

Peace and Disarmament - 1981

Issue

How to move the United States, Super Powers and the world toward the peace and disarmament all claim to desire so that vast sums now spent on escalating military budgets might be utilized for economic and social development. Furthermore, toward the goal of restraint, the issue is how to evaluate the risks of a new arms race between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. and how to negotiate again towards verifiable arms reduction including nuclear arms. Lastly, to deeply question the concept of limited nuclear warfare, the addition of the neutron bomb to the arsenal of the United States and the continuation of the development and stockpiling not only of nuclear weaponry that can totally annihilate humanity and all life on the planet Earth, but also experimentation, development and storage of chemical and biologic agents of sickness and death to humans and their environment.

Background

The National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods was organized in 1913, the last year of an uneasy peace before the outbreak of World War I, the "war to end all wars." In the turbulent years since then, the world has seen much more of massive strife, and for many countries ever-rising military budgets without achievement of the goal of peace nor a continuing advance toward disarmament. But throughout its history, the women of Reform Judaism, in NFTS conventions assembled, have adopted resolutions calling for restraint in military expenditures and steps toward disarmament as well as peaceful solutions to national and international political and social problems. However, the complex issues of the day require more than resolutions. They demand objective study in depth as forerunner to thoughtful, informed actions.

Continuing national and international terrorism, whether by the Palestine Liberation Organization, members of the Irish Republican Army, the Weathermen, or any other groups, causes the loss of innocent lives and is a shocking example of human perversion. Likewise aggression, within as well as over national boundaries, poses critical questions for nations and the world community. But to respond to the dangers of contemporary life with undue emphasis upon colossal military expenditures thus initiating a new arms race not only financially but also in terms of weaponry raises profound moral issues. A neutron bomb which intensifies radiation in a narrow arc that destroys more life than buildings, the added development and stockpiling of weapons of destruction whether nuclear, conventional, chemical or biologic, may add to, rather than reduce, the nation's and the world's dangers.

Resolution

In the complexity of the modern world "to seek peace and pursue it" is an ever-increasingly difficult but most urgent task. Therefore, the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods strongly urges:

- 1) Further strict development of and international adherence to legal and political actions to thwart, punish, and excoriate international terrorists.
- 2) Immediate negotiations between the U.S.S.R. and U.S.A. for a new agreement following Salt I to reduce sharply nuclear weapons in phased and verifiable arms control. This shall cover both reductions in current stockpiles as well as the development and deployment of old and new nuclear weaponry including the neutron bomb.
- 3) Support of disarmament efforts of the United Nations by the United States and all countries, large and small, in both nuclear and conventional weaponry.

- 4) Expansion of non-proliferation treaties.
- 5) The use of the sharp reductions which are possible in expenditures for military purposes for the economic and social benefits of people.
- 6) Through the United Nations and bilateral or regional conferences, agreements and negotiations, continued steps toward a world of peaceful solutions to disagreements, however severe, that all may yet learn to live in peace.