

Resolutions Adopted At the Annual Meeting

National Conference of Jewish Communal Service

Boston, Mass., May 24, 1970

Resolution on Indo-China

The National Conference of Jewish Communal Service, an association of more than 2,000 Jewish Communal workers throughout the United States and Canada, opposes the President's action to intervene in Cambodia and Laos.

We oppose the continuation of the war in Indo-China which threatens the very fabric of this nation. For nearly a decade the casualty lists have mounted in a seemingly unending and inconclusive war. The war has bitterly exacerbated already severe tensions within our society—racial, economic, social, political, educational and generational. It has deflected this country from a massive response to the desperate problems of our cities and our poor. Further delay in dealing with these needs could be catastrophic. Therefore, we believe that no representative group of Americans concerned with the vital needs of this nation can stand aside from what has become the central issue of American society.

As indispensable as are efforts to find a settlement acceptable to all the parties through negotiations, we believe that even more vital is the moral imperative to take steps to end the killing in Indo-China now. To that end, we urge the termination of all American military operations and the complete and immediate withdrawal of American troops.

We pledge to join with others to build a national consensus in support of these goals.

Resolution on Jews in Arab Lands

The National Conference of Jewish Communal Service deplores the devastating situation of the Jewish communities in the United Arab Republic, Iraq and Syria, whose governments continue to discriminate and oppress the Jewish communities—in a manner which recalls the infamous decrees of the Hitler regime. We protest and condemn this frenzied attack on Jews in Arab Lands.

We note that in Iraq the pathetic remnant of a great community is subjected to the unspeakable horrors of public execution of innocent Jews, combined with a campaign of terrorism and repression whose savagery has been attested to by the world press.

We note that in the United Arab Republic some members of the Jewish community have, for nearly three years, been confined to the infamous Taura prison where they are subjected to brutal treatment and are held without trial.

We note that in Syria a body of anti-Semitic measures exists and Jews are required to carry special identity cards and obey a curfew.

In conformity with the resolutions taken at the recent Paris Conference on Jews in the Arab Lands, held under the distinguished patronage of M. Alain Pöher, President of the Senate, we call upon the governments of Canada and the United States to save these communities whose very physical existence is in danger.

We also call upon the United Nations

organization to ask the states concerned to allow the departure of all those members of these stricken Jewish communities who wish to leave and to demand the restoration of their fundamental human rights.

We call upon all Jewish Communal Services to contact their elected representatives urging their concerted action to restore to Jews in Arab lands their rights, their institutions, and their dignity.

Resolution on Family Assistance

The 1970 session of Congress will consider President Nixon's proposals to reform the nation's public assistance programs.

The National Conference of Jewish Communal Services, an association of more than 2,000 Jewish Communal workers throughout the United States and Canada, commends the President for turning the public's attention to a major problem in America.

NCJCS supports the essential elements of the new program, specifically the emphasis on child welfare services; the participation of the federal government in assistance for the working poor; the establishment of a national minimum standard of assistance, and, uniform, simplified procedures for application and eligibility determination; and the provision of income to unemployed parents who are seeking work for training, thereby keeping families together.

NCJCS believes that the President's proposals should be strengthened to achieve a more substantial and lasting improvement in the condition of the nation's poor.

The National Conference on Jewish Communal Services supports legislation which will specifically:

1. Increase the \$1,600 floor proposed by the President to the appropriate

level of subsistence as defined for a family of four by the United States Bureau of Labor statistics.

2. Provide public service employment for those who cannot find a place in the private sector of our economy,—the public sector to become the employer of last resort.
3. Require, in the work requirement provision of the proposal, job standards and wage rates for suitable employment.
4. Include needy individuals and couples without children in the income maintenance system.
5. Establish national standards of assistance for all persons in need.
6. Authorize open-end financing for child welfare services, including all foster care.

Resolution on Soviet Jewry

For more than half a century the Jews of the Soviet Union have been subjected to a consistent policy of national attrition. The root of this policy is distrust of the Jews *qua* Jew, of the Jews as a recognizable entity, of the Jewish people as such, and of Soviet Jewry as a segment of that people. The objective of Soviet policy is, through forced assimilation, to eradicate an identifiable Jewish group.

From this flow all the discriminations and deprivations to which no other ethnic or religious group is subjected: the prohibition on Jewish cultural, educational and communal institutions and on the teaching of Jewish history, literature, languages and moral tradition; a fragmentation and atomization of religious Jewry; the quota system in higher education; the exclusion of Jews from a wide-range of "security sensitive" sectors of public life; the inflammation of popular anti-Semitism through periodic propaganda campaigns that depict the Jew in ugly stereo-types; the odious

equating of Judaism and Zionism with Nazism, and of Israel with Nazi Germany. In recent months, this campaign has become particularly intense, especially in its use of prominent Soviet Jews, obviously coerced, to denounce their fellow Jews, Judaism and Zionism.

