to tackle climate change – independent of government regulation. Among the meaningful responses to this most urgent environmental challenge are: ‘Greening’ Jewish institutions in building design and operations; encouraging members of the Jewish community to make sustainable choices, such as conserve energy at home and on the road; and committing individual companies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
- Participate in interfaith efforts to engage other groups outside the Jewish community to take action on climate change; and,
- Support legislation materially similar to S2025/HR 4409, the bipartisan “Fuel Choices for American Security Act,” currently pending in Congress.

### **3. JCPA Resolution on Human Trafficking (Adopted by the 2006 JCPA Plenum)**

Each year approximately 800,000 people are trafficked worldwide, deprived of human rights and freedoms.<sup>4</sup> Millions more are trafficked within their countries. Trafficking victims are often coerced by a trafficker, lured by the promise of a better life – higher salaries and better living conditions than they were accustomed to in their home countries. However, once they arrive in the new country, they are stripped of any documentation they have (many of whom are smuggled in without proper paperwork) and exploited.

Trafficking victims are physically and verbally abused and often forced to pay large sums of money for the cost of trafficking them between countries. Victims include men, women and children who are purchased for commercial sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, forced labor or as mail-order brides. 80% of trafficking victims are women, and 70% are trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation.<sup>5</sup> In addition, increasing anti-immigrant sentiment has led to restrictive policies, making it more difficult for migrant workers to enter the U.S., and more likely that they will fall victim to traffickers. Trafficking victims are often pushed into sexual or labor slavery by conditions of poverty, discrimination, and gender-based violence and are pulled by the demand of wealthy countries for cheap labor and prostitution.

Human trafficking has a devastating impact on individual victims, who often suffer physical and emotional abuse, rape, forced prostitution, threats against self and family, and even death. But the impact of human trafficking goes beyond individual victims.

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<sup>3</sup> Environmental Defense Fund, [www.environmentaldefense.org](http://www.environmentaldefense.org)

<sup>4</sup> Human trafficking frequently involves the trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation, and also often involves exploitation of agricultural and sweat shop workers, as well as individuals working as domestic servants.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. State Department. Trafficking in Persons Report, Released by the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons on June 3, 2005

In 1998, as a response to the growing problem, then-President Clinton issued an executive memorandum which directed the United States government, in collaboration with other countries, to increase awareness about trafficking and increase protections for trafficking victims. In 2000, the 106th Congress passed the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (PL 106-386). The legislation, reauthorized in 2003, “provides tools to combat trafficking in persons both worldwide and domestically. The Act authorizes the establishment of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, headed by Ambassador John R. Miller, and the President’s Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons to assist in the coordination of anti-trafficking efforts.”

The legislation also requires the State Department to release an annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report to monitor trafficking globally. Countries are rated based on compliance with the Act: Tier 1 countries are those in which governments fully comply with the Act’s minimum anti-trafficking standards; in Tier 2 countries, by far the largest grouping, governments are not in full compliance but are making significant efforts in that direction; and governments in Tier 3 countries are not in compliance, nor are they making significant efforts to come into compliance.

We urge recognition of the unique circumstances and needs of those who fall victim to human traffickers. Anti-trafficking efforts should not inadvertently undermine critical HIV/AIDS prevention programs. We urge Congress to examine homeland security legislation to ensure that it does not contravene the efforts to prosecute trafficking. Rather than being returned to their home countries, victims must be able to remain in the United States during any criminal or civil proceedings against their abusers. And those who fear retaliation if they are deported must be permitted to apply for permanent resettlement in the U.S.

**The JCPA believes that:**

- The demand for and apparatus that facilitates the movement of modern-day slaves around the world must be eliminated;
- Human trafficking is a crime that harms millions of victims worldwide; and that,
- The public should be alerted to the risks involved with it and work with the American government and United Nations to combat trafficking.

**The JCPA and its member agencies should:**

- Advocate for consistent and comprehensive state and federal anti-trafficking laws that provide for criminal penalties for traffickers as well as protection and rehabilitation for victims;
- Support President Bush’s decision to raise the issue of human trafficking in the United Nations and for leaders of the world to work together to end it;
- Support the State Department’s efforts to curtail the demand for human trafficking and to work extensively with governments on action plans for prevention of human trafficking;
- Support the State Department’s efforts with Tier 2 and Tier 3 countries, and any country that demonstrates immediate and obvious violations not recognized in the previous year’s TIP report;
- Encourage local and state law enforcement and prosecutorial agencies to prosecute the traffickers and protect the victims; and,
- Join in coalition with other groups offering advocacy and assistance to the victims of trafficking.

## **4. Statement on Social Security Reform (Affirmed by the 2005 JCPA Executive Committee)**

### **Preamble**

*Tikkun Olam*, repair of the world, is a fundamental value embraced by the Jewish people. The American Jewish community has long advocated the principle of collective responsibility and worked to promote equal opportunity, social justice, and support for those in need in our society who are elderly, widowed, orphaned, poor or have disabilities.

Based on these fundamental precepts, the JCPA historically has supported public and private programs that prevent or alleviate poverty. While Social Security was conceived as a universal social benefit, and still functions as such, it is also one of the most effective anti-poverty tools ever created by the federal government. Without Social Security, nearly 50% of the U.S. elderly population would live beneath the poverty line. The Social Security system is particularly beneficial to women, especially widows and divorced women, and low-income workers, who receive a higher proportion of their lifetime aggregate earnings in Social Security benefits. The program also provides special benefits to orphans.

Maintaining solvency of the Social Security system is a national priority. Americans have an obligation to ensure that future generations of elderly are not denied the benefits to which earlier generations have been entitled. Moreover, America must continue its commitment to those vulnerable people, including the elderly poor, who rely so heavily on the Social Security system to relieve them from lives of poverty. Unfortunately, current predictions indicate that without any reform of the Social Security system, the Trust Fund will begin to run a deficit in the coming decades. Reform is indeed necessary to insure the solvency of the Social Security system.

In 1999, in light of its longstanding commitment to the viability of government programs that ensure the welfare of the most vulnerable groups in American society, the JCPA examined the issue of Social Security reform, consulting with experts from across the ideological spectrum representing differing views on this complex subject.

Based on these deliberations, the JCPA developed a set of guiding principles that should be reflected in any reform plan adopted by the federal government.

In 2005, as debate again arose on the future of Social Security, the JCPA reviewed those 1999 principles and determined that, as updated for 2005, they still reflect its values.

### **Principles**

1. Preserving Social Security should be the federal government's chief priority as necessary reforms are discussed.
2. Any reform plan adopted should strive to preserve as many features of the current system as possible, while ensuring the long-term fiscal health of the Trust Fund. Most important, the reliability of the program must be maintained, to ensure continued benefits for all Americans.
3. Social Security should maintain its universal character, to ensure that it retains widespread support as a program that serves all Americans.
4. The defined-benefit nature of the Social Security program must be retained, in order to ensure that all beneficiaries receive a minimum level of financial support, regardless of economic circumstance.

