

obsession.

Would you like at last a statistic? Here is a statistic: over the course of this year, some ten to twelve thousand Jewish couples will file for divorce. And another statistic: some eighty or ninety percent of them will use Jewish attorneys to handle the case. Is it not possible for us to convene these lawyers, at least those on whom we have some claim—the numbers are not small—and seek through the application of Jewish precepts to encourage them to help their wounded clients to preserve their dignity and self respect, rather than, as is so lamentably and so often the case these days, to exacerbate the conflict?

In each of the areas I have noted, and in each of a hundred more, there is room for improvement, there is need for improvement, there is urgency for improvement. Failing the effort at such improvement, we shall become even more fractious, ever more quarrelsome, ever more trivial. Ladies and gentlemen, in our generation, it is not Jewish powerlessness that is the principal threat to Jewish survival; it is Jewish purposelessness.

In my remarks, I have merely set the stage for a renewed debate on our cosmic purpose. I have proposed some modest arenas, which all can accept, in which we can prove excellence even as the debate goes forward. In that pursuit, as in that debate, I believe that the professional class of our community has a special role to play. You have that role not because you are wiser, or because you are nobler, nor even because you are more committed, for none of these is universally so. No. The special role is yours because only you can break the sterile tradition of minimalism to which we are heir. Most Jews simply cannot imagine another way, a better way, a more

substantial way. People tailor their imagination to fit their sense of possibility, and nothing they have seen of Jewish life has alerted them to the richness of Jewish possibility. But you—you can stretch the imagination of our people by insisting on excellence and representing it. It is for you to inspire a sense of the possible that derives not from our constricted present but from our expansive prospect.

This you can do by helping, at last, to craft a community of ethical excellence, which does not demean itself by honoring the base and which does not debase itself by endorsing the vulgar. This you can do by insisting that the era of grim junk must be done. This you can do, preeminently, by making of your own work a model not only of Judaic commitment but also of Judaic achievement.

And can anyone doubt that it is precisely that community of excellence which we might together craft that is the surest guarantor of our survival? For such a community, so rich and so rewarding, none would think to leave. Our demographers would ply their statistical trade, but we would pursue our mandate mystical, and there would the truth about the Jews be found.

Such a community would itself offer a sufficient response to the question of Judaic purpose. And such a community is ours to fashion, if we will only perceive that suffering is not an adequate summary of our past nor survival an adequate prescription of our future, that, instead, our past is a past of nobility, and our future, a future of holiness. It is that past that must become the motive for Jewish life, and that future, its method. Thus, and thus alone, can our people newly hungry be nourished.

## Reaping the Wild Wind: Some Issues Confronting the Jewish Community Center\*

Abe Vinik

General Director, Jewish Community Centers, Chicago

*The time is long past that the (Jewish community) center rely solely on self-studies for the assessment of its performance, however valuable these may be. The Center is in need of periodic, systematic, outside review—and accreditation . . . of its performance . . .*

The seduction of a new decade arouses certain uncontrollable, irrational impulses, among them the need to define, and thereby hope to control, the future. However much I may enjoy the erotic arousal of such an impulse, the historic rarity of accurate predictions and my own track record as a born-again skeptic make me hesitate to enter upon such a course. At the same time, the planning committee of the Association of Jewish Center Workers may well have assumed too great a risk in asking someone about to withdraw from the battle to deliver this keynote address. The temptation to look back rather than forward will be difficult to avoid. Whether or not this paper serves the original purpose, I am thankful for the invitation because it afforded me the opportunity to review those of my writings over the past thirty years which I could still find. However, this will not be just a snip and paste rehash.

My career in the Jewish community center, for many reasons, has been blessed with fortune. What is relevant here is that it coincided with the explosive growth, measured by any yardstick, of the center field, a growth during what may, in retrospect, be regarded as the golden age of American Jewry. I must confront the present to which that age has brought us; it being my assumption that such a confrontation is, at least, necessary, if not sufficient, for the lay and professional leadership of our centers to deal with the future.