This policy is intended to lead to the forcible elimination of this richly endowed Jewish community—the second largest in the world and the last great remnant of the creative East-European Jewish community that once was. As such, this policy is one of the profound violations of human rights in the world today and must be protested and combated by all men of good will.

Despite the intentions of the Soviet regime, however, Soviet Jewry, or at least a substantial portion of it, refuses to disappear. In keeping with the ancient Jewish historical tradition of proud, obdurate persistence in the face of persecution, large segments of Soviet Jewish youth are ever more openly expressing both demonstrative defiance of oppressive policies and dignified self-identification as Jews. Jewish national consciousness is experiencing an extraordinary renaissance in the Soviet Union.

The National Conference of Jewish Communal Service, an association of more than 2,000 Jewish communal workers throughout the United States and Canada, calls upon the government of the USSR:

1. To extend the full rights of Soviet citizenship to its Jewish citizens.
2. To permit its Jewish citizens freely to practice, enhance and perpetuate their culture and religion by removing all discriminatory measures designed to restrict this freedom.
3. To make available the institutions, schools, textbooks and materials necessary to teach Jewish children the languages, the history, the be-

liefs, the practices and the aspirations of the Jewish people.

4. To permit the Jews of the U.S.S.R. freely to develop Jewish communal life and to associate and work with Jewish communities and groups inside and outside the Soviet Union.
5. To use all the means at its disposal to overcome anti-Semitism.
6. To permit the reunion of Soviet Jewish families with their relatives in Israel and elsewhere, and the right to immigration to those Soviet Jews who wish to leave the Soviet Union.

The scope of the campaign to expose Soviet discrimination and oppression of Russian Jews has determined its efficacy in arousing public opinion in this country and abroad; in strengthening the resolve of Soviet Jews and in forcing some concessions from the Soviet government. As communal service workers, we pledge to join in these interpretive efforts and to act upon the programmatic recommendations forthcoming from the American Jewish Conference on Soviet Jewry.

Resolution on Dissent

In these difficult times, agitated by the frustrations and emotions of the Vietnam war, the upheaval of our ghettos, the seething unrest on our college campuses, the National Conference of Jewish Communal Service, an association of more than 2,000 Jewish communal workers throughout the United States and Canada, nevertheless, finds that restraints on our traditional freedoms—of speech, assembly, the press, the petitioning of government—have been relatively few.

Nevertheless, we are disquieted by disturbing trends which, if not reversed or held in check, could lead to the eventual deprivation of our liberties:

—We see threats of possible govern-

mental reprisal against the press, radio and television if they fail to measure up in their news coverage and editorial outlook.

—We see unmistakable efforts to equate dissent from governmental policy with disloyalty against our country.

—We see indications of the threat of governmental expansion of wiretapping on a scale that could gravely endanger the privacy of large numbers of our citizens.

—We see in the prosecution of the seven defendants in Chicago (originally there were eight) on charges of conspiracy to cross state lines to create a riot in violation of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 a matter of grave concern. The use of "conspiracy" as a prosecution weapon in a free speech case strikes at the very heart of freedom of thought.

—We are made uneasy by state and federal legislative measures intended to curb student dissent by cutting off scholarships and other benefits or the threats to do so.

—And we are disturbed by what may well be violations of the basic rights of certain Black Panther leaders. We have reached no judgment in respect to the charges against them; we welcome all efforts to get the facts. But whatever their alleged offenses against law and public safety, it is clear to us that they are entitled to the protections of due process and the guarantees of the Bill of Rights.

That certain of these developments have their source in the highest governmental circles, we believe, could have a chilling effect on dissent.

The right of dissent is a precious American heritage. It derives from the conviction that a society can achieve peaceful change only if that right is free and unchallenged. Suppression of speech

—or its imminent prospect—incites disorder and violence.

Thus, the right of dissent is of the very essence of freedom in a democracy, and, therefore, vitally affects the freedom and security of Jews. Although, Jews have recognized that the civil law of the state is the law for all, we have also recognized that silence is a sin in the face of injustice. Indeed, Jewish history is replete with instances of strong dissent from the existing order; we have long acted on the assumption that progress is dependent not on a single official viewpoint but on the exploration of differences among creative minds.

It needs further to be noted that dissent is oftentimes abrasive in its forms of expression. It has been said that the purpose of dissent may well be to anger and unsettle. We must, therefore, be prepared for non-violent acts of civil disobedience when these are engaged in for the purposes of rectifying injustices that might otherwise persist. We call upon those who seek change to refrain from violence. We are firmly opposed to violence, as we are to the disgraceful practice of shouting down speakers of opposing viewpoints, a tactic all too often employed by "dissenters."

We call upon the American people to resist threats to freedom of speech, particularly in our mass media—in the press, radio and television. We urge that peaceful avenues of expression remain open to all Americans so that we shall enjoy full opportunity to hear and read all shades of thought and opinion.

We call on our members to join in the effort to defend and protect the beneficent freedoms of our Bill of Rights. If we are to be secure in our liberties, all Americans must enjoy the right of dissent.