

## TASKS AHEAD IN THE JEWISH CENTER FIELD\*

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### INTRODUCTION

THE major purpose of this paper is to fulfill the following tasks:

1. To review recent developments in the Jewish Community Center field.
2. To deal with the questions that Center workers are raising today about these developments.
3. To relate such questions to the general settings and background against which they are raised.
4. To outline the tasks that lie ahead in order to meet the challenges implied in those questions.
5. To develop a program of study and analysis designed to make the Jewish Community Center field a more effective instrument for fulfilling its major objectives.

During the past few years several chapters of NAJCW have held major discussions involving a reappraisal of the goals and objectives of the Jewish Community Center field and their fulfillment. I have observed that other agencies such as YMCA, YWCA, settlement houses, etc. are also engaged in a serious appraisal of their programs. All this suggests that in reviewing these questions we must recognize that we are faced with an apparently general American

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dilemma which affects the entire American people and not only the Jewish people. All this is part of the general trend during the past decade in which America seems to have been concerned with a reevaluation of democracy and how it might best operate in the light of the rapid developments in our economic and political life.

### The Jewish Community Center Field Continues to Grow

As one reads Herbert Millman's article in the *American Jewish Year Book* tracing developments in the Jewish Center field during the past decade, one is impressed with its growth and vitality. Many new Jewish Community Centers have been constructed and many others are being planned in large and small cities throughout the country. Jewish Community Center budgets have increased as have the extent of community support and fees from membership and activities. There has been a tremendous increase in the membership of the Jewish Community Center, especially where Centers are moving from old into new buildings. A review of a list of our own board members would indicate that during the past decade there has been a tremendous increase in the number of board members and committee members

giving unstintingly of their time to the Jewish Community Center. The number of full-time staff has doubled. Our programs have grown tremendously. We now serve all age groups through a great variety of activities with the most rapid growth in nursery schools and in programs for older adults.

### And Yet There Are Many Questions Raised

After reviewing this tremendous growth, one would normally make the traditional blessing—*She-he-chi-o-nu V'ki-mo-nu V'hi-gi-o-nu La-z'man Ha-zeh*—Thank the Lord that we have reached this point. And yet, as one travels throughout the country and speaks to workers, one finds a great deal of uneasiness and questioning on their part. What are some of these questions?

An executive in a new Center building puts it this way: "Since I have moved into the new building I have been primarily occupied with building management and with the type of program which leads me to ask myself, 'Did I need a social work education to carry out the operation of this agency successfully?'" Workers are asking: "Are group work principles being lost in the new Community Center?" "Are we drifting away from the field of social work?" Some workers are asking: "To what extent is the Center becoming a private club in which I cannot practice professionally and achieve the goals which I set for myself when I made this field my profession?" "Is the Center becoming primarily a recreational agency?" "Must I forget about the goals for social betterment in order to attract members to the Center?" "Am I to concentrate all of my work primarily on middle-class interests and high-cost, high-status activities because these are the ones that attract our membership?" Other workers express concern that they play no part in determining the ex-

ternal social forces which are shaping the Center and that they play no role in affecting basic attitudes in the current climate. Another worker indicated that he knows that in working with people he has to start with them where they are; but he has the feeling that he is leaving them there. Many workers who have made a real effort to introduce Jewish programming into the Center wonder whether, in so doing, they are doing no more than simply assuming the role of Jewish educator or rabbi. They wonder what this means for them. For some workers these questions add up to the basic concern—"Is this the kind of a setting in which I want to work?"

The workers who raise these questions feel that there is a serious discrepancy between our goals and the following practices of some of our Jewish Community Centers:

1. Limiting membership to Jewish people only. This has occurred mostly where the Center is located in a changing neighborhood in which Negro and Puerto Rican people live in large numbers. This policy has in several instances required a predominantly Jewish group to expel its few non-Jewish members as a condition for admission into the Center. In other cases it has meant the rejection of referrals from other social agencies in which a non-Jewish youngster was involved. Desegregation has sharpened this problem in those situations where a desegregated school is located near a Jewish Center and the Jewish children bring one or two of their Negro classmates to the Center after school.
2. Discouraging discussions on basic public issues, limiting the presentation of all points of view in controversial issues and submitting to outside pressures in the selection of forum speakers.
3. Failure to provide adequately for the participation of the lesser income groups in the program.
4. Regarding physical facilities as ends in themselves rather than as tools for programming in planning a new Jewish Community Center building.

