

I. THE CONTEXT OF CHANGE



JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE

The Oldest and Newest Chair at the Jewish Communal Table

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A thematic history of Jewish Family Service agencies uncovers several recurring themes: the effects of a religious-secular bifurcation within the organized American Jewish community, increased communal diversity, and the ongoing debates over the definition of human services in general and the nature of Jewish human services in particular.

Slip into any hotel and neighborhood where an Association of Jewish Family and Children's Agencies (AJFCA) Annual Conference is taking place and you are likely to overhear the following:

- Strolling from a session on "Managing Managed Care" to one on "Exciting New Developments in MIS Systems," two agency executive directors, with doctoral degrees in organizational management and in social work administration, chat about endowments and new funding sources, using language most easily comprehensible to Wharton MBAs and Silicon Valley entrepreneurs.
- Sipping decaf *latté* in the hotel atrium while their husbands go shopping, two agency Board Presidents—in professional life, a banker and a lawyer—commiserate with one another about demands from United Way and other public funders for "Board diversification" (read: non-Jews) and documentation of nonsectarian services, on the one hand, and notification of reduced support from the local Jewish Federation, on the other.
- Power-walking at 6:00 A.M. around the hotel's perimeter, still another duo (senior managers, perhaps) debate the merits of moving beyond counseling and volunteer-delivered kosher meals on wheels to offer fee-for-service programs such as "Starting Your Third Mid-Life Career," a workshop facilitated by a human resource specialist

and a social gerontologist, and a court-sanctioned workshop, "Divorce Mediation in Six Easy Steps," team-led by an arbitrator, a representative of a rabbinic court, and a psychologist.

- Relaxing to music at a local nightspot, two newcomers to the professional network, one a Russian emigre and the other a nonaffiliated Jew, share notes on how to incorporate more "Jewish identity" into agency programming and how to embrace non-Jewish staff members within the *heimische* (Jewish familial) ambience.

Take away the *fin-de-siecle* giveaways—the "heart-healthy" hotel fare, the laptops and cellular phones, and the cutting-edge financial jargon—and you are overhearing debates and discussions that could and did take place in slightly different forms at the 1953 National Conference of Jewish Communal Service, the 1935 General Assembly of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, and even at the 1910 National Conference of Jewish Charities.

In the pages of this journal it has become almost axiomatic to note that much has changed in the Jewish communal world, but when we look a bit more closely we are compelled to take note also of what has remained the same, in ways foreseen and unforeseen. As Harold Silver (1962) and Bernard Reisman (1974) have pointed out, the ebb and flow of what goes on in Jewish family agencies affects and is affected by current

trends in the host society, as well as by traditional Jewish values and by ongoing events of Jewish history. Even so, it is striking to note the extent to which the burning issues of the late 1990s resemble the burning issues of earlier decades. Reviewing them in this larger historical context, therefore, provides a perspective and encourages an understanding that if today's unresolved issues are yesterday's unresolved issues, perhaps they require more ongoing monitoring than once-and-for-all solutions.

Readers should note that the history presented below is not the history of Jewish family service (JFS) agencies from the perspective of the users or even from the Jewish community-at-large, nor does it take into account the enormous variation across the more than 145 agencies serving U.S. and Canadian Jewish communities. Rather, it is the history as understood by the communal "servants" themselves, the lay and professional leaders of agencies and of the larger Federation network, who have left us a paper trail of writings and speeches setting forth their ideological, practical, and professional worries and concerns, their personal and institutional *angst* over the nature of their work. There remains to be written the comprehensive history that draws from such primary sources as agency records or casework documents, anecdotal information from the local Yiddish and (later) Anglo-Jewish press, and other forms of client literature or testimony.

Herewith, then, a history of the recurring polarities of JFS agencies in eighteenth- to twentieth-century America (as usual, with less on record of our Canadian cousins).

THE EFFECTS OF SECULARIZATION AND INTRA-COMMUNAL DIVERSITY

By the Middle Ages, there was in every Jewish community a clearly-defined concept of *tzedakah* (mandated charity), traditionally defined as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick, burying the dead and comforting the mourners, ransoming captives, providing free loans and dowries for poor brides, educating orphans, and sheltering the

homeless. In most cases, the custom of taking care of its own fit in well with the secular authority's desire to maintain control from afar by having communal leaders collect taxes and maintain internal order. Within the community, the biblical injunction for social justice and mutual responsibility was combined with detailed talmudic specifications as to precisely when, where, how, and to whom such *tzedakah* must be given. In an arrangement that therefore met everyone's needs, the Jewish community came to resemble what eminent historian Salo Baron likened to a legally constructed "state within a state."

