

## East-West Relations - 1989

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### Issue

To take advantage of the easing of tensions between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics; to promote arms reduction; to advocate for Soviet Jewish emigration; and to encourage the development of Jewish cultural and religious life in the U.S.S.R.

### Background

During the past four years we have seen significant changes taking place in the Soviet Union under the leadership of the Soviet President, Mikhail S. Gorbachev. Glasnost (openness) and perestroika (economic restructuring) have impacted on the U.S.S.R.'s internal affairs and have had a profound effect on its relationship with the rest of the world and especially with the United States.

President Gorbachev's reforms have focused on the Soviets' need to break out of a rigid economic system with its oppressive military budget that has undermined their ability to compete technologically with the West and has failed to provide an acceptable standard of living for the people.

After forty years of Cold War tension we are encouraged by the momentous changes in the Soviet Union and in its client states. Mr. Gorbachev's reforms have raised the prospect that national security may someday be achieved through political means rather than military means. The West should take the opportunity offered by these changes to promote within the Eastern block human rights, democratic process, economic reform and world peace.

Yet Western countries should proceed with caution. The Soviet system has deep roots of oppression, aggression and secrecy, and current changes, while welcome in the West, may very well antagonize many elements in Soviet society. We cannot be sure that the oppression structure of Soviet control and repression will not be put back into place.

### Resolutions

Therefore the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods:

1. In conformity with past resolutions calling for disarmament and responsible arms control, urges the President and Congress of the United States, consistent with security requirements, to use all opportunities offered by the Soviets' new policies to establish a conventional forces balance in Europe at the lowest possible level and to make substantial reductions in strategic nuclear arms moving toward the ultimate elimination of nuclear, chemical, and biologic weapons from this world; and
2. In continuing concern for the Jews of the Soviet Union,
  1. Calls on its member Sisterhoods in the United States to communicate with the U.S. Congress their support of an immigration policy which will allow family reunification without numerical limits and which eliminates ceilings for refugees from countries where there is a "well-founded fear of persecution,"
  2. Calls upon its member Sisterhoods to support programs that monitor the refusnik situation, advocate efforts to relax Soviet emigration policies for those who wish to leave,
  3. Encourages the development of Jewish religious and cultural life in the U.S.S.R. for those who wish to stay and supports the World Union for Progressive Judaism in its efforts to introduce

Liberal Judaism to the Soviet Union,

4. Calls upon the State of Israel and the Jewish Agency to develop procedures and programs to encourage Soviet Jewish aliyah, and
5. Urges Reform congregations to form programs to reach out to new émigrés.