5. Ignoring the needs of the neighborhood and failing to consult adequately with other social agencies or the group work section of the council of social agencies when planning to move out of an old neighborhood or when planning to move into a new neighborhood.
6. Overemphasizing mass activities, especially those that are stimulated nationally such as United Nations Day, National Health Week, Jewish Book Month, etc. and not relating those programs sufficiently to the needs of the membership.
7. Developing the program of the Center exclusively from the point of view of the Jewish community thus giving the general impression that the agency exists in an insulated environment apart from the rest of the community.
8. Giving priority to high-status activities and to those which "pay for themselves."
9. Failure of the Center to become involved in community affairs, both Jewish and general, and failure to guide groups and members toward such participation.

In discussing these problems we must take into consideration the failure of our Community Chests and councils to develop plans and programs to meet adequately the needs of our changing communities. Workers in non-Jewish group work agencies feel that similar problems need to be faced in their programs and are discussing ways and means of resolving them.

#### Let Us Review Our Goals and Objectives

The JWB Survey which resulted in the Statement of Principles evolved a clear definition of the purposes and goals of the Jewish Community Center. During the past decade Community Centers throughout the country reviewed their objectives and by and large agreed with the general concepts embodied in the Statement of Principles, if not with the exact language of the Statement. In general, most Community Centers agree that their basic function is to provide service to the Jewish community or to the Jewish people in the community in the area of informal education and rec-

reation applying the group work method in the planning and the conduct of that service. They have accepted the concept of cultural pluralism as the frame of reference for their *raison d'être* in American society.

An analysis of the Statement of Objectives of the Jewish Community Center as adopted by communities throughout the country that have undertaken self surveys during the past decade would indicate that they agree that their major purpose is to provide service to Jewish population. Along with this they consider themselves part of the American community and feel that their services should be open to all people in the community providing this policy does not contradict their basic purpose of service to Jewish population.

However, during the past decade developments in American society have introduced confusion and obscurity in relation to the basic definition of cultural pluralism. Cultural pluralism as originally defined by Horace Kallen and in I. B. Berkson's *Theories of Americanization* referred to a pluralism of various ethnic, social, cultural, and religious groups. According to this doctrine, every individual should have the opportunity and the right to identify with whichever groups he selects in American life in terms of his own ethnic and religious background and social loyalties. In the broad American scene all of these groups interrelate and bring to the total their particular cultural contribution. This results in a pluralistic yet democratic society. Serving as a concrete institutional expression of the theory of cultural pluralism, the Jewish Community Center is one of the agencies which provides an opportunity for individuals who are identified with any aspect of Jewish life, religious or cultural, to participate in a program which will help them develop identification with the Jewish group. At the same time the

Jewish Community Center, as part of the pattern of American society, serves as a vehicle for interrelatedness with other groups.

During this past decade we have noted a trend to redefine cultural pluralism more narrowly in terms of religious identifications only, as noted in Herberg's book, *Protestant, Catholic and Jew* and in other writings. In my opinion this redefinition of cultural pluralism has been reinforced by the trend towards a greater integration of church and state.

The Jewish Community Center is a setting in which Jewish people have an opportunity to gain experience in democratic living with other Jewish people and to gain experience with other groups in America through the Jewish Community Center's relationship with other agencies in the community. In addition, when the Jewish Community Center provides recreational service to all people in the community without neglecting its major purposes, it further provides an opportunity for Jewish people to live together with other peoples in the neighborhoods.

These goals are achieved primarily through the group work method which is rooted in American democracy and utilizes program as a means of achieving its goals by focusing upon individuals their needs for group living and in the relation of the individual and his groups to the welfare of the community.

There has been a great deal of discussion concerning the need to redefine what we mean by group work as a method. Questions have been raised as to whether we are clear on the extent to which there is a difference between group work and education. It has been said that a Jewish Community Center is a group work agency only partially because it also utilizes other disciplines such as recreation, education, etc. Some have raised questions about the goals of

group work in terms of helping the individual or the group and have wondered whether we are not concentrating more upon the individual and his own ego satisfactions, to the detriment of our concern for the community, the welfare of the group, and its progress as a whole.

