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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JEWISH LEADERS URGED TO PROTECT THEMSELVES WITH JEWISH WOMEN WATCHING CONDOM

October 6, 2002 / 30 Tishrei 5763—As revelers danced through the streets this Simchat Torah (September 28-29, 2002) in celebration of the Torah, Jewish Women Watching (JWW), the New York-based feminist watchdog group, busily broadcast a solemn warning to Jewish communities everywhere: “Practice Safe Politics!” The warning arrived in the mailboxes of over 3,000 American Jewish leaders last week in the form of a postcard and accompanying condom.

The rust-colored postcard, covered in images of sleazy motel mattresses, boasts the following provocative question: “Why is the Jewish community in bed with Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell, and Ralph Reed?” An accompanying condom package sports a Jewish Women Watching sticker and the watchdog group’s signature symbol: the hamza (a hand with an eye in the center). JWW is urging recipients to use the enclosed condoms, which are fully functional.

“We know that people can get a little carried away this time of year,” said one member of the group. “A safe holiday is a happy holiday. We want to make sure that our community doesn’t do something it will regret later.”

JWW’s postcard explains in more detail the strange partnerships between Jewish leaders and members of the Christian right:

“In 1980, Pat Robertson referred to the Jews as ‘spiritually blind’ and ‘spiritually deaf.’ In 1993, he said that feminism was a movement that encouraged women to ‘kill their children’ and ‘practice witchcraft.’ In July 2002, Robertson was awarded ‘The State of Israel Friendship Award’ by the Zionist Organization of America.

“In 1998, Jerry Falwell said that the Antichrist was alive in the form of a male Jew. In 2001, he blamed the September 11th attacks on abortionists and the ACLU. In 2002 the Israeli embassy hosted a prayer breakfast for Falwell along with leaders of the Promise Keepers and Christian Broadcasting Network.

“As head of the Christian Coalition in the 1990’s, Ralph Reed mobilized grassroots opposition to gay rights, women’s rights and pro-choice legislation. In May 2002, the Anti-Defamation League paid for a full-page *New York Times* advertisement featuring Reed’s open letter in support of Israel.”

On the back of the card, JWW publishes the warning: “This condom will NOT protect you from the real intentions of the Christian right wing. ABSTINENCE FROM STRANGE BEDFELLOWS IS ADVISED.”

“The Christian right stands against everything the Jewish community holds dear—the right to choose, the separation of church and state, and equality for all people,” said one member of JWW. “By aligning with these political figures, our community’s leaders are betraying us.”

In the next few weeks, dozens of JWW allies will help distribute the postcards and condoms on campuses, in synagogues and community centers, and to friends and neighbors. This project marks the first time that JWW is using its nationwide network of allies to help spread the group’s message. “Many of our loyal fans expressed gratitude for bringing attention to this important issue,” said a JWW spokesperson. “American Jews won’t let our values of equality and tolerance be sold to the highest bidder.”

“This message is an important piece of our main goal,” another member continued, “to alert Jewish leaders that ‘Sexism is a Sin.’”

Find out more about Jewish Women Watching and its projects at www.jewishwomenwatching.com. Members of Jewish Women Watching can be reached at jww@jewishwomenwatching.com.