

RESOLUTIONS OF THE MEMBERSHIP

HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING

The number of homeless persons in North America has increased dramatically over the past several years. While estimates of homelessness range from under three million to over five million men, women and children, there is general agreement that the homeless population is rising.

A recently released study by the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) indicates that since 1980 there has been a 66 percent increase in the number of homeless shelters. A recent Canadian study shows similar results. A report issued by the U.S. Conference of Mayors' Task Force on Hunger and Homelessness in January 1987 stated that the demand for emergency shelter increased during 1986 in 24 out of 25 cities surveyed. In only one city did the need remain the same; nowhere did it decline. The cities surveyed by the Mayors' Task Force reported that they were unable to meet the needs of the growing homeless population, and that about one-fourth of the people seeking shelter were turned away because of insufficient space.

Even more striking is the finding that the fastest growing segment of the homeless population is families with children. Escalating numbers of both single-parent and two-parent families are turning to homeless shelters for assistance. However, most shelters are ill-equipped to deal with families, since the standard shelter has separate sections for men and women, and virtually no provisions for shared space or privacy.

One reason for this startling increase in homelessness, especially among families, is that housing for low and moderate income people has rapidly diminished since 1980. Many of those sleeping in homeless shelters are employed, but their salaries are too low to enable them to find housing in the current marketplace. In the U.S., every federally assisted housing program has been cut or eliminated during the past six

years. The average wait for assisted housing is 18 months; and in two-thirds of the cities surveyed by the Conference of Mayors waiting lists have been closed.

In addition, there is a tremendous need for group homes and other transitional housing for the nearly one-third of the homeless population that has been deinstitutionalized. Homeless shelters are not able to respond to the special needs of the chronically mentally ill, whether or not they have ever been institutionalized. Community-based residences and clinics are needed to adequately assist this segment of the homeless to become self-sufficient and productive citizens. Therefore, CJCS urges its member APAs, their members and Jewish agencies to take individual and/or organizational action as appropriate in the following areas:

I. Education:

In each community we must learn the facts about the extent of the homeless problem in the Jewish community and in the community-at-large, and find appropriate forums to impart this information to the professional staffs and lay leadership of Jewish communal institutions. We also should educate ourselves about services currently being provided and needs that are unmet.

II. Service Provision:

Jewish social service organizations should be encouraged to participate in programs serving the homeless (such as the Federal Emergency Food and Shelter Program) and to work closely with other voluntary and public agencies seeking to ease the plight of the homeless. In the Jewish community, special emphasis should be placed on addressing the problems of the chronically mentally ill. Individually, CJCS and APA members might consider doing volunteer work in a homeless shelter or soup kitchen, and might also encourage their synagogues and other civil or religious organizations to become involved.

III. Public Policy:

CJCS members, their APAs, Jewish agencies and lay leadership are all urged to communicate our concern and outrage over the plight of the homeless. We should demand that elected officials find the resources to fund programs that address both the critical emergency situation and the long-range issues of permanent, affordable housing and community-based care for the deinstitutionalized and chronically mentally ill. While we understand that providing these services will cost money, we know that not providing them will cost lives. Our values as Jews, and as citizens, do not allow us to place budget constraints before basic necessities of life.

WELFARE REFORM

The U.S. welfare system is long overdue for reform, and there are a number of encouraging signs that a consensus on key elements of reform may be emerging. But in order to bring about change, a massive public education and advocacy effort will be required. We believe that the Jewish community, because of its concern for social and economic justice, must be an integral part of that effort.

Some have charged that welfare itself causes poverty and dependency. Others have charged that the problem with welfare is simply that benefit levels are inadequate. The reality is more complex. Recent studies show that increments in poverty in the last few years are largely attributable to the rise in working poor and not to a rise in female-headed households or welfare benefits. In fact, benefits have been cut in the last few years. And while benefit levels are inadequate in most states and are inconsistent from state to state, the problems with welfare are greater than just those associated with benefit levels. Indeed, while most recipients do not stay in long-term dependency, concern is growing over that segment of the welfare population that is trapped in long-term dependency.