As we review and reconsider our basic principles and our basic goals and objectives we find that they are essentially sound if we can strip them of the confusions around cultural pluralism and the definitions concerning democratic living which have crept into American society during the past decade. These confusions have contributed greatly towards widening the gap between our goals and our practice.

#### CHANGES IN THE AMERICAN AND JEWISH SCENE DURING THE PAST DECADE AFFECTING OUR FIELD AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF OUR GOALS AND OBJECTIVES \*

##### Demographic and Socio-Economic Changes

In those papers Messrs. Blanchard, Dobson and others presented a year ago, they described the population shifts and the increase in suburban developments which have affected the mode of living of our population. As we look about our country we find that people are on the move—seeking to improve their housing situation and to escape the impact of new migrants into their neighborhoods. White people are moving out as Negro and other racial groups are moving in. In some of our new suburbs we find non-Jewish people moving out as Jewish people are moving in. This population

\* At the Conference last year in Atlantic City several papers were presented which described demographic and socio-economic changes which have taken place in America during the past five years. It is therefore not necessary to review those facts in detail but only to refer to them as they have affected our field of practice.

shift is symptomatic of attitudes and relationships which reflect undemocratic aspects of American society. In the old neighborhoods we have noticed tremendous tension, insecurity on the part of Jewish population, insecurity on the part of the new population that is moving in. In the new neighborhoods we have noticed a growth of homogeneity which was described very clearly in an article in the *New York Times* by Sedonia Gruenberg called, "The Homogenized Children of Our Suburbia." People living in the suburbs most often are of the same socio-economic status, and have the same size family. There are very few older people around and very few people of different racial or social groupings. This type of homogeneity provides a setting which has a serious potential for the development of undemocratic values and relationships.

Frequent statements are made to the effect that the Jewish population has become a middle-income and upper middle-income population. Unfortunately we do not have too much objective information on that subject and our definitions of income status need to be clarified in relation to the changed value of the dollar and current modes of living. From the point of view of value-systems, it is my impression that all of American life is geared towards a middle-class living approach. There seems to be a trend towards living beyond one's economic means and towards "keeping up with the Joneses." This trend is reflected in our production of consumers' goods, especially luxury items, in our individual family budgets, our national budget and in the small talk that one hears in living rooms and other informal social settings. A negative attitude seems to prevail towards manual occupations as against white-collar occupations, especially within the Jewish community. There has also been noticeable a trend towards increased self-employment. These de-

velopments are related to the emergence during the past decade of new types of occupations which resulted from revolutionary changes in our production methods. These changes place greater value upon the services of the technician and the engineer and minimize the services of unskilled labor. As automation increases and as this process evolves, our value systems are bound to change even more in the direction of assuming the character of a middle-class society.

The climate during the past decade has certainly been one in which there has been an elevation of the concept of private and free enterprise and the development of a negative attitude towards collective and cooperative enterprises. Note for example the hearings before the Un-American Activities Committee on the cooperatives and the recent trend towards turning public areas over to private enterprise.

Certainly these developments create an atmosphere which makes it more difficult for us to practice group work which stresses cooperation and group living.

#### Conformity and Hysteria

A great deal has been written about the dark cloud which McCarthyism and the general hysteria have spread over our country during the past decade. We currently see a marked improvement in this respect. A very fine discussion on this subject took place at the JWB Biennial held in New York in April, 1956. It is therefore not necessary for me to dwell at length on this general subject. I would however like to stress that the effects of this hysteria are much greater than we anticipate and that its impact upon the American personality and the American way of life is deeper than we imagine. It will probably take several decades before the harm that it has done to America will be rectified. Studies reported in the press have de-

scribed how it has affected our entire educational system, with particular emphasis on the college level. Both students and faculty have been affected to such an extent that sound educational principles cannot be followed. It has created an atmosphere which discourages critical attitudes and honest questioning, factors which are basic to the survival of democracy. *The Journal of Social Issues* (Vol. 3, 1955) is devoted entirely to the subject, "Anti-Intellectualism in the United States" and describes the extent to which the hysteria has encouraged anti-intellectual attacks in this country during the past decade. These attacks have brought with them not only a tendency towards conformity but widespread apathy which is the forerunner of social deterioration.

