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Gerald Bubis has written a very thoughtful and insightful analysis of current issues confronting the field of Jewish communal service, particularly in the areas of professional education, certification, and continuing education. I am still not certain where he comes out on the "profession versus field of practice" debate. I shall restrict my comments to his suggestions about the role of APAs and the JCSA in certification and continuing education.

Bubis is absolutely accurate in concluding that Jewish communal agencies concerned with downsizing and budget reductions have opted for less qualified and lower salaried personnel, thus leading to what he terms "deprofessionalization." However, to suggest that APAs and the JCSA have the power to turn this situation around through recommendations of salary scales, benefit package guidelines, and entry-level standards credits these structures with a degree of power and influence over agency boards, executives, and funding sources that they simply do not and cannot possess.

The APAs and the JCSA are in the midst of their own struggles to find a relevant niche for themselves in the Jewish communal service field (or profession). Even if they were to reorganize according to the Bubis APA model of definition by "what its professionals do," rather than by functional field or area of specialization, they still would have limited ability to affect the decision making of funders, policymakers, and administrators of Jewish communal agencies. Bottom line, it is the executives of Jewish communal agencies who ultimately will be to blame or who will get the credit regarding the state of the profession and of professionalism within the field of practice.

Those executives who are committed to staffing their agencies with degreed and qualified personnel who can meet the guidelines for professionals in Jewish communal service suggested by Ralph Goldman and

Gerald Bubis will advocate with their boards and funders for proper salaries and benefit plans for such professionals. They will also plan and budget with a priority placed on staff development and in-service training opportunities both within and outside their agency structures. They will strongly encourage their staffs to affiliate with APAs and to attend the JCSA Annual Conference, the World Council on Jewish Communal Service, and to write for publication, with particular emphasis on the *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*. They will lend their vision and commit their leadership skills to the building of strong and viable educational programs for social work and human services within schools, colleges, and universities under Jewish auspices. They will contribute funds and help raise funds for many of the national and international professional associations and conferences within Jewish communal service.

Executives of agencies in New York, for example, including NYANA, FECS, the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services, and the UJA-Federation, have invested heavily in staff development programs, subsidized social work graduate education (particularly for newcomers from the former Soviet Union in conjunction with Yeshiva University), and provided in-service training and subsidized conference attendance for practitioner-level staff. In many instances, these activities have been made cost effective through interagency coordination and joint ventures.

In 1994, FECS held a management institute for attendees at the annual meeting of the International Association of Jewish Vocational Service in Miami, NYANA held a national symposium on Jewish refugee resettlement, and the Weiner Center of UJA-Federation held an add-on institute conference to the JCSA Annual Conference for Jewish communal practitioners from the

former Soviet Union. This national contribution to continuing education for Jewish communal service occurred because these executives were committed to the development of the field as a whole, as well as their own agencies and communities.

These examples of executives investing in professional education, training, and certification programs are not exclusive to New York. Many executives throughout the United States and internationally have recently dedicated themselves to a new and revitalized "World Council of Jewish Communal Service." Meetings are being

planned to reorganize and revitalize the national Jewish Family and Children's Professional's Association through the efforts of JFS executives. Executives from many functional fields continue their debates, struggles, and planning efforts collectively on behalf of JCSA.

I would hope that many of the executives and senior management of Jewish communal agencies throughout the United States who have not advocated strongly enough for professionalization will heed Gerald Bubis in his call for action. The answer is indeed "in our hands."



JEFFREY R. SOLOMON, PH.D.

Gerald Bubis continues his prolific and substantive contributions to the field with this article that asks some serious core questions about the status of Jewish communal service as it approaches the end of its first century as a "professionalized" entity. This writer has focused on some of the same issues in preparation for the 1994 Maurice B. Hexter lecture at the Jewish Communal Service Association (JCSA) Annual Conference held in New York in June of this year.

Professor Bubis reviews the literature on whether Jewish communal service is a profession or a field of service. Although I would argue in support of the latter position, I am afraid that this core question is analogous to that of how shall we rearrange the deck chairs on the Titanic.

Jewish communal service as either a profession or a field of service is in serious trouble. It is no longer the hub from which a series of specialized spokes emerge. The spokes are operating with a centrifugal force that is moving them farther and farther away from a smaller hub. Although the growth of Jewish family, nursing home, community center, education, community organization, and vocational affinity groups is laudable, there needs to be greater recog-

nition of the synergy of interdisciplinary collaboration.

How does this manifest itself? For many years, the JCSA Annual Conference was a command performance for the leadership of the field. It attracted up to 1,000 professionals, and all of the leadership of all of the components of Jewish communal service were present. Agencies encouraged junior staff to attend, who did so willingly in order to learn and to connect to a field that served as a magnet for the principles of Jewish community life. However, the 1994 Annual Conference attracted less than 400 participants. With rare exceptions, chief executives of major federations, national agencies, or leadership functional field agencies did not attend. In fact, the Annual Conference was in competition with a Jewish educators' conference and a Jewish nursing home conference held at the same time at different venues. No discipline exists. Little leadership is exhibited.

Bubis' article also speaks to common language with regard to ethics. In previous deliberations on this issue in the context of a Wexner Foundation-supported evaluation of a Jewish communal service academic program, the central themes of Jewish com-

munal service and the degree to which they are based on shared values were discussed. To this end, the editor of *Sh'ma* asked this author to borrow from the computer field a strategy that creates these *Ten Commandments of Jewish Communal Service* (Solomon, 1994):

- I. Thou shalt begin with the foundation of Torah, *Avodah*, and *Gemilut Chassidim*.
- II. Thou shalt build community.
- III. Thou shalt participate in the aspirations of the Jewish people by helping build a homeland in Israel.
- IV. Thou shalt respect the diversity of this people by standing in the place of all Jews of all denominations and beliefs.
- V. Thou shalt seek excellence.
- VI. Thou shalt seek to transmit Jewish values.
- VII. Thou shalt act to respect thy colleagues working in behalf of the community.

- VIII. Thou shalt advocate those values of human and social justice that make us a light unto the nations.
- IX. Thou shalt educate the community through thy work.
- X. Thou shalt educate thyself through continued Jewish learning.

Bubis presents a challenge and action plan that deserve debate and support. The abandonment by professional leadership of their responsibility to professional development is neither healthy nor in our communal self-interest. I urge us to heed the challenge posed by Bubis to develop a shared vision, values, commitments, and standards to ensure that 50 years from today we are stronger as a community.

#### REFERENCES

- Solomon, Jeffrey R. (1994, April 1). Developing an ethical framework for Jewish communal service. *Sh'ma*, 24, 471.

#### EDITOR'S NOTE

Although the following article by Bernard Reisman was written in response to Gerald Bubis' piece, it stands alone as an analysis of trends toward deprofessionalization. Based on Reisman's research and readings, this article presents its own prescription for strengthening Jewish communal service.