5. This minimum benefit guarantee should be provided through the Social Security system itself, and not through a supplemental “safety net” package. Social Security must be preserved as a universal social benefit. A supplemental “safety net” program would invariably be perceived as yet another form of relief assistance, subject to stigmatization and reduced public support.
6. Primary responsibility for the financial security of Social Security benefits should continue to reside with the federal government. Any reform plan should seek to minimize individualized risk.
7. One goal of any reform plan should be to tightly control administrative costs and burdens. Maintaining low administrative costs will ensure maximum financial benefit to beneficiaries.
8. The current system’s progressive benefit structure favors low-income wage earners, who receive a higher proportion of their lifetime aggregate earnings in Social Security payments. To ensure that the Social Security system retains its strength as an anti-poverty tool, this feature should not be eliminated or weakened.
9. Social Security is particularly advantageous to women. The program provides special benefits to widows and divorced women who were married for ten years and have not remarried. Additionally, those aspects of the program that favor low-income workers are particularly helpful to women, whose earnings continue to be lower than men. It is imperative that those aspects of the program that provide extra benefits to women be retained.
10. Any adjustment of the eligibility age for Social Security should include provisions that rectify inequalities that might result. For example, adjustments should be made to address the needs of those who have disabilities, or have limited or no other source of income.
11. Any reform effort must not adversely and disproportionately affect legal immigrants and refugees.
12. Reform of the Social Security system will require difficult choices, some of which may contravene an ideal set of principles. The principles above reflect the values of the JCPA and serve as the measure against which any proposals the JCPA considers supporting will be weighed.

## **5. JCPA Resolution on Comprehensive Immigration Reform and the Problems of Undocumented Migration to the United States (Adopted by the 2004 JCPA Plenum)**

Migration has been a central element of the Jewish experience since biblical times when famine forced the Jewish people to flee Canaan and resettle in Egypt. This experience has been mirrored in American-Jewish life with the immigration of Jews to the United States in search of religious freedom and economic opportunity. As a reflection of our history, and based upon the biblical imperative to welcome the stranger, the American Jewish Community has long advocated for fair and just immigration and refugee policies.

Our American-Jewish values necessitate confronting difficult immigration challenges facing our country and our community. At present, one of the most critical issues is the problem of undocumented migration to the United States. Undocumented migration involves a set of interrelated issues including: the existence of millions of individuals living in the United States without legal status; the dangerous reality of unauthorized border crossings that has resulted in thousands of deaths and increasingly violent conditions in the border regions; the extensive backlogs for family immigration visas that result in prolonged and inhumane separation of families; and the United States’ pressing security needs that require the government to focus resources on individuals who pose grave dangers to the country.

Of particular concern is the United States government's "Blockade Strategy," begun in the early 1990's to stem the tide of migrant workers crossing the border from Mexico to the United States. While the goal of this strategy – stopping illegal entry – is legitimate, it has had an array of negative consequences. The lure of a better quality of life in America drives tens of thousands of migrants each month to risk their lives on dangerous journeys to find work in America, now in more remote and perilous areas along the border. During the past decade at least 2,500 have died while attempting to cross the border. Furthermore, an atmosphere of vigilantism has developed in the border states and poses a threat to security and rule of law.

Despite stricter border controls, the number of migrants living without legal status has continued to grow. Current estimates are that approximately eight to ten million undocumented migrants live in the United States. Over half are from Mexico and approximately 20% are from Central American countries like El Salvador. These migrants contribute to our economy, fill needed jobs and frequently pay taxes, all while remaining beyond our country's social safety net. They are vulnerable to exploitation by unscrupulous employers, and often face lengthy separations from their families because they cannot risk the dangerous border crossing back into Mexico.

Undocumented migration is also encouraged by the lengthy backlogs in the family immigration visa categories. For example, spouses and children of legal permanent residents must wait at least 5 years for a visa; and siblings of United States citizens must wait from 10 to 22 years, depending on their country of nationality. These backlogs have had particularly negative impacts in the Chinese, Filipino and Indian communities, among others and in some cases have kept families apart for generations.

While compelling humanitarian reasons exist to address the problem of undocumented migration, tackling this problem in a comprehensive manner also creates an extraordinary opportunity to enhance the overall security of the United States. By offering migrants – both those already residing in the United States and those seeking admission – a legal process to obtain a desired benefit, the government can establish a security screening system to bar admission to terrorists and dangerous criminals while facilitating the immigration and acculturation of hard-working migrants. This approach will allow immigration enforcement resources to be targeted on actual threats as part of the continued war on terrorism.

The effort to find an all-inclusive solution to the problems discussed above is often described as Comprehensive Immigration Reform. A previous effort in 1986 to address these problems did not address the future needs of United States employers or provide any new means for foreign workers to work in the United States legally, and immigration authorities largely did not enforce many key provisions.

#### The JCPA believes that:

- The United States should maintain support for fair and generous legal immigration policies as an expression of our country's core values of refugee protection, family reunification and economic opportunity.
- Unlike in previous cases where the United States government tried to curb the flow of undocumented migrants coming to the United States to find work, a Comprehensive Immigration Reform program, accompanied by a commitment to enforcement, has a great chance of being effective.
- Efforts to respond to the problem of undocumented migration must recognize the economic realities that underlie this flow of migrant workers, and the United States' security needs that necessitate differentiation between individuals arriving for economic opportunities and those who seek entry to threaten American lives as dangerous criminals or terrorists.

- Comprehensive Immigration Reform proposals should respond to this challenge in a manner that respects the human dignity and human rights of those who wish to enter. Such efforts should include programs that will simultaneously recognize economic realities and apply the labor rights and legal remedies to documented and undocumented individuals. They should also create opportunities for undocumented workers to earn legal status while providing needed labor in the United States. New legislation should aim to actually penalize the employers who knowingly hire undocumented workers, rather than the current situation in which the greatest impact is jeopardizing the status of those workers. Finally, they should address the longstanding problem of unacceptable backlogs in the family reunification visa categories.

The community relations field should:

- Educate to raise awareness of current immigration policies, their consequences including humanitarian issues at the border crossings, and factors that contribute to associated risks for migrant workers.
- Monitor legislative proposals and advocate for Comprehensive Immigration Reform – that addresses flow across the border, earned legalization and family visa backlogs – that effectively values human dignity and allows enforcement resources to be focused on dangerous criminal or terrorist migrants.
- Work with interfaith and ethnic communities in coalitions to advance Comprehensive Immigration Reform.
- Encourage the successful acculturation of new immigrants that includes an appreciation for American democratic institutions, patriotism, and constitutional principles that we all hold dear, including equality under the law and due process.
- Work with the Administration and Congress to shape Comprehensive Immigration Reform. While we applaud the President’s January 7, 2004 speech as it reflects the contributions of both documented and undocumented immigrants, and a need to fix a broken system, this initial proposal falls short in helping these newcomers become fully integrated into our society.
- Call on the Administration, Congress, the Jewish Community and all Americans concerned about the country’s future to recommit to the complex process of developing a comprehensive proposal to reform United States immigration laws that will insure that our immigration system is secure, more humane, and free from stereotyping and xenophobia.

## **6. JCPA Resolution on Defending the Right to Form Unions and Bargain Collectively (Adopted by the 2004 JCPA Plenum)**

In the wake of World War II, on December 10, 1948 delegates of the newly-formed United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This Declaration is a central document of the modern human rights movement. The Declaration sets forth inalienable economic, social, civil and political rights of every individual, no matter where he or she lives.

Fundamental workers’ rights are an integral part of the Declaration, which states unequivocally that “everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association,” and “everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.” The Declaration recognizes the freedom of workers to organize and bargain as fundamental human rights, on par with and deserving of the same protection as others such as freedom of speech and religion.

Despite the lofty words of the Declaration and the protections theoretically provided under U.S. law, working men and women in the U.S., the wealthiest and most powerful country on earth, are often unable to exercise their freedom to form unions and bargain collectively. When workers in the U.S. seek to exercise this right they are often confronted with intimidation, coercion and disinformation that suppress their rights with devastating effectiveness.

Working people in the United States and the society as a whole pay a heavy price for this suppression of the freedom to form unions. When collective bargaining is suppressed, wages lag, inequality and poverty grow, race and gender pay gaps widen, society's safety net is strained, civic and political participation is undermined and a crucial counterweight against unbridled corporate power is weakened. The bottom line: millions of U.S. workers want collective bargaining but are denied it in a wholesale violation of human rights that leaves them and the nation worse off.