If a consensus is to be found, then it

must focus both on adequate benefits for those who cannot achieve economic self-sufficiency—the handicapped, elderly and mothers with infant children—and on promoting economic self-sufficiency for those who can achieve it. Therefore be it resolved that *in light of the importance of promoting meaningful welfare reform*, CJCS urges its members, APAs, their members and Jewish agencies to take individual and/or organizational action as appropriate in the following areas:

I. Education:

We urge education efforts both within the Jewish community and within the broader community about the problems of poverty and welfare, the diversity of the welfare population and its needs, and approaches to welfare reform. Within the Jewish community, we urge special emphasis on the application of Jewish tradition and teachings on helping those who cannot help themselves and assisting those who can help themselves to become self-sufficient.

II. Public Policy:

We advocate the inclusion of the following principles as an integral part of any comprehensive welfare reform. These views should be vigorously communicated to our coalition partners and to elected officials.

To bring about more adequate and equitable benefit levels, benefits should be more uniform and closer to the poverty line. Coverage of unemployed two-parent families, now allowed in only about half the states, should be mandated. The absence of such coverage is a disincentive to keeping families together.

To promote economic self-sufficiency, job and training programs for welfare recipients should be provided, accompanied by vital support services such as transitional child care, health insurance and transportation. Job programs whether voluntary or mandatory, will be unsuccessful unless the infrastructure required to assist recipients to move out of dependency is provided.

Finally, while commending the innovative efforts carried out by a number of

states in developing welfare-to-work programs, we recognize that, in order for comprehensive reform to be achieved, primary responsibility must be assumed at the federal level for setting standards and providing adequate funding.

PARENTAL LEAVE

One of the major contemporary societal changes occurring in the U.S. and Canada is the permanent entry of mothers with young children into the workplace. Currently nearly half of all women with children under the age of one work outside the home. Eighty-five per cent of all women working outside the home are likely to become pregnant at some point during their child-bearing years.

Most women work out of economic necessity. Nearly two out of every three women working today are either the sole providers for their children or have husbands who earn less than \$15,000 a year. In sum, women's wages are critical to the support of their families.

Yet, Canada and the United States do not have universal parental leave policies guaranteeing job security to parents who want to stay home temporarily with a new child. The lack of such a policy frequently compels new parents—usually mothers—to return to work sooner than they feel is physically or emotionally stable—typically three or four weeks after birth.

In Canada, the Labor Standards Acts of most provinces exempt select categories of employees from maternity leave coverage. For those employees who are covered, leave varies from province to province and from 12 weeks to 37 weeks.

Legislation pending before the U.S. Congress, The Parental and Medical Leave Act, would provide up to four months of *unpaid* leave to a mother or father to help integrate a new child into the family or to care for a child who is seriously ill.

Attention to the proposed federal legislation has been heightened by the Supreme Court's recent decision upholding California's parental leave statute.

The issue of parental leave has special implications for the Jewish community. The importance of the family for the continuity of Jewish life is a widely-shared value. At the same time, the Jewish community reflects a low birth-rate. A parental leave policy that makes it easier for families with both parents working outside the home to raise children is clearly important to the health and vitality of the Jewish community as well as to society overall.

Therefore, be it resolved that *in light of the urgent need for parental leave*, CJCS urges its member APAs, their members and Jewish agencies to take action in the following areas:

I. Education:

Every APA should encourage its member agencies to educate their constituencies about the importance of facilitating parents' ability to adequately nurture their children in the critical early months.

II. Public Policy:

CJCS members and organizations in Canada should encourage their agencies to advocate for legislation providing parental leave. CJCS members and organizations in the U.S. should encourage their member agencies to advocate for passage of the Parental and Medical Leave Act and similar legislation at the state and local levels.

III. Jewish Agencies' Policies

CJCS members and APAs should encourage all Jewish agencies to adopt the standards for parental leave set forth in the CJCS model personnel practices code, contained in the booklet: "The Rights and Responsibilities of the Practitioner."