Circumstances eventually brought the same model to North America as well, where among the earliest Jewish settlers were one-time Marranos (secret Jews) from the Portuguese colony of Recife, Brazil. Although they had lived openly as Sephardic Jews during a brief period of Dutch rule (1620-1654), once the colony reverted to Portuguese control, many fled back to Holland or to other Caribbean islands. Trying to escape the harsh hand of the spreading Inquisition, a small group sailed to "New Netherland," as it was called, arriving at the port of New Amsterdam in September 1654. Once there, the group of twenty-three survivors was denied the right to settle permanently. Issuing the decree was Peter Stuyvesant, the "governor" (though not a government representative) of the Dutch West India Company's colony, who was as loathe to have Catholics, Quakers, or Lutherans living alongside members of the Dutch and Presbyterian Churches as he was to have Jews. However, when Stuyvesant wrote to company headquarters in Amsterdam for authorization to keep the Jews out, he was informed instead that he must admit them, in part because a number of Amsterdam Jews were stockholders in the European-based Dutch West India Company and in part because these Jews had fought on Holland's behalf in South America. A resentful Stuyvesant reluctantly let the Jews stay, but he was permitted to set the condition that they take care of their own and not become a burden on the non-Jewish population (Grayzel, 1968).

Responsibility for one's own was similarly introduced into other New World Jewish settlements in Charleston and Savannah in the south and in Philadelphia, New York, and Newport further to the north, the difference being that the self-governing structure was now more voluntary than mandated. Other religious communities in the colonies did the same, and provision of sectarian services was understood to be the appropriate conduit for such assistance according to the principle of church-state separation set forth in the 1783 U.S. Constitution.

This system served the fledgling nation well until the mid-nineteenth century and was facilitated in large part by the relative homogeneity and small size of the colonial Jewish communities.¹ Jews from Holland and Spain were soon joined by Jews from Germany and other areas of Central and Eastern Europe under German control, and also by numbers of Polish Jews. However, in spite of the numerical preponderance of Ashkenazi (German or East European) Jews and the increased use of Yiddish apparent by the beginning of the eighteenth century, the colonial Jewish communities continued to follow Sephardic Jewish ritual and observance. Abraham J. Karp (1975) suggests that this occurred not only because the Spanish-Portuguese influence was the earlier one, but also because the European Jews perceived it to be a more "American" style of Judaism. (The first synagogue to use Ashkenazi ritual tradition was established in Philadelphia only at the very end of the eighteenth century.)

A second characteristic of this institutionalized system of internal governance and group responsibility was that the Jewish settlements, large or small, were organized around self-contained synagogues, forming what political

¹Accepted estimates claim that there were approximately 2,500 Jews in the American colonies by 1790 and 6,000 by 1825. By 1848, due to the immigration of German Jews, that number had increased to 50,000; and by 1875, to 225,000. By 1880, Jews were found in every state of the Union; and in 1918, at the end of the large immigration of East European Jewry, there were more than three million Jews in the United States.

theorist Daniel Elazar has called "congregational communities." Most towns had only one synagogue, and it was easy enough to centralize and coordinate all services around this core. As Saul Andron (1981) describes it, "the synagogue and the community were one and the same," and the synagogue as community center provided for its members' social, educational, religious, and welfare needs from the same *kuppah* (fund).

The early communities, spurred in large measure by the tradition of philanthropy brought by the German Jews, also established hospitals, schools, orphanages, and homes for the elderly, all subsidized by donations and pledges as well as by active fund raising. It was the Jewish version of what Silver (1962) describes as "a uniquely American tradition of a publicly sanctioned doctrine of voluntary philanthropy."

In Charleston, Baltimore, San Francisco, Syracuse, and Seattle, among other cities, Jews created Benevolent Societies, sometimes designated as separate Ladies' and Men's Benevolent Societies and, as it was called in New York, the Hebrew Benevolent Fuel Association. The precursors of modern JFS agencies, these charitable organizations were explicitly created—in the words of one mission statement of the era—"to provide relief to indigent Israelites." The Hebrew Orphan Society was established in Charleston, then the largest Jewish community in the country, in 1801. It was formally incorporated by the General Assembly of South Carolina in December 1802, making it the oldest incorporated charitable organization in the United States, according to historian Jacob R. Marcus. As the number of associations and the volume of work proliferated, many of these merged to form entities known as United Hebrew Charities (New York, Chicago), United Jewish Charities (Syracuse), or United Hebrew Relief or Relief Associations (Winnipeg, St. Louis). All addressed a growing concern with the need for fund raising.

But the key development of the mid-nineteenth century on was the decline of what Andron (1981) calls "the synagogue as a unitary organization" and the concomitant

differentiation of functions into separate domains of "sacred" and "secular" that came to have only the most minimal contact with one another. Andron notes that this differentiation was antithetical to Jewish tradition and values and very much of an anomaly in Jewish community organization. Yet, the bifurcation was well entrenched by the time of the Civil War, culminating in the 1859 establishment of a national Board of Delegates of American Israelites, an organization that flatly refused to engage in any religious functions whatsoever (Lurie, 1961).