In the Jewish community the same attitudes towards criticism resulted in suppressing differences, prevalence of stereotyped attitudes and the lack of creative approaches towards the reconstruction of Jewish life in America during this crucial period.

The atmosphere engendered during the past five years by "living on the brink of war" has contributed towards reinforcing the hysteria and created an abnormal situation which has affected our youth and all society, increased the tensions in our everyday life and made normal peaceful planning and growth quite difficult.

These factors have also increased our difficulties as social workers in achieving our objectives.

#### Cultural and Social Patterns of American Life—Effect of Commercialism

We are living in a complex society in which we see evidence of many conflicting and contradictory patterns of behavior. On the one hand we possess knowledge and have awareness of basic ethical values consistent with basic democracy and American tradition. On the other

hand we are affected in our behavior by commercial values which place great emphasis on the material things in life. Our patterns of behavior are influenced in large measure by the mass media of communication and the ever-increasing role of advertising and publicity. Even many of our cultural activities (in the narrow sense) have been commercialized, such as our celebration of Christmas, Hanukkah, patriotic events, literature, etc.

In the study on young adults by Olds and Josephson, conducted under the auspices of the National Social Welfare Assembly, they describe the living patterns and habits of young adults and their attitudes towards recreational agencies. The following are some of the patterns they describe:

1. The major concerns of young adults are personal, social and economic.
2. Their leisure time activities consist of visiting, watching TV, going to the movies and reading popular magazines.
3. They read very few books and in general their reading is primarily for the purpose of entertainment.
4. The majority of young adults approached in the survey do not participate in public affairs.

It is my impression that the same patterns of behavior prevail among children, teen-agers, and adults. These patterns of living involve a double standard and inconsistent behavior. One of the aspects of inconsistent behavior is the distinction between what one considers ethical behavior and what one really practices. Instances of such double standards are attitudes towards sex, towards ethical conduct in business, towards youth, towards money, etc. Another example is the conflict resulting from the teachings of religious institutions concerning equality, justice, etc., and the economic values applied in efficient industrial competition. Among the Jewish people conflicts prevail between Jewish traditional values on the

one hand and the practices in relation to Jewish ceremonies and festival celebrations on the other. This inconsistent behavior makes it difficult for children and youth with whom we work to develop consistent value systems and leads to maladjustment—all of which again contribute towards making our task as group workers doubly difficult.

Even with the increasing Americanization of the second and third generation there is prevalent within the Jewish community a conflict between self-identification as a Jew and feelings of belonging and security in the majority culture. To some extent failure to resolve this conflict is due to a lack of knowledge and appreciation of Jewish traditions and values on the part of the Jewish people in America. While it is reported that there is a decrease in organized anti-Semitism in our country, there seems to be an increase in social discrimination coincident with a lessening of social relations between Jewish and non-Jewish people. Many of the new suburbs represent a new type of ghettoization. Some of the suburbs consist of a 70 per cent to 80 per cent concentration of Jewish population. From our own studies we notice a decrease in Jewish participation in public recreation programs at the time when public recreation is increasing quantitatively and qualitatively.

While there seems to be an increase in affiliation with Jewish organizations, religious, social, etc., there is need to examine the significance of that identification in terms of whether it contributes to the individual's ability to resolve the conflicts of majority and minority group relationships or whether it serves rather as a means of escaping from that conflict.

One of the cultural changes which took place during the past decade or so is the decline in the number of traditional Jewish homes with their characteristic value-systems. This type of

home was characterized by value-systems deriving from their identifications with orthodoxy, the Workmen's Circle ideology, Labor Zionist ideals, and similar orientations which provided an environment reflecting concern with social justice, international relations and the basic democratic values. During the past decade this type of Jewish family environment has been largely disappearing due to the socio-economic changes noted above. One might wonder about the extent to which the Center should and can fill the void created by the decline of this type of family environment.

The significance of cultural factors in determining behavior patterns was highlighted in the writings of Dr. Bernard Lander of Yeshiva University. In a report of a study which he made of juvenile delinquency in Baltimore recently, presented at the Orthopsychiatric Conference, he stressed that "a lack of community feeling, a complete moral chaos rather than just poverty and slums, was a cause for delinquency." He cited a higher incidence of delinquency now being found in the so-called privileged areas. (*New York Times*, Mar. 17, 1956.)

