

Certain Problems of the Family of Humankind - 1975

To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die... a time to keep silence and a time to speak. (Ecclesiastes 3:1-2,7)

It is a time to speak. Time for Jewish women in this age of recognition of the equal rights and responsibilities of both men and women to exert their efforts towards solving some of the many complicated and seemingly unsolvable catastrophes that keep sweeping over this earth in waves of destruction. Humanity has come through centuries which too often have been marked by oppression, starvation, genocide, war, and other tragedies. Yet these awesome blights have surely left some residue of courage and experience with which to overcome, even to prevent in the future, these very scourges that have enveloped the human family of many lands, races and creeds.

Therefore, in convention assembled in Dallas, Texas in November, 1975, the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods on behalf of its United States members and, when appropriate, its members in other countries who may wish to study, adapt and then act, we declare:

1. Thousands of refugees of the Vietnam War have been admitted to the United States after fleeing their own country in fear. They are in need of a new emotional security and economic opportunity through homes, education and jobs. As Jewish women who know from the experience of our own people the pain of the refugee, we must fully cooperate in our congregations and communities with those agencies which seek to help Vietnamese now within our borders who are struggling to build a new life through which they may contribute to themselves, their families and society.
2. We continue to commit ourselves to principles of free emigration and the right to return, which has been included in documents of the United Nations, such as the Declaration of Human Rights. Therefore, we urge through all means available to us—including our respective governments and national and international agencies as well as any contacts we may have with the non-Jewish community—that all who desire to practice Judaism in their country shall be free to do so without restriction as well as to emigrate from or return to their land of birth or adoption without penalty. As examples of particular, deep concern to members of the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, we mention, for varying reasons, Soviet, Syrian, and Rumanian Jewish men, women and youth, although our concern is not limited only to our own people.
3. We likewise commit ourselves to deep concern for the rights of all minorities within the United States the American Indians, the Blacks, the Hispanic population, the Mexican-Americans and other ethnic groups. Each minority, and especially the native inhabitant who is an Indian, should not be treated as a lesser citizen placed under constrictive protection. The Indian and all other minorities shall be given full respect and equal educational, economic, political and social opportunities as part of the inherent rights of people of the United States of America. It is our responsibility, as women of Reform Judaism who, through the tradition of our faith and people, are dedicated to social action, to further the rights of minorities, and to help develop a better climate of respect for and understanding of differences.
4. World hunger becomes an increasing problem for millions of inhabitants of the planet Earth. At a time when blight, flood and other catastrophes of nature and humanity have wrought devastation, bringing starvation and death to millions, we must rededicate ourselves to efforts to alleviate suffering through international, governmental and private agencies as well as personal resources. On behalf of United States and Canadian members who, through NFTS, are members of the commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism, we call for study of and action on the many programs for individuals and organizations

described in the booklet *To Deal Thy Bread to the Hungry*, published by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

The National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods resolves to continue unabated, through study and action, as it has throughout 62 years of its history, its deep concern with the condition and plight of the family of mankind.