By the early twentieth century, there were not only religious and ethnic distinctions among the Jews in North America, but also differences of nationality and socioeconomic class, as well as a proliferation of Jewish nonreligious ideologies and subcommunities, including Zionists and Yiddishists, labor unionists, and members of fraternal organizations. These groups introduced an unprecedented degree of secularism into American Jewish life, as well as an unprecedented degree of service duplication. Each group was determined to take care of its own, and each group defined itself in ever more narrow terms.

By now, the efforts to merge so many intra-communal relief associations forced the question of consolidation on an even larger scale. Should there be centralized fund raising for autonomous organizations, or should there be a single new organization created in each community to replace all of the existing organizations? In response to this question, the various associations and societies formed so long ago created the Federation system with which we are familiar today.

The decision to federate, which came about only at the very end of the nineteenth century, attempted to preserve the concept of independent, autonomous groups working cooperatively on behalf of the entire Jewish community. By 1910 the Jewish communities of Detroit, Kansas City, St. Louis, Cleveland, Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, and San Francisco had Federations, and when the New York City Federation was established in 1917, it was the forty-sixth to come into being.

The long-term effects of the twin processes of diversification and secularization can be seen throughout the twentieth century, notably in the post-World War II distinction between "synagogue Jews" and "Federation Jews" described by sociologist Steven M. Cohen (see R. Cohen & Rosen, 1992). At the height of this real or perceived polarization, programs and policies were pursued at best without awareness of the activities of other parts of the community, and at worst with antagonism, competition, and total disregard for the values of the other camp. Although contemporary data (from the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey and elsewhere) suggest that such differences have been minimized in recent years and that multi-focused Jewish organizationals increasingly embody the values of both the synagogue world and the Federation world, the fact remains that much institutional energy and rhetoric are expended on creating intra-community linkages across secular and religious Jewish lines (see Rosen, 1996 and Weber, this issue), and Federations and Federation agencies struggle to form partnerships to overcome their own historical separation (see Steinitz, 1995/96 and Zibbell, this issue). This deeply rooted segmentation continues to have enormous implications for all aspects of Jewish human service agencies as well.

THE ONGOING DEBATE OVER THE DEFINITION AND EXTENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Tzedakah always took different forms according to the need of the moment: helping the poor or temporarily distressed with money or food, offering hospitality to travelers or strangers, lending money and services, offering credit without interest, and providing support services for the elderly and disabled. All were considered inseparable from needs that were inherently religious in nature: food for the Sabbath table, wedding arrangements for those who couldn't afford a proper *huppah*, and so forth. Every household had its "box," and every community celebration incorporated an element of *tzedakah*. There was a broader

dimension as well: According to a commonly accepted interpretation of Psalm 41, the phrase "happy is the one who thinks about the poor" ("*ashrey maskil el dal*") refers not only to providing alms for the needy but to "considering them," offering solutions to their problems in addition to mere palliatives.

In the New World, the services continued to be of a varied nature—not only cash or food but also wood for heat and money for loans of different sorts, as well as *matzoh* for Passover, medical assistance, burial services, and free seats in the synagogue (Stein, 1956). Even so, the common perception that *tzedakah* consisted primarily of financial relief persisted and was strengthened in the course of the large-scale immigration of Jews from Eastern Europe (1880–1920), in spite of the fact that the services offered them also went well beyond financial assistance to include classes in English and in "Americanization," business loans and employment services, day nurseries, old-age homes, and orphanages. In this, the era of the settlement houses, rapid cultural assimilation was itself seen as an appropriate communal goal. The fact that this immigration included men, women, and children, many in family groupings, is credited with facilitating this process, in contrast to the difficulties experienced by other groups from China, Ireland, and Africa who migrated—or were forced to migrate—in single-sex clusters.

One of the less salutary effects of this large-scale effort was a growing chasm between the Jewish community's elite givers—mostly successful German businessmen and financiers—and the recipients, mostly East European skilled and unskilled workers. Lurie (1961) writes of this as the creation of a Jewish "pauper class," and Silver (1962) describes the aloofness and contempt with which the donors discussed the need to "civilize" and "Americanize" these immigrants.

Although there were activists who resonated to themes of macro-level social reform—unionization, urban revitalization, and various legal or political remedies—there developed at this time a rather invidious understanding of the need for "charity," as it was

coming to be called. This view understood poverty as a community embarrassment resulting from individual immorality or laziness; a speaker at the 1900 National Conference of Jewish Charities blamed poverty also on the immigrants' excessive Jewish observance that he claimed interfered with their ability to get ahead in a more rational, enlightened society (Silver, 1962).