PAY EQUITY

Pay equity frequently has been referred to as the employment discrimination issue of the 1980s, just as the issue of equal pay for equal work was the focus of efforts during the previous two decades. Equal pay was addressed by two federal statutes which prohibit employment discrimination

on the basis of sex (the Equal Pay Act and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act in the U.S. and similar Canadian federal and provincial legislation). Despite these laws, women holding the same jobs and responsibilities as men continue to earn less than their male counterparts. Enforcement of these laws must be strengthened.

However even effective implementation of equal pay laws will not fully solve the problem of women's earnings seriously lagging behind those of men. Numerous studies show that job categories require skills, education, responsibility and expertise comparable to those in which men predominate.

Most action to promote pay equity has occurred on a voluntary basis, primarily through public sector collective bargaining negotiations. Usually pay equity plans are put into place based on objective studies that evaluate jobs in a given workplace and assign numerical ratings based on criteria established by the employer.

To date more than two dozen states are conducting pay equity studies, six have adopted plans, and 25 local governments have taken similar action. Just this fall San Francisco voters approved a pay equity plan. The concept also is beginning to find favor in some private industries, which originated the kind of rating system used to determine whether pay equity exists within a given workplace.

Several Jewish communal agencies, including the American Jewish Committee, American Jewish Congress, National Council of Jewish Women, B'nai B'rith Women and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations already have adopted stances in support of pay equity.

Therefore, be it resolved that *in light of the importance of pay equity to achieving full equal employment opportunity*, CJCS urges its member APAs, their members and Jewish agencies to take action in the following areas:

It is incumbent on the Jewish community to urge elimination of sex discrimination in employment throughout society. As employers, it is also our

responsibility to ensure that our own employment practices are non-discriminatory. Therefore, every APA is urged to encourage its agencies to undertake studies to determine whether sex-based wage disparities exist within the Jewish communal field and adopt appropriate policies and practices supporting pay equity. As women move into categories in which men have previously predominated, we must ensure that salaries for those categories of jobs are not depressed.

We also should support education, training and outreach programs that increase women's access to all available jobs and their equal treatment in the selection and allocation of those jobs.

SUPPORT FOR A PRO-IMMIGRATION POLICY

The Conference of Jewish Communal Service agrees with and reaffirms the U.S. and Canada's support of a just, fair and humanitarian immigration policy. Our support for a generous refugee and immigration policy is based not only on the historical importance of such policies to the security of the Jewish people, but also on our support for the continued ethnic and cultural diversity of the U.S. and Canada.

Historically, CJCS has been particularly concerned with the advocacy of policies that promote generous immigration and refugee levels, family unification, protection of displaced persons and refugees and the availability of sanctuary from persecution.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Conference of Jewish Communal Service supports the implementation of generous, just and humane government immigration policies practices.

In the coming year, it will be especially important for APAs and their member organizations to participate in education efforts about the provisions of the immigration reform legislation passed by the U.S. Congress in 1986. Such efforts will be necessary in order to ensure that the new law, particularly its legalization provisions

for undocumented aliens, is interpreted and enforced according to the intent of Congress.

SUPPORT FOR A PLURALISTIC SOCIETY

The Conference of Jewish Communal Service, by virtue of its nature as a continental organization of Jewish human service professionals working with and among communities of various ethnic, cultural and linguistic segments of U.S. and Canadian society, has always recognized and supported the efforts of immigrants to enter into the mainstream of North American life.

Indeed, the history of Jewish communal service has been inextricably linked both to the entry of immigrant communities into our countries and their assimilation into our society. These diverse communities have enriched the quality of life in the U.S. and Canada and have contributed directly to their prosperity.

Therefore, be it resolved that *in light of CJCS' ongoing commitment to the principles of diversity and pluralism*, CJCS urges its members, APAs, their members and Jewish agencies to honor the cultural and linguistic heritages of those they serve.

