

## CA BRANCH OF SECULAR JEWISH WORKMEN'S CIRCLE OPPOSES MOVING EMBASSY

The Workmen's Circle/*Arbeter Ring* of Northern California (Branch 1054) strongly opposes President Trump's recent decision to move the American embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, and recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital, although that city's status remains legally unresolved. This decision is provocatively ill-advised, politically destabilizing, and destructive of future peace in the Middle East. It ignores the necessary involvement of both Israelis and Palestinians in the peace process, including a negotiated agreement for Jerusalem to be the shared capital of both Israel and Palestine, with safe and guaranteed access for all people to all religious sites.

While the Trump proclamation may mollify the president's ultra-right Jewish supporters and conservative evangelical base, it also encourages extremists of all stripes to pursue their discriminatory and violent activities over disputed, occupied territory. The decision is now provoking protests in the Arab world, and will continue to endanger Israelis and Jews in the diaspora. It seriously diminishes the already waning prospects of a two-state solution by emboldening Israeli political leaders uninterested in achieving peace.

As American Jews, we urge all Americans, especially congressional Democrats and Republicans, including those who have supported this decision, to join with those who have spoken out publicly and unequivocally to oppose the divisive policy this White House is pursuing.

We also want Israel, an ally receiving substantial U.S. financial and military support, to become a nation where Israelis and Palestinians have equal rights, are respected, and are not subject to the injustices that accompany occupation, displacement, and abuse of power.

We reiterate the Workmen's Circle's decade-old call for a peace reconciliation process based on equal human rights and equal rights to self-determination for Israeli and Palestinian peoples; to the reconciliation of dual claims to their common homeland; and to mutual recognition, respect, and adherence to the values of universal human rights, equality, and justice. We oppose moving the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem prior to final status negotiations, which violates these basic, guiding principles.

*This statement was composed for release by the executive officers of Workmen's Circle/Arbeter Ring, Branch 1054 (Northern California), December 10, 2017. Branch 1054 was founded in 1948 as an affiliate of the national Workmen's Circle/Arbeter Ring, founded in 1900.*