The JCPA believes that:

- Collective bargaining is a vital public good that makes for a more just, fair, open and democratic society and that workers should not be impeded in their efforts to organize.
- The National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), enacted by Congress in 1935, remains an essential cornerstone of workers rights, setting forth fair procedures for collective bargaining, prohibiting employers from discriminating against employees who take part in union or collective activities, requiring employers to bargain with the appointed representative of its employees, regulating what tactics each side may employ to further their bargaining objectives, and establishing procedural guidelines on good faith bargaining.

Therefore, the Community Relations field should:

- Work with members of the Congress so that U.S. law will:
  - Allow workers to freely choose unions without interference, threats or coercion;
  - Establish strong penalties when employees' rights to organize and bargain are violated, including timely injunctive relief and meaningful monetary damages.
- Support efforts of local unions and workers in their efforts to secure better working conditions for themselves and their co-workers, in accordance with long standing principles of Jewish community relations.

## **7. JCPA Resolution on Health Care Coverage (Adopted by the 2003 JCPA Plenum)**

According to the latest Census Bureau report, there were more than 41 million uninsured Americans in the year 2001, an increase of 1.4 million after two years of declining figures. Eight out of ten were in working families. In most cases, the primary wage earner in the household either had a job that offered no health coverage or the premiums were unaffordable. In general, because the uninsured do not have access to needed medical care, they live less healthy lives and die younger than those with health coverage.

The JCPA has long been committed to a broad social justice agenda, including advocating for policies and programs to address the needs of disenfranchised vulnerable populations. In this time of economic downturn and with the focus on the War on Terrorism, new economic pressures are likely to swell the ranks of the poor and increase their needs.

Thus, in keeping with its commitment to support policies and programs that guarantee healthcare to all Americans, the JCPA

- continues to support with ever greater vigor the JCPA's previous resolution calling for universal access to health care.
- supports efforts by Sens. Hatch (R-UT) and Wyden (D-OR) to establish a Citizens Health Care Working Group to facilitate public debate and plans to improve the health care system for Americans.
- joins the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the California Endowment, and their national partner organizations in supporting *Cover the Uninsured Week*, a week-long educational and advertising campaign to bring attention to the needs of those lacking access to affordable health coverage.

The community relations field should:

- Urge Congressional representatives to support legislative efforts to enact universal health care.
- Participate in health care community meetings sponsored by the Citizens Health Care Working Group.
- Educate the public on the lack of affordable health coverage, especially among working families.
- Join local coalitions supporting and participating in *Cover the Uninsured Week* and other similar activities, including town hall meetings, teaching events on campus, health fairs and interfaith events.

## **8. Resolution on Reaffirming Commitment to the Social Justice Agenda (Adopted at the 2002 JCPA Plenum)**

The terrorist attacks of September 11th and subsequent events have generated an inevitable shift in national priorities and altered the legislative landscape in Congress. The nation has properly focused and must continue to focus on issues arising from the fight against terrorism, on defense and security, recovery and rebuilding. At the same time, we should not lose sight of the fact that September 11th represented an attack on our American way of life and on the principles that define our nation. Not the least of these is our national commitment to economic and social justice. The Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA) believes that part of our response to the attacks upon our nation must be a vigorous and sustained reaffirmation and re-commitment to those principles.

The JCPA has long been committed to a broad social justice agenda. We have been vigorous in advocating policies and programs to fight poverty and to help address the needs of disenfranchised vulnerable populations, including the elderly, working poor, disabled, youth, and refugees. Now, in a time of economic downturn and in the aftermath of horrific terrorist attacks, new economic pressures are likely to swell the ranks of the poor and their needs will increase. These conditions will bring not only personal suffering but also the potential for growing poverty and a widening income gap to undermine our unity and weaken our national spirit.

Our response, therefore, must include renewed commitment to our traditional agenda, to invest in America by working to eliminate poverty, enrich our public schools, provide adequate affordable housing, guarantee healthcare to all Americans, and provide for the needs of our children and senior citizens. We must be on the front lines of advocacy for those affected by the economic impact of September 11th as well as for those struggling long before that event. We must refocus on those areas of need that existed before September 11th, including national long term care for the elderly, low income housing assistance, job training, and

other measures that break the cycle of poverty. We must remember as well that one of the consequences of September 11th has been the serious impact on the livelihoods and economic well being of tens of thousands of Americans. We must provide relief for those facing the greatest risk of economic hardship through expanded healthcare and unemployment benefits and other benefits, especially for those low-income workers most harshly affected. These people should not have to depend on private charity alone. Rather, as a nation, we must respond fairly and compassionately to their circumstances.

Even as we battle terror, we must remember the essential principles of economic and social justice that define our nation, and recommit ourselves, with re-energized determination, to advance the kinds of social justice investments in America that sustain and fundamentally strengthen our nation.

## **9. Resolution on Sweatshops and Child Labor (Adopted by the 2001 JCPA Plenum)**

Responding to the ethical imperative to respect and protect the basic rights of working men and women, and noting the experience of our immigrant forebears as sweatshop laborers, the Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA) reaffirms its commitment to safe, decent, secure working conditions and to the campaign to eliminate sweatshops and end exploitative child labor. The organized Jewish community has long been involved in these efforts and has consistently supported the basic right of working men and women to improve their working conditions. Issues of workers' rights are fundamental to our beliefs. As the Torah states unequivocally, "You shall not abuse a needy and destitute worker, whether a fellow countryman or a stranger in one of the communities of your land" (Deuteronomy 24:14). We strive to ensure that all workers, regardless of industry, regardless of rank, are treated with dignity and fairness.

Unfortunately, serious abuses persist in the United States and round the world. Workers in some places, including children, are still forced to labor in unsafe conditions. In many countries, children work in near slavery, for no pay, and as virtual prisoners in factories. The JCPA welcomes efforts by some industries and individual business organizations to monitor child labor and sweatshop violations in the manufacture of the products they sell. However, unless they provide for independent third party monitors that conduct unannounced inspections of manufacturing facilities, there is no assurance that monitoring will succeed in exposing these abuses.

In light of continuing sweatshop and child labor abuses, the JCPA therefore resolves to:

- Encourage the use of independent third party monitoring programs, by groups such as human rights organizations and religious organizations that bring trained investigators to conduct independent and unannounced audits of factories and provide information on their findings to consumers. To be effective, such programs must be conducted in cooperation with those engaged in foreign manufacture;
- Support initiatives to encourage manufacturers, including retailers who act as manufacturers, to take greater responsibility for contractors' violations, including overseas (while retaining any right of indemnity they have against the contractors);
- Commend industry programs that monitor production where independent monitors confirm that no sweatshop or child labor is being used;
- Encourage the purchase of merchandise from those companies whose self-monitoring has been shown to be effective by independent companies;
- Call upon the federal and state governments to provide adequate staffing and funding to enforce existing workers' protection statutes;

- Encourage enactment of municipal, state, and federal statutes or ordinances that prohibit government agencies from purchasing goods made under sweatshop conditions;
- Pledge participation by the JCPA, and urge participation by constituent agencies, in local and national coalitions to combat child labor and sweatshop abuses, through such activities as: public awareness campaigns; legislative measures to end these workplace abuses; and efforts to aid exploited workers currently laboring in sweatshops both in this country and abroad.

## **10. Resolution on Living Wage and Low-Income Workers (Adopted by the 2000 JCPA Plenum)**

*Speak up, judge righteously champion the poor and the needy. Proverbs 31:9*

The American Jewish Community has a long and distinguished tradition of being in the forefront of efforts to reduce economic poverty in the United States. There are several reasons for this. In addition to the Jewish immigrant experience in this nation, the concept of “Tikkun Olam” (repair of the world) requires Jews to work for the welfare of all persons. Moreover, Judaism embodies a sense of ethical responsibility to everybody in our nation to assure them the basic necessities of life and to use our efforts to provide all people with the ability to maintain their economic well-being and dignity.

