

DECLARATION OF INTERDEPENDENCE:

American Jews and Israel¹

Rabbi Lance J. Sussman, Ph.D.

Tel Aviv, 2004

When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for the Jewish people to reaffirm the bonds which connected them one to another, and to assume among the peoples of the earth a separate and equal station to which the laws of humanity and their own heritage entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to maintain their essential unity and common future as American Jews and as citizens of the Jewish State.

For a whole host of reasons which invariably combined to reduce and divide us by circumstance or by malice, it is now our duty, our obligation, to provide for our future unity and our wellbeing as a people.

To prove this, let our history be submitted to a candid world . . .

- We have traveled together as a people for more than three dozen centuries since we first emerged on the stage of history.
- We spawned a new vision of human society and human potential in prophetic word and deed.
- We evolved a nation from our family of our origin to tribes and finally to a monarchy in the Land of Israel.
- We twice survived the destruction of our national state and then developed viable Diaspora communities without ever despairing of our return to our homeland.
- We preserved in Diaspora, the language, customs and memory of our people on every continent and in every age.
- We incurred cruel persecution by Kings, peasants, religious fanatics and tyrants of every stripe.
- We survived the broadest and most diabolical program of genocide which has ever stained the earth with blood and tarred humanity with ignominy.
- We fought in modern times for enlightenment and emancipation and humanitarian causes for the benefit of all people.
- We envisioned, through the Zionist movement, a return to our ancient homeland based on the principles of our heritage and affirmed by international law and the agreement of the family of nations.
- We gathered the remnants of our people from the four corners of the earth and reacquainted them with their land, their language and their national pride.
- We have resolved to exercise our reborn power with restraint, integrity and hopefulness.
- We have pledged to work together in our many lands of domicile as a single people assembled into many polities and communities and to provide for our mutual wellbeing and common spiritual nourishment.
- We have witnessed in recent years a disengagement of many of our people and have confused sovereignty with isolation and security and affluence with destiny.
- We have allowed, at this time, too many centrifugal forces to weaken Jewish life from within, reduce our ties to one another, and in the final analysis, imperil our common future.

We, therefore, the Philadelphia representatives of the North American Coalition for Israel Engagement, assembled at Independence Hall in Tel Aviv, appealing to the People of Israel in North America and in

the State of Israel, solemnly state and declare our mutual interdependence; that our communities ought to be in interdependent , and that all connections between us shall be strengthened and preserved; and that as a global people we should establish economic programs, cultural exchanges and institutional ties which will bind us together in perpetuity.

And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on our tradition and ourselves, we hereby pledge to each other our bond of fellowship, our communal resources and our sacred future as one people of a common heritage and a shared future.

ⁱ This *Declaration* is a revised version of the original August 1, 2004 document presented at Independence Hall, Tel Aviv, North American Coalition for Israel Engagement (NACIE) - Jewish Agency as published by Jewish Partnership Outreach, Philadelphia, PA, 2005.