Unfortunately the lack of objective scientific knowledge concerning the basic values, cultural patterns and social status of the Jewish people hampers the Center and the worker in its task of fulfilling the goals of the agency.

#### IMPLICATIONS OF THESE FACTORS FOR THE JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER FIELD

##### Some General Considerations

It would seem that greater attention in general should be given to programming for the enhancement of democratic values. In addition to the usual type of group program which contributes towards the individual's growth and enables him to learn to live democratically

with others, it is essential that we concentrate as well on programs that will guide and enable the individual to take a position in relation to social and economic inequities and a program which will provide him with the skills to work effectively for social betterment and greater social justice.

To achieve this goal the Center must more consciously help the individual identify with group and community goals, both those of the general and the Jewish communities. This can be achieved only by program methods which provide one with experience in civic and national affairs and which will afford the security which one derives when he plays an active role in determining his own fate and future. In its emphasis upon Jewish programming the Center should develop criteria for the type of program which can contribute towards the individual's self-acceptance as a Jew as well as his integration into Jewish and American life. Not all Jewish content activities, *per se*, necessarily meet these criteria.

The implications of the above for our immediate goals are best described by the following statement from an article entitled, "Value Interiorization and Democratic Education" by Max L. Hutt and Daniel R. Miller, published in the *Journal of Social Issues*, No. 4, 1949.

"A goal of personality development is the development of individual self-sufficiency and independence of action which are compatible with the growing and ever-changing needs of democratic society. This poses the dialectical problem of providing for the interiorization by the individual of social values which, while they help him to discharge effectively his obligations to the community, do not stifle his creativity, critical attitude, spirit of free inquiry, and motivation to improve constantly upon the always inadequate *status quo*. The individual must accept the relevance of group needs and his own obligation to contribute to the group. He must learn to respect the variability among the sub-groups of his society without neglecting the needs of society as a

whole. His identification with any group must not blind him to the right of self-determination of other groups. At the same time, he must learn to express his own needs in a manner which is consistent with the welfare of his community. In attempting to develop such congruent skills, democratic society takes upon itself a complex problem and a considerable responsibility."

##### Specific Directions for Concentrated Attention

Let us review what a Jewish Center needs to do in order to meet the criticisms of our goals and objectives to which we have drawn attention. In discussing ways and means of meeting these criticisms our goal is not to offer concrete solutions but simply to suggest areas for further study in the light of our basic philosophy and goals.

1. *Open Door Policy*—Where the Center is located in a changing neighborhood it needs to give its membership a sense of security and a feeling of belongingness in the community. This can be achieved best by cooperating with other agencies in the community in the development of community activities which will help to improve the neighborhood, maintain adequate living standards in the area and give the people who live in it the feeling that it has a future.

To this end, it should develop an active program of Jewish interests as well as a program which would involve both Jews and non-Jews in cooperative activity involving general community and social issues and recreational activities. As the Center meets with problems in trying to implement such a policy it should consult with the leaders of other groups in the neighborhood as well as with other social agencies. Closing the doors to the non-Jewish friends of the Jewish people living in the neighborhood, in my opinion, is in direct contradiction to the basic goals and purposes of a Jewish Community Center and creates more problems than it aims to solve. It is essential that the Jews living in a neighborhood should participate with the leaders of the Center in determining policies for the agency. This will provide the agency with an opportunity for education, for exercising the democratic process, and for people to

share responsibility for decisions which will effect their day to day living.

When the Center is considering the possibility of moving out of the neighborhood to follow the trend of Jewish population, it should take into consideration the needs of the neighborhood and consult with the organized agencies and groups in the community as to the need for a continuing program in the neighborhood and the manner in which the facilities could continue to be used for such a program under new auspices.

2. *Planning a Center in a New Neighborhood*—Many of the criticisms concerning new Center buildings reflect a concern that it may be becoming "a country club" and all that this implies. I should like to outline the following procedures and guides which in my opinion will help avoid this eventuality:

A. When the Center reaches the stage of deciding to move into a neighborhood it should consult with the Council of Social Agencies and other group work agencies in such matters as site location and program planning.