The JCPA calls upon its member organizations and all Jewish organizations to renew, with vigor, their efforts to “speak up,” to “judge righteously,” and to “champion the poor and the needy.” The work that Jews and Jewish organizations are doing to provide direct and indirect assistance to the poor and the needy in this nation must continue and grow.

Another means for championing the cause of the poor and the needy is for Jewish organizations to advocate for improved and enhanced government programs designed to enable workers to achieve economic well-being with dignity. There are several different ways to accomplish this end, including, but not limited to: setting a minimum wage, mandating higher wages for workers employed by enterprises receiving government monies (commonly referred to as “Living Wage”), mandating certain minimum employee benefits; and providing subsidies targeted to low-income workers for services such as earned income tax credits, childcare, healthcare, transportation, housing, and other subsidies. While the JCPA has endorsed many of these steps this is its first opportunity to discuss “living wage.”

In communities across the nation, “living wage” ordinances have been passed or proposed to raise the wages of very low income working people to help them provide for themselves with a measure of dignity and security. While federal minimum wage laws apply to virtually all wage-earners, “living wage” proposals apply to only those working for city or state contractors or for employers who receive other forms of government economic assistance, since most municipal and state employees are already paid a living wage.

For purposes of this resolution, a “living wage” is one that is above the poverty wage level for the community where the goods and services are provided at the time they are provided. Currently, in most (if not all) parts of the country, such a “living wage” would be above the federally defined poverty wage level for full-time workers. When we refer to “other forms of government economic assistance” we mean governmental subsidies, tax breaks or other economic aid provided by a local or state governmental body with respect to the provision of goods or services typically provided by that governmental body.

Typically, “living wage” ordinances require that government contractors or beneficiaries pay their own employees an agreed-upon “living wage”, while they are working on projects or services for the public entity. One key concept underpinning these ordinances is that goods and services paid for with taxpayer dollars should not be provided by persons receiving poverty level wages.

The JCPA believes that services directly or indirectly paid for by taxpayers should be provided by persons who receive at least a “living wage”, regardless of whether those services are delivered by governmental bodies or contractors or subcontractors of those bodies. Living wage ordinances should be developed on a community by community basis but in no event should a living wage be set at less than the federally defined poverty level. Where necessary, waivers are often provided or other special arrangements may be made to address any potential negative economic impact to smaller projects and to protect services to low-income constituents generally provided by nonprofit agencies that serve the poor.

The JCPA has long believed that those who work at full time jobs should earn enough to support their families above the poverty line. The promise of America and the requirements of a decent family life for all call on us to support municipal and state measures that would at least assure a measure of dignity to those who work for governmental bodies, contractors, or entities that receive tax benefits or other subsidies in connection with the provision of government-related services. The JCPA urges all affiliate agencies to work for the development of state and municipal legislation creating community-based living wage ordinances, which would make it possible for full-time workers to earn an income above the federally defined poverty level for their community. Such a living wage would apply to individuals whose wages are funded by the taxpayers, whether they are employees of governmental bodies or of government contractors, subcontractors, or recipients of other forms of government economic assistance. However, such legislation should be drawn so as not to have the unintended result of adversely affecting services provided to the poor.

Living wage ordinances vary from community to community depending upon the particular circumstances of each locality. Individual living wage proposals must be considered within the context of local needs and concerns by each community where these laws are proposed. The JCPA believes the organized Jewish community should: (1) be an active player in efforts to develop living wage initiatives appropriate to the needs of their particular localities, and (2) enhance its advocacy for government programs designed to enable workers to achieve economic well-being with dignity.

## **11. Statement on Social Security Reform (Adopted by the 1999 Jewish Council for Public Affairs Board of Directors)**

### **Preamble**

*Tikkun Olam*, repair of the world, is a fundamental value embraced by the Jewish people. The American Jewish community has long advocated the principle of collective responsibility and worked to promote equal opportunity, social justice, and support for those in need in our society who are elderly, widowed, orphaned, poor or have disabilities.

Based on these fundamental precepts, the JCPA historically has supported public and private programs that prevent or alleviate poverty. While Social Security was conceived as a universal social benefit, and still functions as such, it is also one of the most effective anti-poverty tools ever created by the federal government. Without Social Security, nearly 50% of the U.S. elderly population would live beneath the poverty line.<sup>6</sup> The Social Security system is particularly beneficial to women, especially widows and divorced women, and low-income workers, who receive a higher proportion of their lifetime aggregate earnings in Social Security benefits. The program also provides special benefits to orphans.

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<sup>6</sup> With Social Security benefits, this number is reduced to 11.9%. Porter, Larin & Primus, “Social Security and Poverty Among the Elderly: A National and State Perspective,” Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Revised April 14, 1999.

Maintaining solvency of the Social Security system is a national priority. Americans have an obligation to ensure that future generations of elderly are not denied the benefits to which earlier generations have been entitled. Moreover, America must continue its commitment to those vulnerable people, including the elderly poor, who rely so heavily on the Social Security system to relieve them from lives of poverty. Unfortunately, current predictions indicate that without any reform of the Social Security system, the Trust Fund will begin to run a deficit in approximately 15 years; by the year 2034, it is expected that the federal government will only have enough assets in Trust Fund reserves to cover approximately 75% of current Social Security payments.

In light of its longstanding commitment to the viability of government programs that ensure the welfare of the most vulnerable groups in American society, the JCPA set out in the Winter and Spring of 1999 to examine the issue of Social Security reform. Included in this process was a consultation at which experts from across the ideological spectrum presented their differing views on this complex subject.

Based on these deliberations, the JCPA believes the following guiding principles should be reflected in any reform plan adopted by the federal government.

## Principles

1. Preserving Social Security should be the federal government's chief priority in determining allocation of current budget surpluses.
2. Any reform plan adopted should strive to preserve as many features of the current system as possible, while ensuring the long-term fiscal health of the Trust Fund. Most important, the reliability of the program must be maintained, to ensure continued benefits for all Americans.
3. Social Security should maintain its universal character, to ensure that it retains widespread support as a program that serves all Americans.
4. The defined-benefit nature of the Social Security program must be retained, in order to ensure that all beneficiaries receive a minimum level of financial support, regardless of economic circumstance.
5. This minimum benefit guarantee should be provided through the Social Security system itself, and not through a supplemental "safety net" package. Social Security must be preserved as a universal social benefit. A supplemental "safety net" program would invariably be perceived as yet another form of relief assistance, subject to stigmatization and reduced public support.
6. Primary responsibility for securing federal retirement benefits should continue to reside with the federal government. Any reform plan should seek to minimize individualized risk.
7. One goal of any reform plan should be to tightly control administrative costs and burdens. Maintaining low administrative costs will ensure maximum financial benefit to beneficiaries.

8. The current system's progressive benefit structure favors low-income wage earners, who receive a higher proportion of their lifetime aggregate earnings in Social Security payments. To ensure that the Social Security system retains its strength as an anti-poverty tool, this feature should not be eliminated or weakened.
9. Social Security is particularly advantageous to women. The program provides special benefits to widows and divorced women who were married for ten years and have not remarried. Additionally, those aspects of the program that favor low-income workers are particularly helpful to women, whose earnings continue to be lower than men.<sup>7</sup> It is imperative that those aspects of the program that provide extra benefits to women be retained.
10. Any adjustment of the eligibility age for Social Security should include provisions to rectify inequalities that might result. For example, adjustments should be made to address the needs of those who have disabilities, or have limited or no other source of income.
11. Any reform effort must not adversely and disproportionately affect legal immigrants and refugees.
12. Proposals to permit the federal government to invest a portion of Social Security Trust Funds in the stock market require additional study. Similarly, proposals to permit future retirees to invest a modest portion of Social Security contributions in alternative retirement investments, including stock and bond index accounts, require further review.