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It is not my intent to dwell on demographic issues or their implications. I am relieved of that burden by the plan for this annual meeting. Instead, I propose to discuss other selected developments in our American, Jewish and professional lives to which, I believe, the Center must direct its attention. I am mindful, in my selectivity, of the danger of distortion of fact, and confusion between cause and effect, resulting in the application of the wrong treatment to the misdiagnosed illness. Your skeptical appraisal is both welcome and essential. After all, "What is the ordinary member of the tribe to do when the witch doctors disagree?"

### Vital Large Social Trends

First; on the American scene, I am less concerned about the disarray in our political economy and our foreign policy than I am in the uncertain prospect of building and holding together any stable coalition of sub-groups in our society. The centrifugal forces engendered by the conflicting interests of so many disparate sub-groups lend confusion to and prevent any consensus about the requirements for community cohesion and national leadership. I see the American Jewish community having essentially detached itself from participation in the process of trying to build a new coalition, due to uncertainty and disillusionment or because its energy is invested in alternative definitions of its own self-interest. The path of going it alone and mobilizing adequate power out of our own resources is an illusion leading to a

dangerous deadend.

Second; we have been infected by the cultured virus, grown in the laboratories of our knowledge industry, which multiplies the debilitating toxin in our body politic that there are no solutions to our problems. If we would only recognize that their conclusion is a biased one, representing a self-serving apology, the aftermath of evaluations of their previous programs which have been tried and failed. They may even be right in the thrust of their belated analysis but the bitter result of the shattering of hope is massive inertia, retreat and weakening of the will to engage in problem-solving and to risk failure. In this wake, passive acceptance that a slow-down in economic growth is inevitable has been nurtured by an advance guard proclaiming the virtue of "no growth." The price the "haves" who proclaim this truth are prepared to pay is for the "have-nots" to accept the consequences of intensified caste and class barriers in America. History suggests that such a scenario offers little comfort to the future well-being of minorities among whom, government edict to the contrary, the Jewish community still belongs. The inevitable implication of such a vision of the future on the availability of adequate resources for our Centers need not be spelled out.

Third; the perceived shifts in the balance of power, from liberalism to conservatism, from the U.S. to the U.S.S.R., from diverse organizational and ideological constituencies within the Jewish community to the Jewish Federation, all lead to a singular end—the centralization and concentration of power. To accept the conservative argument that it stands for decentralization of authority and greater freedom would be misleading. In every sphere other than the economic, and even there it is questionable, the record of conservatism provides contrary evidence. Whether the perception of the shift is accurate or not—and I tend to believe it is not, the reasons for which it is

irrelevant to dwell upon for the purposes of this paper—the fact that the change in the balance of power is so perceived seems incontrovertible, with serious consequences for us as Americans and as Jews and for Federation-Center relationships, until the pendulum swings once again.

Fourth; the nuclear family has seen a relatively sudden and continuing erosion of its status as the norm for family life, particularly since the mid 60's. Led by the new left and its Marxist critique of the bourgeois family, social scientists, family policy advocates and large numbers of social work professionals have adopted a position of benign neutrality towards the emerging pluralism of family form.<sup>1</sup> At the very least, these alternative family constellations, less permanent than the heavens, contribute to the weakening of links between the generations. At the very most, they reduce the priority previously assigned to childbirth and child-rearing. For the Jewish community which has regarded the family as the primary transmitter of its archetypal memories, oral if not recorded history, traditions, practices and values, it is hardly conceivable that any alternative forms or communal program substitutes can adequately compensate for its loss. And yet, despite the example of the American Jewish Family Center, there is serious question if and how the trend can be reversed.

