

Israel and the United Nations - 1975

When the United Nations was created at the end of World War II, the hopes of humanity rested upon the ringing words of its Charter and the agencies it developed. Now in the year of its 30th Anniversary, the imperfect world which the UN reflects has seen the world forum achieve many triumphs and many tragic defeats, some of which now threaten the very existence of the United Nations itself.

The National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods hailed the birth of the UN, worked strongly for the adoption of its Charter, and believed that its various divisions could indeed assist the nations and peoples of the world toward peace, security and development. We welcomed the birth of new nations and their admittance to the United Nations, even though the differing goals of so many diverse nations could and did add to grave tensions and difficult decision making in the UN. We recognize and applaud much of the work of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice which, regrettably, is not adequately used by the States of the World, and the successes of the Security Council, although the latter have too often been limited in number and content. We are particularly mindful of the great gains for humanity made through UN programs and the Specialized Agencies, some of which are the World Health Organization (WHO); the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF); the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA); the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control (UNFDAC); the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); the World Food Program (WFP); United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). However, we deplore the distortion of humanitarian purposes by the recent politicizing of non-political UN agencies such as UNESCO.

As women and as Jews we were also offended by the subversion of the original agenda of the Mexico City Conference for UN International Women's Year. We support the IWY program adopted to raise the status of women throughout the world during the next decade. But we sharply criticize and deplore the introduction in Mexico City of rude, crude and unjust attacks upon Zionism and Israel.

Regrettably, the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods must record the depth of its distress at the increasing efforts, spearheaded by Arab and some Third World nations, to isolate Israel, a member State of the United Nations. We abhor the unjust attacks on Zionism. This latter must be construed not only as an assault on Israel but also an expression of anti-Semitism which insults Judaism and the Jewish people throughout the world.

The most recent and reprehensible of these actions occurred last month before the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly, the committee which covers social, cultural and humanitarian subjects. In its draft resolution on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, after bitter debate, Zionism was included as a form of racism and racial discrimination. Branded an obscene act by the United States, this false charge is the worst of all anti-Israel attacks as well as a virulent expression which impugns our faith and people.

Therefore, the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods in 30th Biennial Assembly convened in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex in Texas in November, 1975, expresses its profound regret at the aberrations of fact and sentiment in the United Nations which threaten and weaken the UN far more than the State of Israel. We warmly commend those nations which vote against these great distortions of truth and urge those who either vote for them or who abstain to reconsider their stance. Furthermore, we urge all Sisterhoods, their individual members and NFTS District Federations to communicate forcefully with their respective governments to make known their approval or disapproval of their country's position.

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All humanity and all nations should stand together firmly in opposition to apartheid, colonialism and all other forms of racial discrimination. But the most recent deliberate falsification of the meaning and intent of Zionism can only impede the struggle against genuine racial discrimination, diminish the strength and jeopardize the life of the United Nations.