Parallel to this increasingly judgmental view of poverty was the decline in exclusive lay responsibility for the *kuppah*. Typically, male community leaders controlled the keys, and volunteer women acted as "Ladies Bountiful" or "Friendly Visitors," maintaining periodic contact with poor families as a way of assessing their needs and monitoring their use of assistance received. Concern for the lack of appropriate training on the part of volunteers, some of whom handled these encounters inappropriately, led eventually to the introduction of paid staff. At the 1910 Conference of Jewish Charities, a reference was made to the more than seventy secretaries and other employees who had been hired to run the charities, and by 1920 all Conference Presidents but one—William J. Shroder—were professional social workers. As the deference to professionally trained leaders increased, the authority of lay Boards decreased, a pattern that was reversed only in the 1940s and 1950s.

Along with the professionalization of the practice came a professionalization of the nature of the problem. The need for ever more sophisticated decisions about allocation of resources was the first step leading to a more refined concept of "concrete services" as opposed to "relief," which, as Martha Selig (1954) reminds us, was itself a more systematized form of intuitive advice, neighborly help, and mechanical assistance. From the 1920s on, the term "social services" increasingly replaced "charity" in the names of institutions and organizations in the field, as well as in the underlying perception of the activity as something grounded more in scientific insight than in moral judgment.

But the problems being addressed came to be seen as more complex and more individually rooted than previously thought. "Case-

work as a technique" was refined as a concept and was increasingly viewed as an alternative to concrete services, focusing on the "individual maladjustment" that was now believed to be a key factor in the creation and perpetuation of family poverty. In this view, provision of concrete services was merely one tool among many for proper treatment of the problem, now attributed as much to personality and ego factors as to a lack of financial resources or to laziness. Poverty had come full cycle from being viewed as circumstantial to being understood as a sign of immorality, and now, a form of pathology.

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s there was a growing emphasis on attention to individual psychological factors as opposed to the economic, social, and cultural context of poverty. Ironically, as Imber (1990) and others have noted, the focus on individual adjustment continued relentlessly into the 1940s and 1950s, even in the face of overwhelming evidence that the human devastation wrought by the Depression and the Holocaust was anything but psychological in origin.

In the early years of the century, recipients of either social services or casework were all economically poor, but at the 1918 Conference a startling new concept was introduced with the delivery of a paper on conducting "Casework above the Poverty Line" (Schreiber, 1961). This was in the context of an avid debate over the superiority of concrete services versus casework or (later) counseling, a false distinction in light of the fact that the reality was almost always a combination of these services. Conference exhortations (Isenstadt, 1954) to acknowledge the primacy of counseling was criticized by some (especially Selig, 1954) who suggested that casework had come to represent an unhealthy overinvolvement in the "inner world of the human personality" (Selig, 1954, p. 219). "Let's put the 'social' back into social work," was the cry, and others argued that, in pursuit of the goal of family rehabilitation, it was necessary to address both economic and psychological needs (Beatman, 1961; Goldman, 1954a & b; Kovarsky, 1954; Schreiber, 1961).

Even so, by 1957 there was a perception,

according to Schreiber, that social reform had been more or less achieved. This was used to justify the ongoing focus on psychology that, as it became more Freudian and abstract, led to even greater professional interest in middle-class and upper-class Jews, who turned out also to have family problems in spite of being economically comfortable. (This paralleled the findings of a 1960 report by the Family Service Association of America that documented increased service to middle-class and upper-middle class Americans in general.) On the one hand, this focus enabled caseworkers to reach out to a broader segment of the Jewish community; on the other hand, it led to criticism that caseworkers were more comfortable dealing with educated, middle-class people more likely to appreciate the goals of therapy.

Of course, another major factor in this shift of thinking had to do with the Roosevelt Administration's New Deal program of the 1930s, which implemented widespread economic relief as well as provision of temporary jobs, including employment on construction projects and work for youth. Government participation in providing relief had been very limited until this time, and Jewish and other sectarian social work agencies were taken by surprise and, in many cases, were highly resistant to the idea of relinquishing control over what had been their key function.

Since clients no longer needed this kind of service from sectarian agencies, social workers and agency administrators were forced to engage in a profound rethinking of their mission. If relief was now the business of government, what was the business of social work? Turning to psychotherapy and to preventive treatment of emotional problems not yet visible, agencies began to offer these to a non-poor population and, following the lead of the New York Jewish Social Service Association, began to charge for the service. By 1953, 17 of 63 large-city JFS agencies charged fees for counseling (Stein, 1956).² As Robert Morris

²However, as Gurin (1955) noted, such fees represented only 2% of family service income, the largest portion still coming from Federations and Community Chests.

wrote (1953, p. 52), "Public services are now the backdrop against which we must view the responsibility of any sectarian service."