Fifth; the American Jewish community, excepting some extremist fringe groups, has tended to operate on the thesis that what is good for the Jews is good for America. Now, after a series of unnerving experiences, doubts have begun to intrude. Does America believe it? Did it ever? And we have even dared to ask, "Is what is good for America good for the Jews?" The concerns are many. Differences in position can usually be accommodated or left to interpretation by the courts. All, of course,

Allan C. Carlson, "Families, Sex and the Liberal Agenda," *The Public Interest*, No. 58, (Winter, 1980).

but one—Israel! As long as we basked in the sunshine of the golden age, the challenge of dual loyalty was submerged and seemed, at last, to have disappeared. The issue of dual loyalty can again be expected to emerge as the Israeli position towards the Arab world comes under heavier attack, as she is further isolated among the nations and, as the lobbying tactics of the Israeli leadership and American Jewry for her security and survival interests no longer delay or avert the move toward a contrary American policy in the Middle-East. If and when we find ourselves in conflict with prevailing American opinion, policy and action, how prepared will we be to assert our Jewishness? Will we begin to raise question about our own acts of omission and commission during the welding and maintenance of the remarkable consensus on behalf of Israel within the American Jewish community since 1948? What will we be able to do to sustain that consensus when its erosion is seriously threatened? Who will stand up and not flinch if and when dual loyalty becomes a real factor and not just a weapon for the anti-Semite or an excuse for the ambivalent Jew?

Sixth; I have enjoyed the privilege of graduate education in social work and coming upon the Center scene when the ranks of the professionals were thin. Later, I experienced the proclamation of social work as the "core" discipline within the Center. Ironically, this occurred almost immediately prior to the virtual disenfranchisement of the Center as a field training and entry level setting for professional social work practice in the eyes of the educators and of the vastly increased number of newcomers, including Jews, in the 60's, upon whom the educators' influence was understandably profound. There seems little doubt that this contributed to the introduction of a variety of Jewishly oriented programs between the East and West coasts, organized to prepare workers for careers in Jewish communal

service. And yet, this proliferation seems not to have brought us much closer to an internal consensus on what is required to deliver the product of the Center. Within recent months a paper presented to a regional gathering of Center workers by a faculty member in one of these Jewishly oriented programs succeeded in avoiding a single reference to either the Jewish purposes of the Center or its practice methodologies while dealing with social work in the Jewish community center!<sup>2</sup>

The problem was compounded when the erroneous assumption was made that the social work foundation upon which additional education in Jewish "attitudes, values and skill" should be built was sufficiently strong.<sup>3</sup> Since I am not a recent convert to or a reluctant critic of social work education, at least for social group work and Jewish community center practice, I feel we have hitched our wagon to a dying star, continuing to graduate all the right students from our Jewishly oriented programs with the Jewish knowledge and attitudes but without the level of practice skill necessary for the increasingly complex, demanding mission of our Centers.

Would that I could reverse the choice which put group work, at its birth, on the track of the professional of social work rather than education. "Core" or "host" discipline or not, social group work is but one of many equal methods of education employed by the Center to achieve its goals and objectives. Many years ago I was indelibly influenced by a great teacher of social group work who helped make that choice to align us with the social work profession but she would have agreed that

<sup>2</sup> Louis Levitt, "The Future of Social Work in the Jewish Community Center" (Paper presented to the Metropolitan Association of Jewish Center Workers, New York City, Nov. 1979).

<sup>3</sup> Bertram H. Gold and Arnulf M. Pins, "Effective Preparation for Jewish Community Center Work," *The Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, Vol. XXXIX, No. 2, (December, 1962).

the following statement about teaching is equally applicable to the social group worker and all of the other educational disciplines represented in the staff of the center:

Teaching is a political act in that it seeks to construe a polity, defined by shared responsibility and authority. Every classroom is an act of making citizens in the realm of that room, and every room is a figure for the larger community. Teaching is a giving to others the gift of how to share their desire that humankind survive as it should, with dignity and energy and moral purpose.<sup>4</sup>

He also wrote, "Teaching is about how to make a choice . . . and from the architectonics of choices, a person will emerge, a person who knows how to cope with the radical loneliness we all inherit and the vast population of decisions we all live in."<sup>5</sup> The professional decision is irreversible, there is no viable alternative to the school of social work except to make it better. We can no longer afford, as so many professional leaders within the Center field have done, to remove ourselves from the encounter and we must seek to influence the future direction of our schools of social work and the Jewishly oriented programs which, in most instances, are related to them. What we can hope to reverse is the observation that "people in social work, teaching, nursing, counseling and related professions have a broad sense of being ineffective."