B. From the time it is decided that the Center should move into a new location to the time that the new Center building is actually opened, it is essential that we involve our membership in all aspects of planning, both those relating to program planning as well as those relating to determination of policies and procedures. This intensive involvement is suggested, not only from the point of view of democratic administration, but also because such involvement enables the educative process to take place. (Too often, as professionals and as leaders, we have assumed that we know all the answers, have lacked confidence in the membership and have attempted to make decisions for them which have resulted in neighborhood and community conflict.)

C. The planning should be related to the needs of the non-Jewish people living in the neighborhood of the new site. This is particularly significant if there are no other group work agencies in the area. From the point of view of budget and staff it is advisable that the study of such needs should be done in cooperation with the Council of Social Agencies. With proper inter-

pretation such planning will enable us to provide services to the neighborhood without detracting from our major services to the Jewish community.

D. In planning new Jewish Center facilities we must be careful to relate such planning to program needs and be sure that the final facilities represent a proper balance between facilities for small group activities and those for mass and general recreation activities. Despite the fact that in many communities facility planning was preceded by basic self study and program evaluation, the facility planning was left to a group of people who were primarily concerned with construction matters and with fund raising. As a result, the end product did not really reflect the community needs.

E. In developing overall plans for total community service, adequate consideration should be given to serving the needs of all the neighborhoods in the city in which there are concentrations of Jewish population. This calls for more careful consideration of the needs for extension programs and use of other facilities. In developing such extension activities we should take into consideration the recent expansion of public recreation programs and the greater use being made of public schools for leisure time activities. It also involves making greater use of facilities under Jewish community auspices such as Jewish schools, synagogues, etc.

### 3. *Other Areas*

A. In relation to the question as to whether the Jewish Community Center is serving the middle and upper income groups, we have the responsibility to plan so that the Center actually serves a true socio-economic cross-section of the community. In such planning, special consideration should be given to providing for those who in our opinion cannot afford the full membership fee in the new Center. This can be done, for example, by giving them priority in enrolling in the new Center at a rate which they can afford according to their own statement. On the other hand, concrete efforts should be made to enroll individuals from the upper income levels of the community who

could benefit from our services. In interpreting our Center program to them it is essential that they appreciate our basic goals of serving a cross-section of the community and that our program content must be geared to that end.

B. Obviously in order to achieve this we need to engage in a basic evaluation of our fee structure so that we achieve cross-sectional participation in our membership. There has been a great deal of discussion lately on objective sliding scale fees. With the high cost of our overall Center services today we can achieve our objectives only if we develop some type of sliding scale approach towards fee structure. This pertains not only to our nursery schools, day camps and country camps, but also to our membership and activities fees. We must be sensitive to what happens to the teen-ager who cannot afford to participate in the weekend program planned by his group or to the club member for whom a "sailing" club program is too costly.

C. In order to maintain standards in a new Center building it is necessary to set a limit to the number of members who can be served in the new facilities and by the planned program in the light of the realistic limitations of budget and size of staff. In many instances where this was not done, the number of members enrolled in the new Center far exceeded the ability of the Center to serve them adequately according to minimal basic standards.

D. We have talked a great deal about intake, but unfortunately have developed very few procedures which relate to our total membership. One of our Centers developed a plan for interviewing all of its 5,500 members before opening the new building. If we are to achieve our goals we must learn something about the history of the individuals' experiences so that programming for growth can be related to those experiences. We need more basic data relating to the individual's background in order to develop our program adequately.

E. Our previous remarks about the total American scene would suggest that we need to develop many more programs involving the non-Jewish population,

both in our immediate neighborhoods as well as on a community basis. This calls for more inter-group programs and opportunities for our members to have greater contact with non-Jews on a planned basis. This type of program is necessary in order to help Jewish people gain more security as Jews and test their security in relation to their non-Jewish contacts. Many of our new Centers are moving into neighborhoods where they represent the only social group work agency. As an American institution, part of a Council of Social Agencies, we have the responsibility to find out how our neighbors feel about the Jewish Community Center, what concepts they have of it, and to what extent the Jewish Community Center could meet some of their needs. All this, of course, needs to be done without neglecting our major function as an agency serving the Jewish community primarily.

