

Establishment of a National Jewish Academy on the Secondary Level - 1971

The National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods desires to associate itself with the Resolution on the establishment of a National Reform Jewish Academy which has been submitted to and approved by the Commission on Jewish Education. Therefore, NFTS presents to its Assembly for action the following:

Like the Commission on Jewish Education, NFTS is cognizant of the deep concern, voiced at the 50th General Assembly of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in Miami Beach, that subtle erosion may alter major commitments which have historically undergirded the educational policies and practices of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and its affiliates: commitment to the separation of Church and State, and commitment to the public school system. Therefore, the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods appreciates the fact that the Commission on Jewish Education has submitted the following resolution which continues our commitment to those principles for which the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and we have historically stood, but takes into account the very real need for high quality in Jewish education and the challenges presented by the Reform movement of tomorrow.

Today we see a growing need for a resource of secondary education with Reform Jewish content wider than can be provided by part-time, supplementary programs—to meet the Jewish needs of our youth. High school students motivated toward maximum Jewish education cannot at present satisfy their thirst for Jewish knowledge under the auspices of the Reform movement.

By creating one privately financed, self-supporting academy, independent of the budgets of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion and their affiliates, including the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, to provide Reform Jewish content in the context of a general academic program, the UAHC will discharge its duty to children of our own congregations, and to others, whose desire for more intense knowledge we must answer. At the same time, the specialized and serious nature of such a school assures that it will offer no true competition to the public school system, nor breach the wall of separation between Church and State through reliance on public finances. It will be a school and enrollment limited to students of the highest motivation and aptitude, privately financed in a spirit that will always assure admission to those in need of scholarship aid.

Therefore, Be It Resolved, That the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods in convention assembled in Los Angeles, California in November 1971 endorses the proposal that the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, in consultation with the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, be authorized to proceed, subject to the limitations set forth in this resolution, to stimulate the creation of a privately financed Reform Jewish Academy on the secondary level.