## **12. JCPA Resolution on Minimum Wage (Adopted by the 1998 JCPA Plenum)**

Federal legislation, scheduled to be introduced this week, would raise the current federal minimum wage by a modest 50 cents a year for each of the next two years. The Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA) supports adoption of this legislation which would restore buying power to minimum wage workers who have seen their purchasing power fall 30 percent in the last 30 years. Further, the JCPA would support and will advocate for the concept of linking the minimum wage to the annual Consumer Price Index to address the ongoing need to sustain a flexible, realistic minimum wage level, reflective of changing economic conditions.

Since passage of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, which established a minimum wage and required Congressional approval for each increase, minimum wage increases have generally failed to keep pace with the rise in consumer prices. Erosion in the real value of the minimum wage has had a serious impact on the standard of living of the working poor. Moreover, erosion in wages of low-wage workers has been a major factor underlying persistent poverty and a steadily widening income gap. The current \$5.15 per hour minimum wage, incorporating a 90-cent increase in 1996-1997, still leaves the income of a full-time, year round minimum wage worker insufficient to sustain a family of three above the poverty level. Recognizing the correlation between low wages and sustained poverty, the Jewish Council for Public Affairs has long supported efforts to raise the federal minimum wage to levels above the poverty line.

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<sup>7</sup> Women receive 53% of Social Security benefits, while paying only 38% of Social Security payroll taxes. Recent studies indicate that a greater percentage of elderly women than men rely on Social Security to lift them from poverty. Social Security therefore plays an important role in reducing the gap in poverty rates between elderly men and women. Porter, Larin & Primus, "Social Security and Poverty Among the Elderly: A National and State Perspective," Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Revised April 14, 1999.

Contrary to charges by opponents of an increase, recent studies have found that a moderate rise in the minimum wage does not reduce employment opportunities or harm small businesses. Economic conditions, not moderate minimum wage increases, determine the level of unemployment, these studies have shown. Further, over 70 percent of minimum wage workers are adults, contrary to assertions by opponents that most minimum wage workers are teens. Forty percent of the last increase went to families in the bottom 20 percent of the income scale, workers who earn on average \$14,000 a year.

The JCPA has long maintained that the federal government has a primary responsibility for alleviating poverty and for ensuring conditions that allow families to move from poverty to economic self-sufficiency. This includes the guarantee of a minimum wage sufficient to allow families to support themselves. The JCPA believes that the promise of America, and the demand for a decent family life for all, requires prompt passage of legislation to raise the minimum wage.

### **13. JCPA Resolution on Sweatshops (Adopted by the 1997 JCPA Board of Directors)**

Responding to the ethical imperative to respect and protect the basic rights of working men and women to safe, decent, secure working conditions, and noting our own community's historical experience as immigrants to this country, the Jewish Council for Public Affairs reaffirms its commitment to the campaign to eliminate sweatshops and to end exploitative child labor.

The organized Jewish community has a long history of involvement in efforts to end sweatshops and sweatshop working conditions and has consistently supported the basic right of working men and women to better their working conditions through the labor movement. In October 1996, the JCPA endorsed federal "Stop Sweatshops" legislation, an important step in the campaign to hold manufacturers and retailers responsible for the conditions under which their goods are produced.

We join now with a broad coalition of religious, human rights, labor, student, women's and grassroots community organizations to support the nationwide "Holiday Season of Conscience" program. This initiative provides American consumers the opportunity to participate in the international campaign to end exploitative child labor and sweatshops. The JCPA supports the participation of its constituent agencies in local and national activities connected with this campaign and with efforts to aid exploited workers currently laboring in sweatshops both in this country and abroad.

### **14. Principles for Addressing Poverty and Welfare Reform (Adopted by the 1994 NJCRAC Executive Committee)**

#### Preamble

Helping Jewish poor as well as those in the general community achieve self-sufficiency has been a fundamental commitment of the Jewish people. Jewish tradition and values emphasize the responsibility of the larger community to provide for the poor and the near poor in ways that enable them to live independently, with dignity, and to move from poverty to economic self-sufficiency. Most welfare recipients are eager to achieve this goal. Blaming welfare recipients for their own plight, rather than addressing the inadequacies of the welfare system and of the nation's economy, is cause for alarm. Instead, a comprehensive approach should be developed, using a full range of collaborative programs and realistic measures of accountability on both the system and the recipient

Conditions which enable families to leave the welfare system include: jobs that pay enough to allow families to support themselves, opportunities for affordable housing, child care, and other social services that meet basic needs. The NJCRAC will support measures which provide families with realistic work opportunities and adequate financial and other supports, especially

for the children in such families. While such reforms may require meaningful financial investment in the short term, they save money in the long-term by constituting a worthwhile investment in people, effectively enabling them to move from welfare to work and ensuring the well-being of children.

### Principles

The NJCRAC has therefore set forth the following principles as a basis for developing a comprehensive and humane welfare reform policy:

1. Welfare reform is part of an overall commitment and strategy to reduce poverty and promote economic independence and social well being among the poor. A wide range of policies and programs, including job creation, health care for all, childcare, and other support services, must be developed to enable the working poor, as well as those dependent on public assistance, to become self-supporting. A commitment to adequate funding is necessary to ensure that these goals are met.
2. The federal government has a primary responsibility for alleviating poverty by providing the necessary programs to enable individuals and families to progress from poverty to economic self-sufficiency.
3. The federal government should ensure a basic minimum level of support to provide a decent living standard for the poor. The level of government funding for welfare benefits should be brought, as quickly as possible, to the federally defined poverty line, with regional adjustments for differentials in living costs. Any action which would further reduce net benefits to individuals, such as taxing welfare dollars, should be rejected.
4. Government policy should recognize the diversity of those who are poor and include programs which respond to the heterogeneous needs of this population. One group requiring targeted services is the long-term poor, who face the greatest barriers to employment. Another key target group, requiring special attention by government, educational and community institutions, is children who have children. Preventing pregnancies among teenagers could have a substantial impact on breaking the cycle of welfare dependence. Children who become parents, or who may potentially become parents, both fathers and mothers, require the following specialized services: targeted education and employment programs; inducements to remain in school; child care and health care counseling, to include programs and social service supports which reduce pregnancy rates and encourage parent responsibility.
5. Training, education, and job creation programs should be funded at levels that enable such programs to be effective in moving clients from welfare to employment and sustainable self-sufficiency. Federal funding for the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) program — or any successor program — should be increased to expand education and training opportunities. Adequate funding must be provided also for job development strategies, as well as for job search assistance. Matching state funding requirements should be reduced, and application procedures simplified, so that administrative and fiscal constraints no longer prevent states from accessing their full allocation from these programs.
6. Welfare reform should not be funded at the expense of established government benefit programs which currently serve welfare, low-income, and immigrant populations, the working poor, the disabled, and other needy groups.
7. Government policy should provide for comprehensive support services for welfare recipients enrolled in job training, education, and placement programs and for recipients in transition from welfare to work. Services should include health care, childcare, housing transportation, legal services, and other social service supports.