The above treatment of the six priority concerns is superficial rather than exhaustive. It offers no recognition of the contra-indications to the identified trends. The priorities are stated without reference to such issues and other trends, which must have a direct impact on the Center, as government funding, social welfare policy, the women's movement, Jewish education, the loss of centrality by the synagogue, re-

<sup>4</sup> A. Bartlett Giametti, "The American Teacher, the Annual Report of the President," Yale University, (March, 1980).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

emergent Orthodoxy and immigration, including that of Jews both from the Soviet Union and Israel.

This is not a litany of despair. While it reflects the reality of my perceptions and seems to demand an overwhelming, almost superhuman, professional response, we have only to look back on earlier challenges we confronted to feel reassured that there again we shall prevail. It would indeed be presumptuous to think of, much less to offer, solutions. Instead, I propose to suggest a few initiatives and reactions by the Center in order for it to serve, in Reisman's term, as a "countervailing" force. My effort will be directed towards four components of the Center's operation, its organization, its program, its personnel and its relationship with Federation. Here too, I shall be suggestive and selective, more intent upon opening the discussion rather than trying to be definitive or all encompassing.

#### Countervailing Forces in Community Centers

To begin with the organization of the Center, I should like to recall the proposed responses spelled out by two of my very good friends to the concentrations of power they found emerging around them in government, the economy and within the Jewish community. This centralization, coupled with the clear recognition that the individuals, families and communities we served brought a multiplicity of interests, needs and problems to the Center, led them to the logical conclusion that the Center, in turn, would have to strengthen its position in order to deal with and respond effectively to its own constituencies and to the growing authority which was demanding subservience from it. These, among other diagnoses, led them to contemplate the evolution of the agency into a "compre-

hensive"<sup>6</sup> or "multi-service"<sup>7</sup> center. The proposals had many attractions, internally to Center lay and professional leadership and externally, to Federations, which were themselves vigorously promoting mergers and/or contemplating the establishment of new comprehensive service agencies to meet the needs of special target populations like the elderly. Due to certain limiting factors inherent in the nature of the organized Jewish community, these proposals were stillborn. In retrospect, I am relieved that my early enthusiasm for them was not put to the test of making them operational because they would, sooner or later, have brought the Center into conflict with its own mission to challenge the centralization of power, to expand the base for responsible decision-making and the sanction of power within the Jewish community.

The Center needs to be ever conscious of its obligation to remind the Federation of its task, that the route it takes as the only Federation affiliate which shares the community organization role with Federation, while not always parallel, is not an adversary but a complementary and supportive one.

Instead of incorporating new functions, which could or should better be done by others, we should better direct our attention to improving quality control of our own product, the delivery of group services. Instead of the Center becoming the nucleus for the pearl of the comprehensive or multi-service agency, we should lend our strength to efforts at inter-agency or organizational cooperation. Whether in preschool, youth or adult education with synagogues and central Jewish education agencies, in Jewish family life education with Jewish family service and education agencies or in broader coalitions including Jewish hospitals, voca-

<sup>6</sup> Bernard Warach, "The Comprehensive Community Center: A Prospectus for the Provision of Integrated Jewish Communal Service," this *Journal*, Vol. XLII, No. 2 (December, 1976).

<sup>7</sup> Morris Levin, "Needed a New Institution," this *Journal*, Vol. LIII, No. 1 (September, 1976).

tional and child care agencies for youth counselling, joint programs, consortia, councils or other cooperative ventures need to be created and nurtured. Without the initiative and leadership of the Center this will not occur. The price for community building is a heavy one, to share credit for success and assume full responsibility for failure, but it must be paid if we are to go about the work of community building.