To be sure, the aftermath of World War II required a huge outlay of relief and other more concrete services to the Jewish refugees and displaced persons who flooded these and other shores, but the long-term trend was clear. In peacetime circumstances, government would take care of basic needs and services, and private agencies, Jewish and nonsectarian, were free—or consigned—to deal with human problems of a more abstract nature.

As these words are being written, the pendulum has swung yet again in the direction of greater provision of services from the private sector, though with a new twist. Currently, the rhetoric of nonsectarianism asserts that "private" is no longer synonymous with "sectarian"; on the contrary, most nonprofit services, due to the infusion of public funding of varying amounts, are now as scrutinized for evidence of "diversity" and "multi-cultural organization" and implementation as much as any purely government-administered program has ever been. It remains one of the ironies of the last decades of the century that the enthusiasm for multiculturalism is applied in contemporary American society to every ethnic, national, and racial variant *except* Jewishness, a victory of group acceptance that is bittersweet indeed. It becomes even more ironic in light of the fact that at the same time that government support of these programs has actually decreased, the requirement that they be offered in "nonsectarian fashion" has remained and even been strengthened in the public mind.

THE ONGOING DEBATE OVER "JEWISH NEEDS" VERSUS THE "NEEDS OF JEWS"

By now it should be clear that from earliest times, the obligation of *tzedakah* did not distinguish between social services and Jewish services. Not only were they provided under the same auspices, but even more importantly, they were fundamentally intertwined in the lives of a people for whom religion and lifestyle were one and the same, and who were ex-

pected by even the secular authorities to conform to Jewish law. When all American Jews were part of a congregational community, funds raised and distributed within that community, whether by volunteers or by a rabbi, circulated within an integrated system. Individual and family well-being supported Jewish life, and Jewish life was supportive of individual and family welfare.

The short-lived secular Board of Delegates of American Israelites, formed to provide protection of the civil and political rights of Jews in the United States and abroad, lasted until 1878, when its functions were subsumed by the new Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Despite this subtle shift from strictly secular auspices to religious denominational auspices (which in turn forced the Orthodox to establish their own separate services), the overall trend was toward the growth and persistence of two main streams: one, a purely religious stream, itself divided between Orthodox and non-Orthodox Jewry, and the other, a "Jewish nonsectarian" stream. This "Jewish nonsectarian" stream further subdivided into social service agencies, on the one hand, and secular national organizations, on the other, which inherited the Board of Delegates' concern for Jewish defense issues in light of increasing reports of pogroms and persecution in Europe.

Over time, other factors contributed to the institutionalization of this dichotomy, including the growth of Reform Judaism, the increasing trend toward secularization in the lives of many American Jews, and increasingly rigid interpretations of the constitutional principle of church-state separation. But even the services offered to Jews outside of the context of religion per se, be they relief, counseling, or information and referral, had what many claim was still a very Jewish flavor, and JFS agencies still saw themselves as a "very family-centered and an intrinsically Jewish enterprise" (Kovarsky, 1954).

Yet, the challenge posed by the New Deal created even more professional turmoil than the need to reengage the mission of social work. For the Jewish community, the new emphasis on meeting clients' psychological

needs raised an even larger question: "Why should these needs be addressed in a *Jewish* context?" or, as it came to be posed, "What is Jewish about Jewish social services?"

According to Robert Morris (1953) of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, this question had first surfaced as far back as World War I, if not earlier. At that time, plans to establish a School for Jewish Communal Work had produced two approaches to what Silver (1953) later called the "perpetually recurring problem of Jewish content."

1. Jewish social work is distinctive for being derived from unique qualities in Jewish life, and "something Jewish" is essential in Jewish agencies to strengthen group survival.
2. Jewish social agencies exist to meet the practical needs of the Jewish population, and the mere fact that Jews want such agencies is sufficient rationale for their existence even though the services provided may be indistinguishable from non-sectarian services except for the auspices.

The first major paper on the subject was given at the 1924 National Conference of Jewish Social Service. I.M. Rubinow, arguing that Jews were sufficiently distinctive as a group, with unique family values and unique problems (e.g., more elder needs and illnesses like tuberculosis than high rates of crime and illegitimacy) concluded that Jewish welfare work in fact comprised a significant act of social responsibility and group solidarity (Silver, 1962).

In 1936, a Special Committee on Jewish Content gave a report to the National Conference of Jewish Social Work (NCJSW). Based on social workers' responses to a questionnaire as well as on committee deliberation, the report concluded that "Jewish caseworkers have as wide a variety of attitudes and feelings about Jewishness and Jewish content as the Jewish group as a whole. [Therefore] No universally acceptable definition of Jewish content is yet available" (Morris, 1953, p. 54).