8. Any mandatory employment, whether in the private or public sector, to which welfare recipients are assigned must not displace current workers and jobs, must provide pay and benefits equal to those of other workers doing the same work, and should not at any time pay wages below the minimum wage.
9. If fixed limits are established, such as time limits in programs associated with training and job placement, they should be contingent upon individual circumstances (including provision of waivers for people with disabilities or other needs), the capacity of the federal government to guarantee adequate education and training services within the given time frame, the ability of the economy to generate sufficient numbers of permanent jobs within reasonable geographic access, the needs of dependent children, and the government's capacity to provide the necessary support services.
10. Government policy should be flexible in assigning operational responsibility for the design and implementation of non-cash welfare programs, such as job training and child care, enabling participation by a range of state and local government and non-governmental agencies experienced in developing effective, localized service delivery programs. The policy, however, must be based upon an adequate level of government funding for service provision and clearly established government standards of accountability.
11. Welfare programs should emphasize incentives over penalties. Family cap provisions and other punitive restrictions endanger the welfare of children and families and do not promote self-sufficiency.
12. Welfare programs should facilitate family stability by removing bars to participation by two parent families, and by not penalizing impoverished families in which both parents are employed. Reforms should make it easier to combine some paid work with welfare benefits, particularly in cases where only part-time and low wage work is available, without loss of health care, child care, and other support services, and to allow recipients to retain more of their earnings in order to save for future needs.
13. Preferred remedies to poverty are those which support families, promote self-sufficiency, and reward work, such as the earned income tax credit (EITC). The recent expansion of the EITC means that families with one member working full-time in a minimum wage job will be able to live above the poverty line. To ensure use of the EITC, including awareness of advance payment availability, outreach efforts, to both recipients and employers, should be enhanced. All welfare recipients, upon application for and departure from welfare programs, should be notified in writing of the availability of the EITC. Employers should be required to inform new employees of the option of having advance EITC payments available through their payroll. At the same time, the federal government should continue to explore ways of establishing a more effective and efficient advance payment system.
14. Given that child support enforcement services are critical to preventing poverty, child support by absent parents should be enforced more vigorously through mechanisms such as: establishment of paternity as soon as possible following birth; periodic update of guidelines for appropriate support payment levels; interstate coordination of central registries for collections and disbursements; and a federal child support enforcement clearinghouse, and other federal assistance wherever possible. However, failure of efforts to establish paternity should not result in disqualification for welfare eligibility. A safety net of assured minimum child support must be provided regardless of parents' employment status.

## Conclusion

The NJCRAC is committed to calling to the attention of the Jewish and general community the problems associated with poverty, and to advocating support for those programs that will move individuals and families out of poverty toward self-sufficiency.

The NJCRAC recognizes federal, state, local, private, and individual responsibility in working to develop a coordinated program of support for welfare recipients and their families.

The NJCRAC urges local and national Jewish organizations to join in coalition with other civic, religious, and advocacy organizations, and together to disseminate this or similar welfare reform position papers in their states and communities, and to express these positions as preferred public policy to government officials, newspaper and magazine editorial boards, and candidates for office in this election year.

## **15. NJCRAC Principles on National Health Care Coverage (Adopted by the 1993 NJCRAC Executive Committee)**

We call upon the federal government to take action to assure adequate and affordable accessible health care coverage for all individuals and families.

### **I. Universal Access**

We seek a national health care plan that serves everyone living in the United States. Health care should not be employment dependent and should not exclude anyone with prior medical conditions.

### **II. Comprehensive Care**

We seek a health care plan that provides comprehensive benefits for the whole population through:

- a. Programs aimed at health promotion and risk reduction including:
  - Prevention of illness and disability through pre and postnatal care, immunizations and epidemiologic services.
  - Education of providers, families and Individuals about early symptom identification, appropriate use of health care services through risk assessment, public health materials and educational events.
  - Early screening, diagnosis and treatment through physical examinations (inclusive of dental, eye and hearing care).
  - Comprehensive reproductive health services for men and women.
- b. Availability of primary health care services particularly In rural areas and the inner cities.
- c. Acute, chronic, ambulatory and institutional care including mental health care.
- d. Long term care; rehabilitation that treats health problems, including services offered by health care providers in home settings, hospitals, clinics, extended care facilities, specialized nursing facilities, congregate settings and hospice care.

### III. Choice of Health Care Providers

We seek a national health care plan that would permit individuals to exercise choice in the selection of physicians and other certified health care providers.

### IV. Equity, Efficiency and Quality

We seek a universal access national health plan that would provide services based on the principles of equity, efficiency and quality of output. The process of financing health care should be equitable, cost effective, easy to administer and to understand.

We seek a national health care plan that provides appropriate discipline for unprofessional acts by medical providers and provides appropriate recompense for injured patients.

### V. Cost, Coverage, Financing

- a. We seek a national health care plan that significantly reduces the rapid inflation in the costs of providing medical services.
- b. The cost of participation should be fair, affordable and progressive, i.e. based on the ability to pay.
- c. The agencies or commissions that establish benefits, standards of evaluation for the quality of health services, guidelines for medical practice, and the authorization and geographic location of appropriate service providers must include participation by consumers, health care workers and professionals, and appropriate government representatives.
- d. Unnecessary duplication of services should be eliminated.
- e. While in our view health care coverage provided by a single payer system is the best proposal to implement our goals we will also support a health care proposal that breaks the link to employment and provides for the most efficient, cost effective system of administration, without jeopardizing the quality of service; ensures universality of coverage, maximizes choice of provider for the consumer and does not place a greater burden for the costs of coverage on those who are less able to pay for it.

### VI. Health Care Providers

We seek a national health care plan that provides for the continuing education and training of health care workers.

The plan must provide for just compensation for all workers at all levels of the health care system.

### VII. Innovation and Research

We seek a national health care plan that promotes effective and safe innovation and research in medical techniques, research on the delivery of health services, and research on health practices of individuals and families. Health research should include full study of all segments of the population including the particular health problems associated with a given group.

# Appendix C: Important Statements

## **A. Statement of Opposition to Divestment From or Boycotts of Israel (July, 2007)**

We view with increasing concern the phenomenon of trade unions in a number of countries, including, most recently, the United Kingdom, issuing resolutions that either directly or indirectly call for divestment from and boycotts of Israel.

With the large number of local, regional and international conflicts, with the diverse range of oppressive regimes around the world about which there is almost universal silence, we have to question the motives of these resolutions that single out one country in one conflict.

We note with increasing concern that virtually all of these resolutions focus solely on objections to actions or policies of the Israeli government, and never on actions or policies of Palestinian or other Arab governments, parties or movements. We notice with increasing concern that characterization of the Palestinians as victims and Israel as victimizer is a staple of such resolutions. That there are victims and victimizers on all sides, and that many if not most of the victims of violence and repression on all sides are civilians, are essential items often not mentioned in these resolutions.

Any just and fair resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict must be brought about through meaningful negotiations between their elected representatives. We believe strongly in a two-state solution, brought about through meaningful negotiations, with the involvement and encouragement of the world community.

Trade unionists and their organizations seeking such a just and fair resolution should be assisting those working to bring the two sides together in direct talks and then negotiations. In this regard, we call for increased engagement of trade unions with their counterparts on all sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We support efforts of Palestinian and Israeli trade unionists and their organizations to maintain contact and cooperative and mutually supportive activities, even in the midst of tumult and political change within their respective communities and polities.

Calls for academic boycotts of Israel are inimical to and counter to the principles of academic freedom and freedom of association, key principles for which academics and educational unions have struggled over many years. Rather than limiting interactions with Israeli educators, academics and educational institutions, we see the importance of maximizing, rather than proscribing, the free flow of ideas and academic interaction between peoples, cultures, religions and countries.

Similarly, calls for journalistic boycotts of Israel are inimical to the free flow of information and journalistic objectivity, and must be opposed.

Rather than divestment from Israel, we believe that investment of time, energy and material aid is the best means to alleviate the ongoing suffering of Palestinians and Israelis. Engagement, rather than disengagement, with the Israeli people and the Palestinian people is needed, so that a just and fair resolution of this conflict may be pursued, and so that meaningful progress towards achieving the legitimate needs of Palestinians and Israelis can be made.