By no means would I confine this enterprise to the family of Federation affiliate or beneficiary agencies. Reach-out to all existing organizations and institutions within the Jewish community is part of this expectation. I would place particular emphasis on building relationships between Center and synagogue, not only for the many reasons I have identified elsewhere,<sup>8</sup> but because they are responsible to its inhabitants. Separately and competitively, they divide and weaken the Jewish community. Together, they enhance one another and strengthen it. Nor would I restrict such activity within the boundaries of the Jewish community. The precipitous retreat from the coalitions existing until about 1967, not always deliberate, often in response to hurt, anger and rejection, must be rerouted and rebuilt, not in moments of impending crisis, but in an exploratory search to find a common ground and to proceed with its cultivation. The process may help us rediscover that problem-solving is achievable through sound decision-making and responsible action.

Center programs must take greater cognizance of the forces at work which succeed in weakening the family and not contribute to these forces, inadvertently, by too eager a willingness to assume parental roles or advertently, by a neutral acceptance of or accommodation to alternative forms to the nuclear family. On the eve of the

<sup>8</sup> Abe Vinik, "Deja Vu — Synagogue-Center Relations Revisited," presented at the Metropolitan Center Executives' Conference, Hollywood, Florida, (January, 1980).

White House Conference on Families there seems to have been scant involvement by Federations and Centers in the development of programs or platforms or in the state caucuses to select delegates, as if the issues were not relevant to our Jewish public affairs concerns. Whatever we do may be insufficient to reverse the powerful trends gnawing away at the nuclear family but our Centers do deal with many family units and their individual members who are ready for and have demonstrated their responsiveness to family and intergenerational activities and group experiences. Every setting, the home, the Center, the synagogue or the camp; every old and newer group form, including the tribe, the *havurah*, the trip or the holiday assembly; and every opportunity for extending the horizon of belonging from local to citywide, state, national and international group affiliation must be purposefully utilized for such programming.

The Center's approach to Jewish identification as an experiential and developmental process must prove itself in practice so that community leaders become witness to its validity within their own families. Board membership and lay leadership development programs must also incorporate their families into their activities.

Now that the demographers have made us aware of the significance of numbers, we are less prone to consign certain elements in the Jewish community beyond the pale. Solitary singles and intermarried couples, Jewish immigrants from the Soviet Union and Israel, in vastly greater numbers, require patient support and encouragement from the Center to enter or re-enter the mainstream of Jewish community life. The reality of Israel, not campaign slogans or myths, must be able to sustain the identification of American Jews with her. We can expect that the most vulnerable bastion, the identity of the Jewish college student on campus, will be under concentration siege by an array of third world, minority, Marxist, pacifist and other forces. It is a

campaign in which the Jewish community and the Center will need to throw in their best trained strategic reserve, not only to resist the anticipated attack but to learn to prepare for other battles on the fronts.

When probably one-fourth to one-fifth of Jewish school-age children reach the age of bar- or bat-mitzvah without any Jewish education,<sup>9</sup> it is not appropriate for the Center to disclaim responsibility for fear of usurping another's turf. It is time that the Center took the initiative to convene all the interested parties to plan what they should do together to reach these children and their families.

So many creative program ideas need to be planted and helped to germinate in the fertile soil of the Center. Their growth will be dependent upon the size and skills of its professional staff. It is time to restructure the organization and job responsibilities of Center staff and to halt the persistent downtrend in the percentage of Center budget allocated for personnel. Recent estimates indicate that Federations now employ an average of one full-time professional for every five thousand Jews and every five hundred thousand dollars raised in the community.<sup>10</sup> This is surely a substantial increase compared to the opposite experience of the Center and other communal agencies engaged in direct delivery of local services with the exception of those communities involved in relatively large scale resettlement of Jewish immigrants from the Soviet Union. The Council of Jewish Federations study from which these figures are drawn recommends the establishment of a Federation personnel recruitment and educational program without any thought given to the integration of such an effort with the personnel require-

<sup>9</sup> These estimates are the author's, extrapolated from local community and national data which are ambiguous in definition and not current.