Further, CJCS fully supports the furtherance of pluralism in our societies, whose respect for both the languages and cultures of all members of society is essential for the continued health of the U.S. and Canada.

Accordingly, we view with alarm the recent rise of the so-called "English Only" and "English First" movements in the U.S., which would make English the official language by state law and/or constitutional amendment. (An amendment to the U.S. Constitution also has been introduced.) Such laws, however, make no provision to facilitate English proficiency—at a time when English language classes for adults are widely oversubscribed. CJCS urges education efforts within the Jewish community and the broader community

on the anti-immigrant and anti-pluralism attitudes embodied in the "English Only" and "English First" movements, whose leadership is closely associated with organizations that have taken a restrictionist stance on immigration.

CJCS also urges Jewish agencies to support positive language policies and programs that stress English proficiency for all Americans. In addition, we should advocate for adequate resources to expand English proficiency classes, as well as bilingual and bicultural education programs that enable students to advance academically while learning English. Moreover, in recognition of the need to foster pluralism at home and to promote more effective global communication and understanding, we encourage foreign language proficiency for all students.

HUMAN NEEDS AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Helping those who are in need is the oldest of Jewish traditions and a fundamental value of American and Canadian societies. Our countries spend billions of dollars annually on human services and private philanthropy provides billions more. Even so, recent studies show that poverty is increasing and the need for social services of all kinds is growing faster than our ability to provide them.

In the United States today, 34 million people live below the poverty line and millions more struggle just above it. One in five children under the age of 18 lives in poverty. The economic recovery from the recession of 1981 and 1982 has not significantly lessened the number of impoverished. In fact, the gap between the most well-off and the least well-off grows steadily larger.

Many who live in poverty lack the skills, education and job opportunities to become self-sufficient. For them, the drastic reductions in public funding for job training, counseling, remedial education and support services, including day

care, have meant far fewer opportunities to acquire the skills necessary to achieve economic independence. Over the past six years, cuts in public funding have also reduced considerably the resources available to voluntary agencies to provide such services. Services are also needed for a growing segment of the unemployed — skilled workers who have been left jobless by extensive plant closings and attendant economic dislocation.

But poverty is not only the plight of the unemployed. The working poor make up an increasingly large share of the poor, in part because the U.S. and Canadian minimum wages have not kept pace with the cost of living. In the U.S., the minimum wage has been frozen at \$3.35 an hour for several years. According to the U.S. Congressional Joint Economic Committee, today a family of three headed by a person working full-time at the minimum rate would fall about 20% below the poverty line.

Many of the problems that afflict our society respect no economic barriers. Community based mental health counseling is desperately needed by the deinstitutionalized and the chronically mentally ill, by teenagers whose rates of depression and suicide are skyrocketing, and by families trying to stay intact under the stresses of daily life. Substance abuse, family violence and sexual abuse afflict rich and poor, Black and white, Jew and non-Jew. So do illness, handicaps and the problems of aging.

The 1980s is a decade of rugged individualism and cynicism about the value of the helping professions. This attitude has made it difficult to advocate for more and better services to give dignity and hope to people in need. It has also hindered the ability of Jewish communal and other social service agencies to recruit and retain staff.

Therefore, be it resolved that *in light of ongoing and increasing need for human services*, CJCS urges its members, APAs, their members and Jewish agencies to take action in the following areas:

I. Public Policy:

Individuals and agencies should contact public officials at the local, state and federal levels to educate them about the needs of their constituencies, especially the impact of program cuts that already have been enacted. CJCS members should urge a halt to further reductions in public funds for human services and encourage additional funding for programs that address the most pressing human needs. The U.S. Congress should be urged to increase the minimum wage.

II. Education:

Every effort should be made to educate the Jewish community and the community-at-large about the needs that remain unmet in our communities and the value of programs designed to meet those needs. Successful programs should be publicized and used as models.