F. It is not necessary to dwell at length here on programs for community participation and citizenship training. Suffice it to say that we need to concentrate much more than we have done heretofore on that aspect of our program as it relates to the Jewish community and to the general community. I should just like to comment that in relation to the Jewish community our programs heretofore have consisted largely of fund raising activities, which, because of fund raising pressures, have not always been consonant with our general educational goals. We have not used these programs to help the individual develop positive attitudes to the causes for which we have conducted fund raising programs. Instead, we have all too frequently been content with meeting quotas and fulfilling goals at the expense of the educational responsibilities which are inherent in such activities and in our own philosophy.

G. We are always aware of the need to develop our program in relation to specific individual needs. However, we have been criticized for imposing nationally based programs upon our memberships. In developing such programs as Mother's Day, Father's Day, Americanization Day, Jewish Book Month, Jewish Music Month, etc. we

have to develop methods of motivation so that such programs may be related to the specific needs of the people with whom we are working. This implies using nationally produced materials in these areas as resources and not as stereotypes and permitting each group to become involved in such programs in terms of its own level of development and need.

- H. In the light of our previous discussion concerning the need of the individual to develop a sense of values through our program, we need to concentrate more on developing activities which stimulate membership to become concerned with values. In participating in teen-age conferences I have frequently noted that teen-agers make general statements on matters of religion and social issues which reflect very superficial thinking and represent merely an unthinking repetition of what they have read or heard adults say. We have a responsibility to develop methods of helping these teen-agers analyze those issues more basically in the light of democratic values and Jewish traditional concepts. From a concrete program point of view we need to develop experiences relating to manual labor, such as sheltered workshop programs, leave areas of our new Center building unfinished for teen-agers to complete and furnish, develop more work camp projects and in general provide them with some basic experiences which will give them new experiences which they do not normally have in their day-to-day living. Recently we have noted many such projects being undertaken in Centers. Some of our nursery school parents, for instances, have become involved in building nursery school furniture. In short, I should like to suggest that we ought to place less emphasis on the finished product and concentrate more on the process of those of our programs which enhance the values which he have discussed above.
- I. In terms of counteracting the effects of hysteria and the tendency towards conformity we need more consciously to introduce diverse points of view and varied — even conflicting — ideologies

into the program. Learning and growth take place more effectively when an individual is confronted with choices to make between various alternatives. Carrying out such a program involves careful planning, because if we leave the content of the program to chance it is not very likely that alternatives will be presented. It involves the search for resources and materials from a variety of sources, some of which may not be readily available in the community. In view of the present tendency in American life to seek unanimity and harmony artificially and at all costs, it is important that we create an atmosphere of free and critical inquiry in our agency so that we can help our members become more informed, intelligent and effective individuals in arriving at decisions on basic issues. This type of programming approach is essential both for Jewish and general issues.

- J. Despite the fact that there has been almost unanimous agreement on the need for the Center to concentrate its program on serving the needs of Jewish people, there has been inadequate planning for creative approaches to programming in this area. Jewish people throughout the country are trying to find new and different meanings in their group belongingness. The Jewish Community Center must help them in this search to find their values and self-identification in their own terms (not in terms of someone else's pre-conceived survival values). Such assistance cannot be provided by the use of stereotyped program approaches. It calls for the utmost skill and knowledge to relate program to the specific needs of our membership. It would seem that differential program approaches are called for to meet the different needs of the individual who rejects his Jewishness, the needs of one who comes from an orthodox home and accepts his Jewishness, those of the one who comes from a reform Jewish background, those of one who comes from an ardent Zionist home, and the needs of one who comes from an unidentified Jewish environment. In this connection greater stress must be placed first on the process of de-

veloping such programs rather than on the Jewish educational content of the program.

### Implications for the Professional Worker

The role which the professional worker plays in the agency and the manner in which he functions are important factors in implementing our goals. This refers not only to the manner in which he uses himself consciously as a professional but also to the manner in which he has made a part of himself and of his life those values and goals which he aspires to transmit to his membership. This is important because growth and development on the part of membership is determined by the extent to which the setting as a whole together with the worker—professionally and personally—afford consistency in the value-system to which the membership is exposed. Hutt and Miller, in the article referred to earlier, emphasize this point as follows:

The learner's interiorization of these attitudes occurs in the course of his relationships with "significant" adults. The primary vehicles of the interiorization seem to be the learner's empathetic responses to and identification with these "significant others." As he comes to anticipate consistent actions, he is enabled to develop more adequate methods of coping with his environment. Irregularity in the behavior to which the child is exposed is very disruptive. If the rules of life are unpredictable, he cannot develop any successful techniques for adjusting to people.