<sup>10</sup> Andrew Hahn and Arnold Gurin, "Jewish Federation Professionals: Status and Outlook," this *Journal*, Vol. LVI, No. 2 (Winter 1979-80).

ments of their affiliate agencies. It is as if they were operating in a different dimension of space and time and need to receive and hear the signal that, not only are we all in this together, but that we may even have some small contribution to make in such a mutual enterprise.

Let there be no doubt that the Center's organization and facilities, its purpose and program, will remain unfulfilled assumptions and expectations without qualified personnel at every level of its operation. The attraction, development and retention of such staff deserve our highest priority. It is a task that commands the participation of all Center professionals and their allies, whatever their discipline, wherever they may be employed, in Centers, in Federations, in any appropriate program of graduate education or in JWB. What then is required of us?

Every professional, from line worker to executive, who has been immersed in water over his or her head, to sink or swim, and who survived, deserves our respect and admiration. Those who did not warrant more than an expression of regret. Instead the Center field must resolve that it should not be permitted to happen again.

Every professional has the right to expect a job description that is doable, a definition of goals and objectives that are measurable and regular performance evaluations with clear, pre-established criteria. He or she has the right to expect consistent support and supervision from a supervisor who can teach as well as do, who accepts responsibility for the supervisee's successes and failures. He or she has a right to expect from supervisor that deficiencies in prior experience and education will be repaired and that the supervisory relationship will be directed towards professional growth and readiness to assume more demanding responsibility with increasing independence.

Professional development is, however, dependent upon more than the availability of skilled supervision. It is not possible to

hone one's group service skills and to teach them to others without continuing direct practice. Every professional position must not only offer, it must require, an assignment in direct practice and afford adequate time to assure the integrity of that practice.

The Center derives much of its energy and momentum from the strength of its Board of Directors and its Board committees. Center workers covet the responsibility for working with these groups. But, how very little has professional education, in-service training and supervision or protected time within the professional's job assignment made possible successful performance and increasing skill in this critical dimension of group work.

How old and tired, how worn out these observations seem. And yet, how very little progress has been made since these calls were first sounded.<sup>11</sup> How sad it is to contemplate that every educational discipline, other than social group work, employed in the center affords a greater prospect for direct practice in work with groups. How is it possible, under these circumstances, for the social group worker who is the professional most frequently responsible for work with Boards or Board committee groups, to prepare him or herself for this assignment?

The content of job descriptions and supervisory inputs will need to be augmented by a substantially greater, more planful, investment in in-service training. This effort will demand a new partnership in the part of the Center, the local Federation and the Jewish Welfare Board<sup>12</sup> with a clear definition of the responsibility of each. JWB's involvement will need to begin with an understanding and acceptance of the prevailing view from the Center field that

<sup>11</sup> Samuel Levine, "Club Leadership," *The Jewish Center Worker*, Vol. X, No. 1 (January, 1949).

<sup>12</sup> In this regard see: Robert I. Hiller, "Implications for the Profession of the Review of the Council of Jewish Federations," this *Journal* Vol. LVI, No. 2 (Winter 1979-80).

the priority it once gave to the personnel function has diminished; that one overt evidence of neglect can be found in its undermanned Personnel Services Department. It is hardly adequate to respond that the number of candidates has increased for, and the number of vacancies decreased in, posted positions. The Department has never been able to come to grips with its inability to provide adequate guidance for referral and placement to positions and Centers which are in the best interests of every worker's professional growth and satisfaction. The challenge is not lightly made nor am I unmindful of how costly and difficult it would be for JWB to accept it. Acceptance of this call by JWB would radically change its character from that of a trade association for a field of service to the leadership of a movement to which it aspires.