The discussion was soon cut off by the

realities in the late 1930s of the arrival of refugees from Hitler's Europe and the displaced persons who came after the war, beginning in 1947. By the time the work of resettling those immigrants had begun to slack off, the Jewish community—and the entire country—was enjoying unprecedented heights of economic well-being, which led to renewed soul-searching over the question of Jewish content and Jewish values. The question as posed in 1936 still applied: Given public aid for problems linked to unemployment and ill health, and given the spread of central community fund raising for welfare services in general, was it sufficient justification for Jewish social services to talk vaguely about Jewish content "consisting of principles... which recognize and conserve Jewish cultural values" (Morris, p. 43)?³

One answer to the question emerged from the survey undertaken for the Springfield, Massachusetts Jewish Social Service Bureau (JSSB) to determine its future. Among its findings, the survey report noted that very few Jews other than refugees and newcomers actually turned to the JSSB for services, and in 1951 alone as many veteran Jewish families

³For a fascinating sidebar to this concern for "Jewish values," the reader is directed to a number of analysts who have questioned the fundamental compatibility of Jewish values to American democratic values, and of Jewish values to social work values. In these discussions (Alfred J. Kutzik in G. Berger, pp. 1143-57; S. Bayme, pp. 29-38 in Barry W. Holtz and Steven Bayme, *Why Be Jewish?*, American Jewish Committee, 1993; and Fred Berl in Reisman, 1974, p. 28), we are reminded that a universalist ethic with emphasis on self-determination and individual worth is in significant conflict with traditional particularistic Jewish values of group solidarity, intra-group distinctions, and adherence to commandments. Kutzik reminds us that Judaism in fact incorporates both "democratic values" and "antidemocratic values" and cites Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan's 1948 description of "the predicament of the modern Jew" who seeks to harmonize irreconcilable differences between Jewish tradition and the "humanist naturalism and democratic nationalism" of Western civilization. Fred Berl, then of JF&CS in Baltimore, tries to resolve the conflict between Jewish values and social work values with an interesting linguistic sleight-of-tongue: "In view of the prevalent sense of anomie in contemporary society, the turn to Jewish identity is in fact enhancing of personal freedom in that it provides a sense of rootedness and direction."

were using the services of four local nonsectarian agencies as used the JSSB. The survey also revealed that many members of the Springfield Jewish community knew very little about the JSSB and its goals or even of its existence. Yet, the Survey Committee concluded, a separate and individual JSSB was justified and should be continued on the grounds of "intangible considerations of feeling and attitude which surround the existence of a Jewish social agency" (Morris, 1953, p. 60), or, as Silver (1953) phrased it, the feeling that the Jewish community, quite apart from the group who actually uses these services, needs them and wants them to exist. The report further recommended that the agency should continue to "avail itself of the casework, supervisory, and consultative services of the Family and Children's Service wherever and to the fullest extent possible" (Wolf, 1953, p. 385).

In 1951 the CJFWF appointed a Family Services Planning Committee, charging it with defining the scope and purpose of the Jewish family agency. Additional impetus for this committee's work derived from the fact that the Family Service Association of America had begun work on its own statement on "Scope and Methods of the Family Service Agency," which made it even more pressing for Jewish family agencies to formulate their own rationale, at least regarding purpose and function (Kovarsky, 1954). The Statement, presented at the November 1953 Delegate Assembly, drew heavily on the conclusions of the Springfield Survey. It announced that, since justification for Jewish services can no longer lie in special language and cultural needs of Jewish clientele, a new rationale for Jewish family services rested on "three fundamental factors"

1. clients' personal preference for a Jewish agency, often the result of factors operating on the subconscious level
2. the relationship between client and caseworker made easier by the projection of certain values onto the agency that creates feelings of "belonging," even though rarely discussed
3. the significance of the Jewish agency for

the Board member, the volunteer, and the professional worker as a means of expression of their own cultural traditions and religious impulses

As the Statement noted, "In a democratic society different groups with equally positive qualities of feeling for people and desire to serve them can all have their separate agencies" (cited and described in Zelditch, 1954 and Silver, 1954).

Continuing in this optimistic vein, Silver expressed firm support for "the arguments of tradition and communal obligation," and claimed further that the existence and growth of Jewish family agencies were sufficient evidence that they are wanted and fill a need. He concluded that this highlights the reality of the Jewish community as "a living, functioning organism" with "intangible yet powerful emotional, intellectual, and spiritual forces of values, sentiments, traditions, and mores" (1954, p. 14).