AIDS

The AIDS epidemic in North America is growing at an alarming rate. To date, at least 20,000 people have died of the disease and millions more are suffering from AIDS symptoms. In addition, epidemiologists estimate that from 1.5 to 5 million individuals are infected with the AIDS virus, even though most of them are currently asymptomatic. It is estimated that by 1991, nearly 300,000 AIDS cases will have been diagnosed in the U.S.

Although the risk of contracting AIDS is still significantly higher for gay men and intravenous drug users, there is no segment of the population that is free of risk. Heterosexual men, women and children are being diagnosed with AIDS in increasing numbers. Among Jews, the number of people with AIDS is also growing. Those afflicted with AIDS need care and compassion; their families, friends and caregivers need services and support.

Our Jewish values, most particularly *bikur cholim*, *p'kuach nefesh* and *tikkun olum* impel us to address this issue directly.

Therefore, be it resolved, that *in light of this urgent and life threatening crisis*,

CJCS urges its members, APAs, their members and all Jewish agencies to take immediate action in the following areas:

I. Services:

Members and service agencies should provide appropriate services to persons with AIDS and AIDS-related complex (ARC) and their families, health services, hospice care, respite needs and supportive social services should all be considered.

II. Education:

Facts about AIDS must be widely publicized to counter myths and unfounded fears and to create a communal atmosphere of informed caring and support. Information about the disease, its transmission, and its prevention should be made available, including information on safe sexual practices. The use of advertisements for condoms should be encouraged.

Information targeted to youth, which is of critical importance, should be tied to curriculum on sex education and family life education. In Jewish education and counseling settings, special emphasis should be placed on Jewish values.

III. Research:

All levels of government and private research institutions should allocate sufficient resources to allow an all-out effort to find effective treatment and ultimately a cure for AIDS. Experimental drugs must be made available in sufficient quantities and at prices that are affordable to all who need them.

IV. Civil liberties/Discrimination:

In our efforts to respond appropriately to the AIDS crisis, special care must be taken to effectively oppose attempts to isolate or scapegoat people with AIDS or to infringe on their civil liberties and rights to confidentiality.

APARTHEID

In South Africa, the toll of human suffering continues to rise. The government has solidified its position, as reflected in the recent national election results. The

chances for wholesale dismantling of apartheid and movement toward power-sharing with Blacks have dimmed. Meanwhile, the crackdown on dissent and widespread detentions, including those imposed on children, continue. The South African regime also is having a destabilizing influence throughout southern Africa, through its periodic military strikes on neighboring countries.

The American Jewish community has long been on record as condemning apartheid. In recent years, as the anti-apartheid movement has moved into the forefront of public consciousness, the Jewish community has been active on a number of levels—education, protests, coalition activities, and public policy. Most community relations organizations have criticized the administration's policy of "constructive engagement" with the South African government and have urged the imposition of economic sanctions such as those passed by Congress last year.

The issue of divestment of holdings in companies doing business in South Africa has been a major topic of study and discussion. Many Jewish organizations have divested themselves of holdings in companies not adhering to the Sullivan Principles (a voluntary code of fair employment practices). Still others have gone further by carrying out total divestment. Indeed, the 1986 NJCRAC Plenum called on all Jewish communal agencies to divest themselves of all holdings in companies doing business in South Africa.

The movement toward divestment, a priority for anti-apartheid leaders in the U.S. and South Africa, has been especially strong among universities and state and local governments. It has been fueled by the conviction that the U.S. has a pivotal role to play in bringing pressure to bear on South Africa, that only sweeping economic sanctions will have an impact, and that any economic dislocation caused by sanctions and investment are a small price to pay for eliminating apartheid. Furthermore, the architect of the Sullivan

Principles, Rev. Leon Sullivan, is imminently expected to call for total divestment and a trade boycott.

Therefore, be it resolved that CJCS urges its members, APAs, their agencies and Jewish agencies to: continue to condemn apartheid and the attendant human rights and civil liberties violations occurring

in South Africa; monitor implementation of the Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986; divest holdings from companies doing business in South Africa; and work with others in the anti-apartheid movement to convey the Jewish community's views and activities to combat apartheid.

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