We offer our support to assist trade unionists as well as interested members of the community-at-large who are grappling with these matters, and who share our concern over simplistic and non-constructive approaches, whether in the form of misguided resolutions or other statements on the tragic conflict between Israel and the Palestinians.

Stuart Appelbaum, President, Jewish Labor Committee; President, Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union / UFCW

Edward J. McElroy, Secretary, Jewish Labor Committee; President, American Federation of Teachers

Morton Bahr, Treasurer, Jewish Labor Committee

John J. Sweeney, President, AFL-CIO

Anna Burger, Chair, Change to Win

Clayola Brown, President, A. Philip Randolph Institute

Timothy A. Brown, International President, International Organization of Masters, Mates & Pilots / ILA

R. Thomas Buffenbarger, International President, International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers

William Burrus, President, American Postal Workers Union

James Clark, President, International Union of Electronic, Electrical, Salaried, Machine and Furniture Workers-Communications Workers of America

Larry Cohen, President, Communications Workers of America

Barbara J. Easterling, Secretary-Treasurer, Communications Workers of America

Patrick D. Finley, General President, Operative Plasterers' and Cement Masons' International Association of the United States and Canada

John J. Flynn, President, International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers

John Gage, President, American Federation of Government Employees

Leo W. Gerard, International President, United Steel, Paper and Forestry, Rubber, Manufacturing, Energy, Allied Industrial and Service Workers International Union

Ron Gettelfinger, President, United Automobile, Aerospace & Agricultural Implement Workers of America International Union

Michael Goodwin, President, Office and Professional Employees International Union

Larry V. Gregoire, President, International Chemical Workers Union Council / UFCW

James A. Grogan, General President, International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators and Asbestos Workers

Don M. Hahs, National President, Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen / IBT

Joseph T. Hansen, International President, United Food and Commercial Workers International Union

Edwin D. Hill, International President, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

William P. Hite, General President, United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry of the United States and Canada

James P. Hoffa, General President, International Brotherhood of Teamsters

Joseph J. Hunt, General President, International Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental and Reinforcing Iron Workers

Frank Hurt, International President, Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union

Louis Lacarbonara, President, Italian-American Labor Council

D. Michael Langford, National President, Utility Workers Union of America

Thomas F. Lee, President, American Federation of Musicians

Jill S. Levy, President, American Federation of School Administrators

James C. Little, International President, Transport Workers Union of America

William Lucy, President, Coalition of Black Trade Unionists

Douglas J. McCarron, General President, United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners

Gerald W. McEntee, President, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees

Bruce S. Raynor, General President, UNITE HERE

Cecil E. Roberts, President, United Mine Workers of America

Michael Sacco, President, Seafarers International Union of North America

Robert A. Scardelletti, International President, Transportation Communications Union / IAM

Michael J. Sullivan, General President, Sheet Metal Workers International Association

George Tedeschi, President, Graphic Communications International Union / IBT

Patric M. Verrone, President, Writers Guild of America, West

Reg Weaver, President, National Education Association

James A. Williams, General President, International Union of Painters and Allied Trades

*List in formation*

B. AFL-CIO Position Regarding Investing in Peace in the Middle East

May 12, 2005

Mr. Richard M. Rogers  
Executive Secretary-Treasurer  
Greater Boston Labor Council, AFL-CIO  
8 Beacon Street, 2nd Floor  
Boston, MA 02108

Dear Brother Rogers:

This is in response to your letter of May 2, 2005 regarding a pending ballot initiative requiring the City of Somerville to divest its holdings in Israel bonds and any investments it has with companies that supply arms and military equipment to Israel. As you may know, American unions have been supporting Israel Bonds for decades.

The AFL-CIO does not support disinvestment into the region. On the contrary we favor increasing investment to the West Bank and Gaza, and to Israel itself, that would contribute to creating jobs, providing housing and other services, and in general contribute to strengthening the Israeli economy for all its citizens and building the economy of a future Palestinian State. This necessitates investment, not disinvestment, and requires greater cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians.

These views enjoy widespread support throughout the Middle East and are shared by both parties to the dispute, including recently elected Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas. The Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority have both called upon donor nations and organizations to increase investment in the area so as to relieve the economic crisis of the poor and needy, build infrastructure, and give both Palestinians and Israelis optimism for a better future.

Finally, the AFL-CIO supports all efforts that contribute to building a just and lasting peace in the region based on a two-state solution. We hope that such a peace will provide a "peace dividend" for those working for an equitable and fair solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Sincerely,  
Barbara Shailor, Director  
International Affairs Director

C. Israel Solidarity Rally: Remarks by AFL-CIO President John Sweeney  
April 15, 2002

Thank you very much, Stuart Appelbaum. I'm happy to also be joined with Morton Bahr, the president of the Communication Workers of America and a vice president of the AFL-CIO.

On behalf of the 13 million working women (and) men of the AFL-CIO, I stand with you to express our support for the people of Israel in this darkest of hours. The AFL-CIO condemns all acts of terror directed against Israel and its citizens. America's working families, seared by the horrors of September 11th here in our own country, can begin to imagine how terrifying the suicide bombs have made daily life in Israel.

These assaults on innocent civilians at their places of work and rest should be named what they are — crimes against humanity that cannot be condoned. (Applause.) These acts of terror will not succeed. The AFL-CIO joins with you in calling for an end to all acts of terror. We call on all parties to make respect for life and for the dignity and rights of all people the cornerstone of peace.

When violence escalates, it is working families who pay the price in loved ones lost, homes destroyed and dreams crushed. The American labor movement has a long and enduring relationship with the state of Israel, a relationship grounded in our solidarity with the Israeli Trade Union Federation, the Histadrut. We join with you in asserting the simple reality, Israel has the right to exist in security and in peace. (Applause.) We will work with you toward that day.

At the beginning of this new millennium, I led a delegation to Israel, accompanied by President Morty Bahr and Jay Mazur, then- president of UNITE. We met with Israel's political, military and trade union leaders as well as with workers from all sectors of society. We traveled to the West Bank and met with the Palestinian trade union leaders. We met with workers from both sides, who expressed a real desire and commitment to work for peace. At that time a secure and lasting peace seemed to be within reach, a peace grounded in security for Israel and hope for a prosperous future and fulfillment of the aspirations of the Palestinian people. Tragically, the hopes of that moment have been shattered. Now we witness violence that can only spread despair among all people, fueled by even greater poverty and unemployment. The cycle must be broken. Conflict must give way to negotiations. Hope must supplant despair.

The AFL-CIO applauds the initiative now under way by Secretary Powell seeking to end the violence, to move quickly towards negotiations that might lead to a political settlement. We hope it is not too late. As the richest nation on Earth and the cradle of democracy, it is incumbent on the United States to take the lead in these efforts. The United States must stay engaged, using its influence to condemn the acts of terror while moving the parties back to the negotiating table.

The AFL-CIO stands ready, together with workers across the world, to help rebuild the peace and the region once the violence stops. I will tell you this: The AFL-CIO will continue to defend Israel's right to exist and the right of its people to live in peace. (Cheers.) We will continue to denounce terrorist assaults on civilians, and we will work to support a just and lasting peace.

Thank you. (Cheers, applause.)

D. National Solidarity with Israel Rally  
New York, September 20, 2006

*Linda Chavez-Thompson, Executive Vice President of the AFL-CIO, was to have delivered the remarks below at the National Solidarity with Israel Rally held on September 20, 2006 in New York City, but was unable to attend due to a family crisis. Nevertheless, the following is her prepared remarks.*

I'm delighted to be here on behalf of the ten million proud members of the AFL-CIO from Maine to Honolulu ... the women and men who teach our kids, fight our fires, build our homes, and nurse us back to health.

I'm here to deliver three messages.

The first message is that we are proud to stand alongside our sisters and brothers... the working women and men of Israel and their trade union federation Histadrut.