In view of the above, we, as Jewish Center workers, must clarify for ourselves our roles as Jews and as Americans and make every effort to live in accordance with our orientation. This does not imply that every worker must possess the same ideology and follow similar personal practices. On the contrary, each one should arrive at his own way of life in terms of what he chooses to be in the American democratic setting. Whatever that choice is, it should present a

consistent pattern so that the members with whom he works have a definite, clear image of his sense of values. The member "gets lost" and demoralized in a relationship which does not embody a definite set of values.

As Center workers we must play an active role in Jewish and American affairs. The problems we face in such participation have been dealt with to some extent in the NAJCW Code of Ethics. Another problem however is that of time in relation to our working hours. We are occupied when community affairs take place. However it is essential that we set for ourselves participation goals upon which we can act to the best of our ability. The concrete formulation of such goals is in itself a factor in our value-system. Center workers' participation is also related to the question of the status of the profession. The more we assume leadership roles in community affairs, the more the community will recognize the significance of the profession. Status basically is earned and value is assigned to a profession on the basis of its contribution.

In order to develop a setting for practice which meets the challenge of critical times and our feelings about conformity, it is important that we develop a critical approach and an attitude of questioning both towards communal affairs and towards the program of our own agency. It is important that we constantly check whether we are falling into a pattern of merely accepting statements made by "authorities" on face value. Implied in this statement is the necessity for encouraging critical attitudes at staff meetings, and for the executive as well as the worker to accept questioning from each other with respect to the agency function. It is necessary for us to develop a consistent procedure for staff to engage in reviewing and solving our problems.

## TASKS AHEAD IN THE JEWISH CENTER FIELD

Our greatest danger is that of becoming satisfied with the *status quo* in agency development and program. Developing a setting which encourages questioning will undoubtedly reflect itself in the entire program of the agency.

As we review all of our problems it becomes more and more evident that at present we lack adequate resources and techniques with which to cope with many of them. Not only do we need to sharpen our own skills and techniques but we also need to become familiar with and make greater use of other disciplines in developing an adequate program. For example, in planning teen-age and young adult conferences we do not make sufficient use of the techniques developed by the group dynamics field, techniques which can help us provide more creative programs for these conferences. A paper on this subject was presented at an NAJCW Conference a few years ago and unfortunately there was very little followup on the matter. The group work field has been discussing this subject at some length in various settings.

We have reviewed time and again the need for research in our field. A committee under the leadership of Irving Cantor is beginning to delve into some of these problems. The workers' development of a research-oriented approach is essential if we are to obtain basic raw data for study and further research. We need to develop basic records in our agencies. However, in many instances we have adequate records. In these cases, we need to undertake programs involving the analytic study of these records to provide us with material for the planning of fundamental research projects. In our own program planning, especially in relation to new neighborhoods, we need to utilize more effectively those research approaches which will enable us to know more about the people

with whom we work and to develop a program which will more nearly meet their needs. In developing our new Centers we have been installing new business machines which to date are primarily used for auditing, bookkeeping, and billing. If we were research minded we could make better use of these machines which with slight additional cost can be used to provide us with more basic data concerning our program.

In discussing the outline of this paper with one of our executives, his comment was, "Where can you find the perfect worker you are talking about?" Obviously we cannot operate at *all times* in the manner indicated above. What we need today is to set realistic goals for ourselves so that we can do some of these things *some of the time*. This involves the need for self-discipline and the disciplined use of time. It also involves a reevaluation of job analyses and criteria for staffing so that time is set aside in the day-to-day function on the job for self-training and effective planning.

### Summary

In closing I should like to emphasize once more that we are living in a very complex and dynamic world. For many decades we have been confronted with the lag between technical and physical developments on the one hand and developments in social sciences which are concerned with harnessing the technical developments for human welfare, on the other. It may be trite but still it is necessary to state that we in the Jewish Community Center field are confronted with many difficult tasks in our efforts to close the gaps between our theory and practice. I hope that the points outlined in this paper will serve as a basis for further study by the profession and the association in fulfilling our tasks.