This point of view was not without its critics. Perhaps foremost among them was Samuel C. Kohs, who at the 1947 meeting of the NCJSW asserted that individual psychiatric casework as practiced in Jewish family agencies had no Jewish content whatsoever, and to the extent that a caseworker might attempt to connect an individual to the Jewish community or to Jewish family life, it was against good psychiatric practice to do so. Kohs (1947, p. 153) charged that the "structure and function [of the Jewish family agency] today are much more the result of Christian and of so-called 'nonsectarian' pressures than of Jewish tradition, of the needs of Jewish community life and the demands of the organized Jewish community." He further accused the Jewish family agency of becoming "more and more of a stranger in the association of Jewish communal organizations—with a vanishing interest in problems of Jewish life... Jewish adjustment, and in positively motivated objectives toward the preservation and the enrichment of Jewish individual and group life." He issued the ultimate challenge: "If this change in the Jewish family agency is necessary and desirable then it should not

longer be a Jewish community responsibility. It should depart from the Jewish scene and become the responsibility of the community as a whole."

If, on the other hand, he continued, there is a place for a Jewish family agency in the Jewish communal program, it should take the form of "the common instrumentality to bring together and to unify the influences [of the synagogue, the Hebrew school, and the Jewish center] *within the home*" (Kohs, p. 157). In this and a later article (1955), Kohs lamented the absence of any other Jewish communal agency dealing with families as a group, since the synagogue, Talmud Torah (school), and Jewish Community Center (JCC) all cater primarily to individuals within the family unit. He envisioned a revitalized family agency that could fill this gap by relating its work to the needs of the other three institutions, using rabbis, JCC workers, and Jewish educators as resource persons. He imagined such a family agency promoting Jewish content in the lives of intermarried families (this, in 1947!); helping resolve conflict caused by differing attachments to Judaism across generations of an extended family; and dealing with real or imagined experiences of discrimination or anti-Semitism, feelings of shame or inferiority, and parents' desires to provide a richer Jewish home life. Challenging agencies to acknowledge that service to Jewish families is closely linked to the *preservation and enjoyment* of Jewish life (p. 10), Kohs urged his colleagues to "either integrate (with other Jewish organizations, religious and secular) or *go out of business*" (1947, p. 159). Anticipating professionals' skepticism as to the success of this new approach, Kohs chided, "How do you know, until you make an effort to find out?... In the transfer from relief to the psychiatric and psychoanalytic approach, how did we ever discover that Jewish individuals and families *wanted* that kind of service?" (1955, p. 13).

Bernard Reisman (1974, pp. 10-11) summarized the emergence of a full-blown theory of the "Jewish purpose" of the Jewish family service agency as consisting of three views:

1. the "humanitarian view"—providing social services that are indistinguishable but for being provided under Jewish auspices, and doing so as a vestige of our sectarian past that will eventually wither away
2. the "maximalist view"—according to which any services offered under Jewish auspices must have a clear Jewish purpose that includes contributing to the enhancement of Jewish life and to the survival of the Jewish people
3. the "fundamentalist view"—justifying the agency *ex post facto* on the basis of its existence; the services themselves are an outlet for Jewish expression, despite the paradox of requiring Jewish knowledge and "sensitivity" alongside strong prohibitions against actually using them in the therapeutic process

By the 1950s, American Jews were developing a new view of themselves. Now more than 5 million strong, they were largely American born and overwhelmingly urban. They had survived the destruction of Jewish communities in both Western Europe and in Eastern Europe, and were engaged in efforts on the other side of the world to airlift Jews from North Africa and other Moslem lands and bring them to Israel, the new venue for Jewish resettlement.

There was a renewed concern for Jewish identity, including Jewish education and especially adult education. This seemed to develop from an awareness that, if the torch is to be passed on at all, it can now happen only in America or in Israel. At the same time, there was a new and unprecedented sense of full participation in American life as well. As Bernstein (1962, p. 25) put it,

Let us be clear that we do this for ourselves but not alone for ourselves. We live in an America which aspires to a pluralistic society, and no longer a melting pot. As Isaiah Minkoff has so well put it, we are a group of America, not in America, an America in which each group is expected to bring its unique gifts for the enrichment of all, an America which thrives on differ-

ences and not on uniformity. We are true to our country only as we are true to ourselves.

This was the new message: on the one hand, a new respect for an interest in the heritage that was almost totally wiped out in Hitler's Europe, and on the other hand, a sense of belongingness in America to the extent that not only do Jews share its culture and values but that we have an obligation as quintessential Americans to share our success with other less fortunate groups. Bernstein stirringly concluded, "At stake is the moral and political leadership of America in the world. At stake, too, is our own moral integrity. We must assure these freedoms not alone because of what other nations may think, but rather, as President Kennedy has well said, because it is right."