When the terrorists of Hezbollah first struck against Israel ... the first to die were railroad workers in Haifa.

And time after time, when terrorists send their rockets and explode their bombs in Israel ... our union sisters and brothers lose their limbs, or their loved ones, or their lives.

So our message to them is ...

you believe in peace – so do we.

You believe terrorism should end – so do we.

We are on your side – we are one with you.

My second message is to President Ahmadinejad of Iran.

The message is: we see what you're doing.

We know that the Hezbollah terrorists are on your payroll.

We know that you violate the law of nations and call for the destruction of the state of Israel.

And so the millions of us in the AFL-CIO pledge here and now that just as we give all of our support to the Iranian workers you oppress ...

we give all of our support to the Israeli workers you would destroy.

And my final message is to each of you.

Our parents supported Israel when it was created ...

our generation supports Israel today...

and I promise you that our children will support Israel long after we are gone.

Our hopes for the Israelis and the Lebanese and the Palestinians are clear.

We are on the side of trade unionists in each of their lands who seek peace.

For today, we believe in helping the victims of violence among all three peoples to rebuild their homes, their shops, their infrastructures, their lives.

And for tomorrow, we believe in creating a Middle East where all three peoples live side by side in peace, security, and prosperity, each in lands they can call their own.

The Talmud teaches us all that the world is sustained by three things ...

law, truth, and peace.

We dream that the day will come when law, truth, and peace come to every corner of the land of Abraham...

and together, we will make that day happen.

Thank you.

# Appendix D: Other Players

## Who Work With Organized Labor

Interfaith Worker Justice (IWJ, formerly known as the National Interfaith Committee for Workers Justice) “calls upon our religious values in order to educate, organize, and mobilize the religious community in the U.S. on issues and campaigns that will improve wages, benefits, and working conditions for workers, especially low-wage workers.” Based in Chicago, the IWJ is a national faith-based organization. IWJ has some three-dozen local “labor-religion coalitions” as affiliates. Many local religion-labor coalitions include rabbis; at least two are staffed by rabbis.

There are a number of “Jewish social justice” organizations around the United States, many of which include support for workers’ rights on their organizations’ agenda. These include:

Boston:	Tekiah, Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action (JALSA), Jewish Organizing Initiative (JOI)
Chicago:	Jewish Council on Urban Affairs (JCUA), AVODAH: The Jewish Service Corps
New York:	Jews for Racial and Economic Justice (JFREJ), Jewish Fund for Justice (JFJ), AVODAH: The Jewish Service Corps
Washington DC:	Jews United for Justice (JUFJ), AVODAH: The Jewish Service Corps
Minneapolis St. Paul	Jewish Community Action
St. Louis:	Jews United for Justice (JUJ)
Los Angeles:	Progressive Jewish Alliance (PJA).
San Francisco:	Jewish Youth for Community Action (JYCA), Progressive Jewish Alliance (PJA).



# Appendix E: Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge the help and assistance of the following people who made invaluable suggestions, additions and corrections.

Herman Brown, Phoenix, AZ; Elihu Davison, MetroWest, NJ; David Dolev, Boston, MA; Joyce Goldstein, Cleveland, OH; Selma Goode, Detroit, MI; Michael Grace, Washington, DC; Carolyn Jacobson, Washington, DC; Cookie Lommel, Los Angeles, CA; J. Michael Nye, North Hollywood, CA; Michael Perry, Chicago, IL; Ed Rehfeld, Washington, DC; Richard Rumelt, New York, NY; Donald Siegel, Boston, MA; Paula Simon, Milwaukee, WI; Gerry Sommer, Washington, DC; Rosalind Spigel, Philadelphia, PA.

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## **About the UJC/JCPA Israel Advocacy Initiative (IAI)**

The partnership between United Jewish Communities (UJC), the Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA), federations and Community Relations Councils serves as a powerful Israel advocacy infrastructure. IAI is based on two primary principles: that the continued support of the United States government is essential to guarantee Israel's long-term security and that federations and JCRCs play a distinctive and crucial role in advancing community-based advocacy on behalf of Israel.

The UJC/JCPA Israel Advocacy Initiative works with more than 150 communities to enhance Jewish Community Relations Councils and federations' capacity to meet Israel advocacy challenges in their communities within a nationally coordinated and strategic framework.

An expanded Israel advocacy team is also working with communities to improve the quality of their outreach to key non-Jewish leaders. The goal is to meet emergency and ongoing challenges on campus, and to effectively communicate messages through the media.

IAI has already made an impact, countering anti-Israel divestment initiatives within mainline Protestant churches, on college campuses, and in city councils. Our system can and is making a difference.

The UJC/JCPA Israel Advocacy Initiative focuses its efforts in three spheres:

1. Mobilizing communities to intensify their interfaith and intergroup dialogue.
2. Promoting community-campus partnerships with federations and JCRCs and working with administration, faculty, and student groups and addressing anti-Israel rhetoric.
3. Addressing local communities' needs including an extensive field survey that will provide a valuable snapshot of local efforts and specific community needs.

For more information on the IAI, please contact [info@thejcpa.org](mailto:info@thejcpa.org).

## About the Jewish Council for Public Affairs

The Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA) serves as the representative voice of the organized American Jewish community in addressing the mandate of the Jewish community relations field. The mandate is expressed in two, interrelated goals:

1. To safeguard the rights of Jews here, in Israel, and around the world; and, in order to accomplish that,
2. To protect, preserve, and promote a just American society, one that is democratic and pluralistic.

These goals are pursued in a non-partisan manner informed by Jewish values. History teaches us that Jewish security is inexorably linked to the strength of democratic institutions. Thus, our community has a direct stake — along with an ethical imperative — in assuring that America remains a country wedded to the Bill of Rights and committed to the rule of law, whose institutions continue to function as a public trust.

The JCPA reflects a unique and inclusive partnership of national member agencies, local community relations councils and committees, and the federations of which they are a component part or affiliated agency. It convenes the “common table” around which member agencies, through an open, representative, inclusive and consensus-driven process, meet to identify issues, articulate positions, and develop strategies, programs, and approaches designed to advance the public affairs goals and objectives of the organized Jewish community.

The work of the JCPA, especially in matters relating to democratic pluralism and social justice, reflects the profound Jewish commitment to *tikkun olam*, the repair of the world. It expresses the conviction of the organized Jewish community that it must be active in the effort to build a just society. The JCPA has the responsibility to enhance the capacity of member agencies to effectively pursue the public affairs agenda. This responsibility requires the JCPA to provide coordination, support, and guidance for public affairs initiatives undertaken by national and local member agencies, to advocate on behalf of the public affairs policies of the organized Jewish community, and to respond to those member-identified needs which strengthen their individual and collaborative capacity to advance the communal public affairs agenda.

For more information on the JCPA, please contact:

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[www.jewishpublicaffairs.org](http://www.jewishpublicaffairs.org)

## **About the Jewish Labor Committee (JLC)**

The Jewish Labor Committee has represented the organized Jewish community on questions relating to trade unionism and human rights since 1934, when it was founded as a labor-based rescue operation in response to the rise of Nazism in Europe.

Today, the JLC is an independent secular organization that:

- Helps the Jewish community and the trade union movement work together on issues of shared interest and concern;
- Works to maintain and strengthen the historically strong relationship between the American Jewish community and the trade union movement;
- Promotes the shared social justice agenda of both communities.

The JLC's national headquarters are in New York City; they have staffed local/regional offices in Boston, MA; New York, NY; Philadelphia, PA; and Chicago, IL; — and volunteer-led JLC or JLC-affiliated groups in such places as Los Angeles, CA; Detroit, MI; Washington, DC; Cleveland, OH; Miami, FL; and Phoenix, AZ.

For more information, please contact the JLC's national headquarters:

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