A word about professional preparation for social group work practice. There can be no gain or much satisfaction in the disengagement from or critique upon social work education. What is urgently needed is a massive, protracted effort to change the system by encouraging and recognizing the intellectual effort required to write the papers that will present carefully drawn alternatives in social work philosophy, in theory, in practice methods, in the role of the worker, in the use of program and in the educational and administrative function of supervision. Out of our practice we must draw the teaching and supervisory records which will once again identify the Center as the standard bearer for the profession. Only in so doing will we be in a position to reject the sorry plaint about our ineffectiveness (and his?) from a former dean of a school of social work. Instead, we shall then justifiably be able to proclaim the sense of our own effectiveness as Center workers, giving leadership to our colleagues in other settings so that their practice can offer them too a sense of personal and professional fulfillment.

The hegemony achieved by Federation, with which we are so closely identified, is neither infallible nor invulnerable. Its retention will command a heavy price. However reluctantly, it will have to be paid, for its future and our own. That price will involve:

1. Greater understanding by Federation lay and professional leadership of its agencies, and an unequivocal commitment to maintaining their strength and their operational autonomy.
2. Demonstrated concern, beyond the realm of public relations, for improving standards of agency service.
3. Discard of the mistaken assumption that its Jewish concerns are universal while those of its agencies are parochial and affirmation that both have an equal stake in the well-being of the Jewish community.
4. Readiness to share responsibility with all its agencies for the function of community organization and community planning.
5. Active support for agency efforts directed at increased inter-agency cooperation.
6. Obligation to provide adequate funding of its affiliated agencies with the understanding that, when this is not possible, it will be a joint responsibility to develop the means for the agencies themselves to seek the funds they need in such a way as not to detract from the annual campaign.
7. Awareness of the pitfalls involved in transferring the obligation to secure adequate funding to its affiliated agencies, by leaving them dependent upon a mirage of grants, contracts or purchase of service agreements from government sources.
8. Avoid competition with its affiliated agencies for the limited pool of lay leadership by concentrating upon expansion of that pool.
9. Work with its affiliated agencies to combine resources for the conduct and improvement of community-wide leadership development programs.

### In Conclusion

I have tried to suggest the agenda for what the Jewish community requires of us. There can be no greater imperative than the evaluation of our performance, not necessarily on that agenda, despite my partiality to it, but on one that represents the consensus of the community and its lay and professional leadership. The time is long past that the Center rely solely on self-studies for the assessment of its performance, however valuable these may be. The Center is in need of periodic, systematic, outside review—and accreditation (based on commonly accepted national standards)—of its performance, not unlike the models long in existence in public and private secondary and higher education. This is a role which the professional could encourage the Center to delegate to JWB. The organization and assembly of review teams of lay and professional leaders, drawn from Centers throughout the U.S. and Canada, composed of a wide variety of disciplines and interests, including men and women experienced, among others, in the areas here presented, would identify JWB with the responsibility for oversight of quality control in the Center and permit it to move towards further development and implementation of the tentative steps it has begun to take on standard setting. The

review team would be responsible for fact finding, analysis, evaluation and recommendations to correct weaknesses as well as to identify strengths.

By opening its performance to critical outside examination, the Center would be asserting its operational autonomy vis-a-vis Federation which, for understandable reasons, is unwilling and unable to engage in such review. The review team's findings would, of course, be fully shared by the Center with the Federation and the community as an expression of its conviction that the Center belongs to its community and its members. This communication of the Center's determination to correct its deficiencies would help it move closer, not to Gresham's law, but to the aspirations towards excellence by the best of its lay and professional leadership throughout North America who would emerge as the visible arbiters of its standards for service.

Then, when the question is again asked, "What is the ordinary member of the tribe to do?", the process by which the Center governs itself and delivers its services may free us, as professionals, to think, to choose, to act, individually and collectively, with the assurance that the best available model for service to the Jewish community is realistically within our grasp.