On a less lofty level, this obligation to be *ohr la-goyim* (a light unto nations) took the form of greater concern with Jewish community relations organizations working on church-state separation; equality of opportunity in education, employment, housing; and other basic civil rights. Jews also saw themselves in the forefront of the struggle for medical care for the aging, rehabilitation, and other great social issues of the day. "This is *tzedakah*... defined... more fully as... man's humanity to man" declared Mr. Bernstein (p. 28).

Well into the 1960s, the combination of government support services in the areas of health, child care, and welfare and the energy harnessed for the civil rights movement, the War on Poverty, and the determination to reverse the harmful effects of the urban ghetto convinced American Jewry that their highest goals lay in creating a new national social policy for the United States. Indeed, Baltimore JFS executive Milton Goldman sounded downright defensive in explaining why his agency continued to consider strengthening Jewish life and community as its primary responsibility, though he hastened to add that strengthening the overall community was a "secondary responsibility" (Goldman, 1966, p. 29). Charles Miller, speaking for this new fusion of Jewish values in service to America, gave the rationale as "a wholesome expres-

sion of all that is finest in American democracy" (1969, p. 231).

Everyone by now is fairly familiar with the phenomenon of rediscovered Jewish pride and Jewish ethnicity that began in the Jewish community on the eve of the 1970s (in 1969). The forces behind this turnaround were both positive—the impact of the Six-Day War and the Yom Kippur War in Israel—and negative, the disillusionment with liberalism and universalism wrought by the hostility of the black separatist movement and the divisiveness of the confrontation between the U.S. government and the anti-war movement. Underlying both of these forces, perhaps, lay the fact that the generation coming of age were the grandchildren of the turn-of-the-century immigrants, and as such would have, in any event, uncovered a yearning to remember the tradition that their parents had been so eager to forget. Within the JFS movement, this led to a renewed "concern for the enhancement of the quality of Jewish family life" and an affirmation of the obligation to facilitate "Jewish continuity" (Isenstadt in Reisman, p. 24).

As Reisman points out (1974, p. 20), the proponents of a Jewish context for Jewish family services rarely explain exactly how to use Jewish source materials to mitigate personal or familiar stress. Moreover, very few agencies would want to emulate some currently fashionable approaches that explicitly take such traditional values as *shalom bayit* (family harmony) at all costs, in-marriage, and exclusive heterosexuality as absolute standards for therapeutic goals, in flagrant contradiction to social work values of openness and nonjudgmental service.

On the practical level, most recent-day efforts to incorporate Jewish content encourage what is called a "Jewish ambience" through staff development to enhance their own Jewish knowledge and commitment, study of basic Jewish concepts and how they might apply to agency programs and policies, and, in general, setting the rhythms of the agency to adhere to and reflect the Jewish calendar. The developments in the specific area of Jewish family life education (see Tiell and Weber, both in this issue) provide an excellent ex-

ample of how social workers, rabbis, and Jewish educators can come together to create services that exist nowhere else in the Jewish organizational network in this particular format. This recurring debate can be said to have come full cycle in recent times with the 1993 adoption of a Position Statement by the Association of Jewish Family and Children's Agencies. The position articulated an important role for JFS agencies, now and for the future, in meeting the goals of Jewish continuity in contemporary North America (Steinitz and Weidman, 1993).

CONCLUSION

It is difficult to summarize nearly 350 years of history, much less to predict what tomorrow will bring. An instructive example can be found in a 1955 exercise of predicting the future of Jewish communal services that fell quite short of the mark when read a mere forty years later (Hexter in Morris and Freund, 1966). While correct in presuming that there would not soon be a World War III or a Great Depression on the scale of the one in 1929, Maurice Hexter also predicted that

- The welfare state was here to stay and would expand, partnering with strong labor unions in the provision of eldercare.
- The Jewish population would continue to become suburbanized, and to enjoy ever more leisure.
- Synagogues would be strengthened; and Jewish family agencies would make a desirable alignment with "a progressive rabbinite."
- Jewish medical institutions and medical schools would flourish, along with a revival of a school for Jewish social work.

It is relatively easy to deride predictions that went awry, at least in degree if not in fact, and to call attention to changes that were less predictable:

- increased importance of non-social work skills to Jewish family agencies, including administration and finance, information

systems, law, mediation, and other kinds of mental health and physical health specializations

- the shift from individual casework to group work now underway in many agencies as the next phase of preventive programming
- reduced reliance on diminishing support from Jewish, community, and government funders and increased reliance on agency-generated income through entrepreneurial ventures and partnerships inside and outside of the Jewish community
- increased—albeit gradual—acceptance of the Jewish community agenda as the JFS agenda

We cannot anticipate in detail the histories and predictions that will be written at the midpoint of the twenty-first century, but it is tempting to suggest that, despite an overlay of new and unprecedented demographic and communal realities, a lot of the fundamental concerns will be familiar indeed. That may yet turn out to be the strength, and not the weakness, of the JFS movement.

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