

Farewell Message from Brit Tzedek v'Shalom

In 2002, at the height of the Second Intifada, a small group of American Jews took stock of the seemingly endless violence between Israelis and Palestinians, and knew that something had to change. Together we dreamed of harnessing the energy of the grassroots and reigniting a path to peace -- Israeli and Palestinian states living side by side.

We came together to encourage U.S. government leadership for these two states and to open up a frank dialogue in the Jewish community about the conflict.

Brit Tzedek, of course, was not alone. Then, as now, we had allies in the U.S., Israel, and elsewhere. We were part of a larger shift: a collective effort to redefine what it meant to support Israel and work on behalf of her best interests.

But in 2002, many of us felt few in number and isolated. All of us, whether founders of Brit Tzedek or quiet voices of dissent at the back of temple social halls, faced the prospect of attacks or stony silence for saying out loud what we felt: a mutual recognition of rights and dignity between Israel and Palestinians was in the long-term interests of Israel and the Jewish people.

Today, fully three-quarters of the American Jewish community supports the creation of two states, and two-thirds would be willing to see the American government press Israel and the Palestinians to achieve it.

Scores of once timid Congressional members and our own president are committed to making the aggressive pursuit of peace part and parcel of U.S. policy.

We are so proud of the role that Brit Tzedek has played in providing a voice, a home, and a window into a new way of thinking -- the spark for some, a place of safety for others, a focus of advocacy and organizing for many more.

We are so proud of how our crucial role in changing American Jewish public discourse and opinion. Together, we made this happen, and there is still much work that needs to be done.

This Friday, Brit Tzedek will join forces with J Street and wed our power as grassroots activists to J Street's DC savvy.

As we prepare to step into our new partnership, let us remember the power of a single act, a single person, and a single voice, magnified and amplified when joined with that of others.

Brit Tzedek began as a small gathering of broken-hearted and concerned Jews, but is moving into a new phase as the large network of confident and energized activists -- some 50,000 -- that it became.

A movement, after all, is nothing but a group of people, moving. Each and every person, each and every moment, each and every act -- matters.

The past years have been years of heartbreak, hard work, and some very real progress. Now is the time to build on all that has come before. Now is the time to make that progress lasting.