

United Nations Issues and Sisterhood Actions - 1987

Issues

- 1) The importance of global awareness to understand the issues before the United Nations and to provide effective Sisterhood action.
- 2) Rededication to the vision and action of NFTS throughout its 75 years by “thinking globally and acting locally.”

Background

NFTS has a long history of concern about international affairs in resolutions and actions and participated in the formation of the United Nations. As a further evidence of commitment to the United Nations, a UN Task Force was organized in September 1986. NFTS was subsequently accredited to the UN's Department of Public Information in December 1986.

The Board of Directors, meeting in May 1987, adopted a policy statement calling for public access to the United Nations War Crimes Commission Files deposited in the archives of the United Nations. This action, together with statements by other Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) has helped to achieve a favorable decision by the Commission. In this, as in many ways, the Non-Governmental Organizations are able to transform institutional thinking, promote ideas and actions, help younger generations to understand implications of global issues, and to be the true community of human rights.

During the past Biennial period, disarmament issues were a continuing focus of apprehension. The 65 resolutions adopted on Disarmament included calls for a comprehensive nuclear test ban, adequate security measures for non-nuclear states, prevention of an arms race in outer space, reduction in military budgets, and commitments to non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The General Assembly called for a durable and comprehensive solution to the problem of the Palestinians and the Middle East under United Nations auspices, while reinforcing the security of Israel. The Assembly endorsed a call to set up a preparatory committee to work towards convening an International Peace Conference.

Many UN supporters have been troubled about the serious financial crisis brought on by the delayed payment or withholding of assessed amounts. A funding method was adopted giving major contributors to the UN budget a greater voice in its preparation, without altering the Charter provision that each member State has one vote in the General Assembly.

Human Rights concerns continue to engage the global community. Declarations were adopted on the protection and welfare of children and the right to development. The General Assembly expressed deep concern at the human rights situations in Afghanistan and Iran, regretted the lack of improvement in Chile and El Salvador and condemned the continued occurrence of summary or arbitrary executions.

Many NGOs, among them NFTS, have joined member States in pressing for implementation of the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief. David E. Lilienthal, when he was Chairman of the United States Atomic Energy Commission, said “greater knowledge about the world will, I think, be the keynote of the immediate future. There must also be greater love and understanding, and greater faith in humankind and in the purposes of the Creator of the universe. Knowledge,

love, faith—with these three, the atomic age, the age in which we live, can become an age of mercy, of joy, and of hope, one of the blessed periods of all history.”

Resolutions

The National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, in a rededication to the global vision and determined action of Sisterhood women through 75 years, proposes that its members:

- 1) Urge their governments to reaffirm their adherence to the causes of peace, international cooperation and human rights expressed in the Charter of the United Nations and to perform the resulting obligations undertaken by their commitment.
- 2) Establish a network of NFTS/UN liaison members in districts and local Sisterhoods, which will keep Sisterhoods informed about relevant global concerns.
- 3) Develop programs of education and action on world peace and human rights, as well as on specific current UN areas of focus, such as homelessness and drug abuse.
- 4) Encourage the support of the United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM) which develops and funds ways and means of income generation for women in developing countries who are responsible for the major share of health and life care for children.
- 5) Promote efforts to secure freedom of religion with particular emphasis on the right of Soviet Jewry to practice their religion or to emigrate from the U.S.S.R.
- 6) Continue efforts to eliminate the “Zionism is Racism” equation from United Nations statements and resolutions.